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IN INGEGNERIA DEL TERRITORIO**

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**PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES IN SUPPORT OF THE  
DECISION-MAKING  
PROCESSES. THE AMBIVALENCE OF PARTICIPATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The dissertation concerns the analysis of participatory practices in support of the decision-making processes. In particular, the research work is based on an important consideration, according to which, traditional participatory processes do not work in practical terms. Indeed, the evolution of the concept of participation reveals that although the implementation of the participatory processes arose from the necessity of strongly criticizing the contemporary society of the 1960's, nowadays they have been used to reinforce and legitimate the existing power relations. In this conceptual framework, participation is currently analysed and interpreted either as a democratic right or as an instrument to achieve specific goals. As a result, the dichotomy, between theory and practice, acquires an increasing importance within the international debate.

Moreover, the dissertation intends to interpret the intrinsic ambivalence within the concept of participation through the analysis of a case study represented by the Sardinian Regional Landscape Plan (RLP). Sardinian regional government elaborated its RLP in 2006. However, different problems, such as the lack of implementation of the RLP at the local level, entailed the necessity for a revision. In particular, the Sardinian case study represents an emblematic case due to the implementation of two very different participatory processes. From this perspective, these approaches are studied in order to understand the difficulties to translate theoretical concepts about participation into practice.

In addition, the research work is based on a qualitative strategy and on a case study design, where a triangulation of methods, which are traditionally related to either qualitative or quantitative research strategy, is used. In particular, the data were collected through semi-structured interviews and self-completion questionnaires that involved different categories of participants such as academicians, officials of the regional, provincial and local governments, technicians of building enterprises, member of environmentalist bodies and practitioners.

Moreover, the data analysis highlights some important considerations. First of all, the political decisions influenced negatively the outcomes of the participatory processes. Indeed, during the elaboration phase, the specific purpose of the regional government was to legitimate its ruling role on the planning decisions at the local level, implying a lack of real involvement of participants. In the revision phase,

despite the apparently good intentions, the regional government, which belongs to an opposite political alignment of the previous one, intended to represent itself as a forward-looking administration in order to increase consensus on behalf of citizens, local and provincial administrations, practitioners and the economic and productive sectors. Secondly, the lack of a solid awareness of the importance of participation makes the implementation of effective inclusive moments impossible without a methodological reference framework.

From this conceptual perspective, the research work proposes a procedural protocol, whose aim is to define a methodological framework concerning the implementation of participatory practices in support of the planning processes at the regional scale. The procedural protocol focuses on four main issues: the interdependency of participatory and planning processes, the definition of specific responsibilities, the circularity of the processes, and their flexibility. First of all, the participatory processes should be parallel to the planning processes, becoming a necessary element of the procedures of elaboration and approval of plans. On the other hand, despite the complementary nature of the relation between participatory and planning processes, they should not lose their decisional autonomy and independence. Secondly, with respect to the impacts of the political decisions on participatory and planning processes, the authorities that implement participatory processes should be external bodies, composed by a multidisciplinary group of experts in political and social science, and in participatory practices. Thirdly, the circularity of the processes is based on considerations, according to which the relations between participatory and planning processes are not linear. In this way, it could be possible to take corrective measures in the most important phases. Finally, the fourth issue is related to specific economic, social and political contexts in which the participatory processes are implemented. Indeed, the research work tries to maintain a certain degree of flexibility in order to make it possible that suitable adjustments of the processes in relation to the reference context do occur.

In conclusion, “learning from failing” represents an important lesson of the research work. Indeed, despite the undeniable failures that characterise the current participatory practices, participation remains a significant aspect that could give a decisive contribution to the effectiveness of planning decisions.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Participation and the participatory processes remain central elements of the modern society, representing a prerequisite and a democratic right in the Western nations. However, although their importance is underlined at the international level, the implementation of participatory practices puts in evidence some criticisms and problematic aspects due to the ambivalent nature of the concept of participation. Indeed, although it represents theoretically a democratic right, governments sometimes implement the inclusive processes in order to reinforce the existing power relations (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). From this conceptual framework, the research proposal focuses on participatory approaches in support of the decision-making processes, analyzing problems and criticisms to translate theoretical concepts into practice. This research is implemented through a qualitative strategy based on a triangulation of methods, where the case study of the Sardinian Regional Landscape Plan (RLP) is analysed. In particular, a procedural protocol is elaborated in the penultimate chapter in order to integrate the participatory processes within the planning processes at the regional scale. The chapter is composed of four parts where different issues are examined as following:

1. the relevance of participation in the field of study, in order to clarify why it is important;
2. the research questions;
3. the contributions of the work in terms of discussion of positive and negative aspects concerning participation;
4. the structure of the dissertation.

In relation to the first aspect, the research proposal derives, on the one side, from the author's personal interest in participation theory and from the specific Sardinian experience with respect to this topic. On the other side, it is related to the overwhelming importance that the participatory processes have for the whole society. Moreover, governments and communities sometimes abuse this term, which is easy since its definition is not clear at all. Indeed, the planning system concerns different interests and positions. An improper management of the various aspects involved in the planning processes could be a source of planning strategy ineffectiveness. In order to identify the interests at stake, different theoretical and practical participatory approaches in support of the decision-making processes exist. However, although

they may seem theoretically straightforward, it could be very difficult to translate them into practice. Indeed, Cooke and Kothari (2001), and Hickey and Mohan (2005), as it is discussed in the literature review (see paragraph 2.1, pp. 7-10), assume that the participatory processes can reinforce oppressions and injustices. In other words, governments may sometimes implement participatory processes in order to legitimate their choices with no real involvement of different viewpoints. On the other hand, Bobbio (2004) analyzes the links between good participatory practices and the specific context in which these processes are implemented related to different issues. In particular, one of the most important aspects concerns the participants' identification. Indeed, the participatory processes that involve all the interested people in the planning processes could be considered good practices. However, it is possible to have different levels of participation: total community or only one part, which are only public bodies or private lobbies and citizens' organizations. Moreover, the interest of some groups could be misrepresented. On the other hand, some groups could refuse to participate, owing to a lack of interest or no real power in political terms. Moreover, some positions can hardly be included in the participatory processes such as the interest of future generations (Bobbio 2004, pp. 40-54).

In addition, the concept of participation is fundamental in the landscape planning context and, in particular, in Sardinia, one of the two main Italian islands. Indeed the Sardinian regional government approved the RLP in 2006. It was implemented through two different stages: the elaboration and the revision phases that concern respectively the elaboration of the RLP and its revision. The Sardinian RLP represents a planning tool to manage the regional coastal areas. Moreover, its main goals are: protecting, conserving and increasing the value of the environmental, historical, cultural and settlement identities of the Sardinian region. In addition, all the municipalities are bound to implement their Masterplans with respect to the RLP (Regione autonoma della Sardegna, 2006c, pp. 2-193). However, the elaboration process of the RLP entailed various problems and critical issues, such as an only-apparent involvement of the local municipalities and of the provincial administrations, and an excessive attitude towards protection and preservation of natural areas with or without a real environmental or cultural-historical value. Moreover, the inclusiveness of the local municipalities and provincial administrations could be defined as only-apparent because the participants did not have the possibility to express their opinions, needs or expectations. In a nutshell, the participatory process

was directed to inform participants about the contents of the planning process without establishing a multidirectional dialogue among public institutions. This troubled situation entailed that no local municipality approved its Masterplan by 2009. Therefore, in 2010 the regional government started a revision process. On the other hand, some problems were unresolved, such as the question of the poor involvement of private bodies and organizations and the lack of awareness concerning the importance of the implementation of participatory practices in support of the decision-making processes.

In relation to the second aspect, the research questions are:

1. How is it possible to apply theoretical concepts of the participatory processes into practice?
2. What are the main aspects that can compromise the effectiveness of the participatory processes, and for this reason they need a specific attention?
3. How could the participatory moments and the planning processes be integrated in an effective system, minimizing the gap between theoretical and pragmatic considerations?
4. Is participation only a right or a duty as well?

The choice of these specific questions arises from an important consideration. Indeed, the analysis of the literature (see chapter 2, pp. 6-21) highlights the difficulty to apply theoretical concepts of participatory processes into practice. Moreover, the effectiveness of the participatory processes depends on many factors, such as the influence of participants' behaviour, the stakeholder identification and the stage at which the participatory processes should begin. Therefore, political issues can easily influence the participatory and planning processes, although excluded people from the planning and participatory processes demand for participating. However, it happens that those who are really involved do not participate actively due to different reasons, such as disinterest or the lack of the necessary skilfulness that could grant effective inclusion. As a result, the last question, which asks whether participation is a right and/or a duty, is thought-provoking.

The Sardinian case study is analyzed in order to identify problems, factors and aspects that have influenced the effectiveness of the participatory processes implemented during the elaboration and revision phases. In this way, it is possible to identify the practical problems related to the implementation of the participatory processes.

From the methodological viewpoint, the line of the research starts providing a general scenario through its theoretical assumptions, underlined in the literature review (see chapter 2, pp. 6-21). After that, the thesis' discussion moves from the macro-level to the local through the analysis of the Sardinian case study, and afterwards, it returns to the broader vision on the basis of the elaboration of the procedural protocol. The innovative aspect of the research work is related to different issues. First of all, the concept of participation is analysed in a peculiar and innovative way. Indeed, now it is clear that participatory practices do not always entail a benefit to involved communities. Therefore, in these cases, it acquires an instrumental meaning, becoming a tool to reinforce the existing power games. As a result, it is necessary a clear definition of what the term participation means and its role in the planning processes. In addition, the concept of participation is sometimes used in an improper way. Indeed, its definition reveals a certain degree of uncertainty due to the intrinsic dualism between participation as a democratic right and as a way to achieve specific and sometimes opportunistic goals. Secondly, although the links and the influences between the reference context and the participatory processes are undeniable, the elaboration of an integrated system between inclusive moments and the planning processes is necessary. As a consequence, the procedural protocol (see chapter 6, pp. 88-125) represents an innovative issue in the Italian and Sardinian contexts where the participatory practices do not achieve a sound success. Indeed, it could be a useful and complementary tool to define shared strategies and effective planning decisions.

According to this conceptual framework, the thesis has the following structure:

1. introduction;
2. literature review;
3. research strategy, design and methods;
4. the Sardinian Regional Landscape Plan;
5. data analysis;
6. procedural protocol;
7. conclusions.

The literature review chapter analyzes the evolution of the concept of participation from the 1960s to nowadays, the current theoretical positions on participation reinterpreted through the methodological framework "theoretical and/or pragmatic considerations", the benefits and limitations of participatory practices and finally the



influences among politics, planning discipline and participation. The aim is to deeply understand the field of study in order to identify the critical points that the literature underlined and what contribution this research can make to deal with them. The second chapter describes the research strategy, design and methods, in order to define the methodological framework which the research is based on. The third chapter describes the Sardinian planning context and the participatory processes implemented during the elaboration and revision phases. The fourth chapter analyzes and interprets the data obtained through the chosen data collection methods with respect to the research questions. In the penultimate chapter, the procedural protocol is elaborated, describing the structure, the contents, the scope, the objectives and the integration between participatory practices and the planning processes at the regional scale. The last chapter analyzes the conclusive aspects concerning the research work. Moreover, it proposes some recommendations related to the discussed case study and the literature it is based on.

In conclusion, the aim of this dissertation is to analyze the problems of the participatory processes in the Sardinian territorial context in order to identify some contributions that could be included in the literature concerning the participatory practices in support of the decision-making processes.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Current society is characterized by a growing complexity, deriving from a somewhat forced coexistence between various interests and positions, represented by the ongoing social transformations. In a nutshell, society is characterized by a dichotomy between the public administrations and citizens. However, the crisis of the public administration legitimacy in terms of people's needs fulfilment, and the incapacity to communicate in a constructive way has determined a widespread crisis concerning regional and urban planning (Friedmann, 1993. p. 16). On the other hand, it is clear that stakeholders are increasingly involved in planning processes. Therefore, the issue of public participation becomes central in the scientific debate concerning the planning discipline. As a consequence, the participation debate is now quite familiar among planners, academics, and researchers.

From this conceptual viewpoint, this chapter aims at situating theoretical perspectives in relation to participatory processes within a methodological framework in order to define the research context. The chapter is structured in five sections. In the first, the evolution of the concept of participation is analyzed in order to identify the different phases that have entailed its current meaning. In the second paragraph, the different current theoretical positions with respect to participatory practices are examined in order to clarify the opinions of different scholars about the current conception of the participatory processes. The third considers both benefits and limitations of participatory practices. Indeed, the aim is to identify, on the one hand, the motivations that entail the use of this type of practices in support of the decision-making processes, and, on the other hand, the problems that can also be noticed in the case study. The fourth section analyses the correlations and interactions among politicians, planning processes and participatory practices, in order to evaluate the influences and the impacts of political decisions on the planning and participatory processes and vice versa. The last paragraph concerns the concluding remarks where the final considerations are explained in order to emphasise key theoretical and practical aspects.

## 2.1. THE EVOLUTION OF CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATION

The concept of participation is characterized by a long and complex history. From this point of view, this paragraph aims at examining and interpreting the evolution of the concept of participation from the 1960s to nowadays in order to define the historical scenarios that have entailed the current positions on participation and the participatory processes.

First of all, the concept of participation is closely connected to the idea of democracy. This concept derives from the Greek words “*δῆμος*” (people) and “*κράτος*” (power). Moreover, although its etymological meaning is people’s power, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive definition of democracy owing to the complex conceptual nature of the term. Indeed, this ambiguity has repercussions on the role that citizens have to play in the decision-making processes (Held 1997, pp. 15-16). As a consequence, public participation in the decision-making processes is considered a part of the definition of democracy. Indeed, it represents a prerogative of Western nations (Creighton 2005, p. 1).

In addition, the concept of participation is in a continuous progress and one of the main challenges is to implement it into practice. Indeed, according to Reed (2008), it is possible to recognize five main phases of the evolution of the concept of participation in terms of contents and meaning, as follows:

1. anti-modernisation critique;
2. involvement of different perspectives in planning;
3. participation as a prerequisite in the sustainable development agenda;
4. critique and disillusionment with respect to participation’s effectiveness ;
5. revision of the participatory practices.

In the late 1960s, the participatory practices represented a form of protest or a critique of modern society due to two processes that Van Tatenhove and Lerroy (2003) call “political modernisation” and “policy arrangements”. In particular, the political modernisation entailed a change in the planning policies, ensuing the coexistence of traditional and experimental policy arrangements. Indeed, the rise of new coalitions of actors who had the capacity to mobilise resources and to modify the rules implied a search for new strategies and styles of governance, characterized by a polycentric networks of stakeholders. In a nutshell, the social and political changes and the interactions and interrelations among different actors and stakeholders have

increased the awareness about the importance of the participation practices in support of the decision-making processes.

In the 1970s, the necessity of participatory practices within the planning processes became more evident in relation to two interconnected issues. First of all, politicians, economists and planners took decisions that affect people in relation to their physical environment, where they live and work, and in terms of their welfare and quality of life. Secondly, these decisions were taken without any form of participation or informative phase on their effects on the communities. However, although new public policies created opportunities of participation for both single and organized citizens in relation to the decision-making processes, they concerned only the relations between public administrations and citizens or the civic society. In other words, despite the increasing awareness of incorporating the local perspectives into the planning discipline, the time was not ripe for granting the implementation of effective participatory processes (Reed, 2008).

In the late 1980s and in the 1990s, not only were the planning system and the entire society facing globalisation and the consequent crossing of the national borders in terms of economic, social and cultural relations, but also they dealt with the process of making the politics more equalitarian through a horizontal process of power control. Moreover, the planning processes were influenced by a shift from government, characterized by hierarchical and well-institutionalised forms of governmental practices and politics, to governance, which entails less strict planning practices are interdependence among different viewpoints (Tatenhove and Lerroy, 2003).

Moreover, nowadays the concept of participation has increasingly been used as a prerequisite in the sustainable development agenda. Indeed, its importance was put in evidence, for example, by the Principle no. 22 of the Declaration of Rio of 1992. Here, participation is viewed as a necessary condition to achieve sustainable development (United Nations, 1992). From this perspective, during the last forty years of the twentieth century participation was optimistically considered as a necessary tool to achieve sustainable development and to face the challenges that affect the social, cultural and economic spheres of the societal contexts. This viewpoint is well summarized by the work of the World Bank (1994), where participation represents a process in which stakeholders can gain or share control over decisions that affect their lives.

However, as Cooke and Kothari (2001) suggest, the concept of participation shows some limitations and critical points. Indeed, they argue that the participation can encourage the tyranny defined as “...*the illegitimate and/or unjust exercise of power...*” (Cooke and Kothari, 2001, p. 4). In other words, they claim that although shared knowledge, negotiation of power relations, and political activism are spontaneous forms of participation, these participatory approaches can reinforce oppressions and injustices. For example, participatory processes sometimes are conducted by governments in order to legitimate their decisions without a real involvement of different viewpoints. Indeed, these processes involve only public institutions, which do not always reflect the interests and perspectives of communities that they represent.

Therefore, it is possible to summarise two main critical positions. The first concerns the technical limitations of participatory approaches, emphasizing the need for a review of the methodological tools. The second focuses on the theoretical, political and conceptual limitations that characterize these approaches. In other words, despite the fact that some authors detect the limitations of participatory practices in the inappropriateness and ineffectiveness of methods and tools, other authors argue that the limitations derive from a prior problem. Indeed, political issues compromise the effectiveness of the participatory processes due to the politicians' distorted vision of participation, which negatively influences the theoretical and conceptual way in which the participatory processes are conceived. Moreover, Cooke and Kothari (2001, pp. 7-8) identify two types of tyrannies: “...*the tyranny of decision-making and control...*” that refers to the question “*Do participatory facilitators override existing legitimate decision-making processes?*”, and “...*the tyranny of the group...*” that concerns the following question “*Do group dynamics lead to participatory decisions that reinforce the interests of the already powerful?*”. The first tyranny focuses on the failure of participatory practices in reversing the top-down approaches within the planning processes. Indeed, participatory planning tends to acquire and manipulate the knowledge rather than incorporate the communities' experiences and skills within the processes. In a nutshell, it represents a distorted and only apparent negotiation of opinions within policy debates. The second typology of tyranny concerns the incapacity of participatory approaches to take account of the existing inequalities within the communities, reinforcing the current power relations rather than empowering the marginalized groups.

The last phase is characterized by an increasing awareness of the limitations and mistakes of the previous periods, making a revision of the theoretical positions on participation. Indeed, Hickey and Mohan (2005) go beyond the contemporary critiques of participation, seeking to identify a new methodology through the interpretation and the contextualization of the current participatory approaches. Their idea derives from two important issues. First of all, the concept of participation should be ideologically explicit and coherently connected to a local development theory. Secondly, it is necessary to involve multilevel and multi scale strategies that transcend the individualisms and the localisms. Moreover, these objectives can be achieved through the citizenship, since *“...People adhere to decisions and share responsibility precisely because they have participated in the discussion rather than being bound or obliged by law...”* ( Hickey and Mohan, 2005, p. 65).

In conclusion, the concept of participation has evolved during the last century from an optimistic and ideological conception to a more conscious interpretation and implementation into planning and development processes.

## **2.2. THE CURRENT THEORETICAL POSITIONS ON PARTICIPATION**

The previous paragraph explained how the concept of participation evolved from the 1960s to nowadays, where the problematic nature of public participation is evident. Moreover, as Innes and Booher (2004, p. 419) argue, *“It is time to face facts we know, but prefer to ignore. Legally required methods of public participation in government decision-making...do not work...”*. Indeed, these methods do not involve the implementation of genuine participatory processes. Moreover, they sometimes entail antagonisms between planners and participants, and within the same group of citizens.

From this conceptual viewpoint, this paragraph aims at analysing current theoretical positions concerning an analytical framework that could represent the foundation of the presentation and the examination of the Sardinian case study. Indeed, the concept of participation has been applied to different contexts, where a wide range of ideological, social, political and methodological meanings were considered. In addition, the literature highlights how public participation in planning is a frequently disputed issue due to its ambivalent nature within the public administration (King et al., 1998). Indeed, according to Innes and Booher (2004), the

concept of participation possesses an intrinsic dualistic character owing to the existence of paradoxes, dilemmas and ambivalences within its definition. In particular, this research intends to focus on the dualism represented by the distinction between theoretical and/or practical questions (see table 1). The former concerns the concept of participation as a democratic right. Meanwhile, the latter focuses on participation as a means to improve the quality of decisions. As a consequence, this paragraph is divided into two parts. In the first, the viewpoints of different authors who conceive the inclusiveness character of public planning practices as a democratic right or a tool very useful to obtain specific goals are analysed in order to understand the difference between these two points of view (see table 1).

<b>Perspectives</b>	<b><i>Theoretical</i></b>	<b><i>Practical</i></b>
<i>Definition</i>	Participation as a democratic right	Participation as a mean in order to improve the decision quality
<i>Examples</i>	Arnstein (1969): the ladder of participation	Michener (1998): participation is based on the goals for which it is used.
		Rowe and Fewer (2000): participation is based on the nature of the public engagement

**Table 1 Theoretical versus pragmatic perspectives**

The second part concerns a discussion on the perspectives of different academicians who conceptualise this ambivalence within the concept of participation. The aim is to examine the several dimensions implied by this specific issue.

**2.2.1. PARTICIPATION AS A DEMOCRATIC RIGHT OR AS A MEAN TO IMPROVE THE DECISION QUALITY**

In relation to the first part, this paragraph analyses, from the theoretical viewpoint, participation as a continuously evolving process (Arnstein, 1996), and from the practical perspective, participation as a process based on direction of communication flows elaborated by Rowe and Fewer (2000), and participation based on goals for what it is used (Michener, 1998).

First of all, one of the pioneering viewpoint on participation is its conception as a democratic right (Arnstein, 1969, p. 216) who defines participation as “...a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be

*deliberately included in the future...*". From this perspective, the definition of participation entails the concept of democracy. Indeed, strategies and policies can be democratic whether the interests of all the stakeholders are included within the planning process through a direct involvement of citizens. Moreover, the participatory processes represent a strategy that allows excluded citizens to be involved in the planning processes. Indeed, people can play a role in the identification of objectives and policies, acquiring their own part of benefits in the affluent society. However, it is necessary a power reallocation, otherwise the participatory processes would be empty. Indeed, although power holders could claim that all parts are involved, only some stakeholders have the real possibility to benefit from these processes. Moreover, Arnstein (1969) identifies different degrees of public involvement on a continuum. Indeed, the Arnstein's ladder of participation is composed of eight rungs that are grouped together into three macro levels: non participation, tokenism and citizen power. Each of them represents the power degree that is held by individuals. The lower levels of the ladder are manipulation and therapy. These two rungs represent a false participation. Indeed, manipulation biases the concept of participation because those who hold the power aim at leading citizens in order to build a basis for greater consensus. Therapy considers the lack of power as a psychological problem that needs to be cured through group therapies. Informing, consultation and placation represent the "tokenism" level. Here, participation is purely formal because citizens are informed but there is no guarantee that their opinion will be really taken into account. Partnership, delegated power and citizen control represent the tallest rungs of the ladder. They represent the real citizen power or control on decision-making aspects of the planning processes (Arnstein, 1969).

On the other hand, from the pragmatic point of view, participation can be analysed in relation to the goals for which it is used. For example, Michener (1998) studies the concept of participation through the distinction between planner-centred and people-centred participation. From the planners' viewpoint, public participation can represent a legitimate form of planning objectives, because their primary outcomes concern administrative and financial efficiency. Indeed, if community participate actively, the acceptance process of new policies could become easier. On the other hand, the people-centred perspective focuses on participation as a means in order to meet local needs and at the same time as a process which can empowers the marginalized groups through enhancement of local management capacity and



increasing the community consciousness. From this perspective, the planner-centred participation has top-down interests versus the bottom-up, because are preferred in the context of people-centred participation (Michener, 1998).

Moreover, Rowe and Fewer (2000) analyze the participatory approaches or methods in relation to the nature of the public engagement. Indeed, they identify the communication between experts and the public as the lowest level of public involvement, due to a top-down and one-way communication flow. Meanwhile, the pursuit of active participation in the decision-making processes, such as public input or opinion, represents the highest level. Indeed, the latter is characterized by a two-way dialogue among participants, where information is exchanged. From this perspective, the role of communication assumes an important significance. Indeed, according to Healey (1996), the participatory processes should be defined in connection with three characteristics: communication style, language and attention, and importance. Each person who is involved in the participatory processes should be identified with reference to these characteristics. Planners should define the planning processes in a communicative context, by trying to involve as many people as possible. Decisions and planning implementation should derive from these processes. Otherwise, decisions and results could possibly prove ineffective. On the other hand, the possibility to have an input into the decision-making processes represents the key concept that differentiates participatory practices from other strategies of information sharing (Rowe and Fewer, 2000).

### **2.2.2. PARTICIPATION: AN EMBLEMATIC CONCEPT BETWEEN THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES**

The ambivalence of the theoretical and practical perspectives on participation has been conceptualized by different authors who analyse the same concepts using a different terminology. For example, Beierle (2002) conceives this distinction as political versus technical. Indeed, he suggests that the decision-making processes need both political and scientific decisions in the stakeholders' involvement, because science is not able to address and resolve this kind of problems by itself.

In addition, Day (1997) examines the ambivalent concept of participation as bureaucracy versus democracy. From this perspective, participatory processes could be seen either as bureaucratic dominated or as a democracy generating activity. So, the increasingly-culturally and technologically-advanced societies require more

rationally-organized activities and decisions from the bureaucracy on one hand, and more inclusiveness and democracy on the other. Moreover, it is easy to understand how democracy and bureaucracy are dependent on each other, and at the same time, disconnected. Therefore, although bureaucracy supports democracy through the management of its programs, it represents a cause of conflicts and tensions within a democratic governance system. Indeed, Day (1997, p. 429) argues that *"...under the present, rather inconsistent democratic rules, bureaucracy is supposed to be both independent and subservient, and both politicized and no-politicized at the same time..."*. Moreover, democracy diverges from bureaucracy in different ways. First of all, democracy entails the concept of inclusiveness, meanwhile bureaucracy implies selectiveness. Secondly, democracy involves slow and complicated participatory processes. On the other hand, bureaucratic activities demand flexibility and speed (Beneviste, 1989). As a consequence, this apparently conflicting relation should be dealt with through a process where the communities' interests are protected by elected representatives who grant the democratic dimension. Meanwhile, strategies and policies are implemented through bureaucratic activities.

In addition, the ambivalence between theoretic and practical issues is analysed by Innes and Booher (2000). They examine the role of participatory practices within four planning models: technical/bureaucratic, political, social and collaborative. In particular, the first two can represent a pragmatic perspective, where participation is viewed as a duty in relation to the requirement of the law, and as a way to improve the decision quality through a better understanding of communities' values. The last two arise from the necessity to involve some marginalized groups in order to guarantee that all the interests could be incorporated within the decision-making processes.

In conclusion, each of these authors provides an important and significant interpretation of the intrinsic ambivalence in the definition of participation. Moreover, although these conceptualisations analyse the same relation between theoretical and/or pragmatic considerations, they highlight important dimensions of the same analytical framework that represents a significant antecedent in relation to the Sardinian case study. Indeed, the dual vision of participation based on the impartial fulfilment of a democratic right and the achievement of biased benefits is traceable in the Sardinian RLP. Moreover, although the two interpretations are clearly evident in the Sardinian case study, this ambivalence is not so much distinct as well

**2.3. BENEFITS AND LIMITS OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES**

The involvement of communities in support of the decision-making processes can entail benefits and at the same time some negative aspects. In particular, this paragraph intends to examine the advantages and the disillusionments or problems that should probably be tackled in the implementation of the participatory processes. Moreover, the benefits are analysed in relation to the analytical framework that is characterised by the dualism between theoretical and pragmatic issues concerning participation (see table 2), developed in the previous paragraph (see paragraph 2.2, pp. 10-14).

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
<i>Theoretical issues</i>	Inclusion of different perspectives in defining problems which affect the society
	Effectiveness of decision or policy
	Transparency of process
	Promotion of social learning
<i>Pragmatic issues</i>	Better understanding of a community’s needs
	Greater consensus among participants
	Higher quality information

**Table 2 Benefits of participatory processes in relation to democracy and equity and pragmatic issues**

The first positive aspect is closely connected to the concepts of democracy and equity. Indeed, participation approaches offer the possibility to reduce the risk to have marginalized groups. In other words, participation allows the involvement of groups and individuals who have an interest in the planning processes, avoiding that the positions of weaker groups are not taken into account. An active participation of stakeholders on the decision-making processes can promote benefits and advantages for the wider society (Reed, 2008). The need of a participatory democracy is connected to social trends such as sustainable development, partnership working, the disillusionments of public on the objectivity of science and the challenges of conventional forms of political representation. From this perspective, participation in the decision-making processes represents a democratic right. Moreover, society demands new relationships that have to be both vertical and horizontal. In other words, vertical relationships concern communication and interaction between public institutions that have a higher hierarchical position compared to other stakeholders in the planning processes. Meanwhile, the horizontal relationships concern the communication and interaction among citizens and

individuals. Richards et al. (2004) suggest three principal issues about the necessity of participation in the decision-making processes. The first concerns the inclusion of different perspectives in defining problems that affect the society. Moreover, the second benefit is connected to effectiveness of the planning decisions and implementation. Indeed, the latter has more probabilities of success if it is supported by a broader coalition. Moreover, the involvement of citizens in the planning processes allows anticipating unpopular and ineffective policies and strategies, reducing the costs and the time of the processes (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). In addition, the third advantage concerns the transparency of the processes. Indeed, the involvement of conflicting perspectives and claims can increase public trust in the final results. Another important benefit that is linked to the theoretical perspective is the promotion of social learning. Indeed, the development of new relationships between stakeholders and the wider society can promote the mutual learning and the appreciation of legitimacy of different viewpoints. For example, Blackstock et al. (2007) suggest three reasons for the active involvement of the public and stakeholders. The first concerns the normative issue. Indeed, encouraging the mutual learning can enrich both society and individual citizens. The second question is linked to a greater efficiency in identifying and selecting appropriate solutions. The third is an instrumental reason, because collaborative relationships can reduce conflicts. In other words, the management of the participatory processes provides information about local planning contexts and allows implementing more effective action strategies. From this point of view, participation could give a solid foundation to planning strategies and it can narrow the local conflicts.

The second typology of benefits is connected to practical arguments. They focus on the quality and durability of the decisions, which are analyzed through the involvement of stakeholders in its wider sense. In other words, it promotes a better understanding of communities' needs, so that decisions could meet population demands in the most proper way. Indeed, participation can allow adapting better interventions to local, social and cultural conditions. In this way, it is possible to meet local needs and priorities and to enhance consensus among citizens and other stakeholders (Reed, 2007). Moreover, participation provides higher quality information inputs, which are essential in order to include different perspectives and viewpoints. As a consequence, participation allows increasing the effectiveness in meeting local needs and priorities. Indeed, the involvement of a wider number of

stakeholders can produce more complete information, which represents a prerequisite in order to anticipate possible negative outcomes. In other words, coordination of all the stakeholders who participate in the planning processes is fundamental since the impacts of their actions could be completely out-of-control otherwise. This could possibly cause ineffectiveness and/or inefficiency of the planning processes. In addition, although ethical considerations could also apply, they could be considered less important, in this specific context. Moreover, participation can increase trust among participants and legitimacy among different perspectives which can lead to a sense of ownership over the processes and the results (Reeds, 2008).

However, an increasing disillusionment amongst practitioners, stakeholders and the wider public could possibly grow. Indeed, Richards et al. (2004) argue that this widespread disillusionment concerns three important questions: how, when and why participatory approaches are adopted. They emphasize the need for a more selective approach to choose participatory methods in order to identify situations where the participants' contribution can represent a successful factor to implement results. Moreover, participatory practices show different problems, such as costs of the processes in terms of money and time, citizen disinterest and ineffectiveness. From this perspective, Bobbio (2004) argues that four questions have to be taken into account in order to guarantee the effectiveness of the processes, as follows:

- a. in what circumstances;
- b. when, in which stage of the planning processes;
- c. who are the participants;
- d. methods and techniques to involve the stakeholders.

Indeed, Bobbio (2004) suggests that an inclusive process could be effective in relation to two cases: the presence of strong or potential conflicts, such as the syndrome of NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) or the lack of essential resources to make decisions. In addition as Kothari (2001) claims, the empowerment of marginalized groups, which are group without a real decision power, may interact with existing power framework in an unexpected and negative way. As a consequence, the participatory processes can encourage existing privileged groups and discourage the expression of minority perspectives, creating a dysfunction of the consensus within the groups (Cooke and Kothari, 2001).

Moreover, although people have the possibility to participate they do not always actively do it due to different reasons. First of all, citizens participate actively when they have a real interest. Secondly, people must perceive that they can really influence the decisions. As a result, citizens do not perceive their role as necessary in order to improve the decision-making processes. Moreover, despite the common belief that public participation is egalitarian, in practice it is characterized by social inequalities, such as the level of education. Indeed, the ability to participate depends on different variables, such as race, income and education, which can influence the real possibility to participate (Chabot and Duhaime, 1998). In addition, motivation, skills and resources are not equally distributed. Moreover, planning issues show a certain degree of technical complexity that can inhibit citizen participation, in particular in situations characterized by the lack of skilled facilitators. Other factors that discourage the participation are overwhelming personal needs, low sense of effectiveness and distrust of bureaucracy (Sanoff, 2000).

In conclusion, public participation has twofold levels of benefits and problems in relation to the planning processes and/or the results of the processes, and two categories of beneficiaries: government and citizens.

#### **2.4. POLITICAL INFLUENCES, PLANNING DECISIONS AND PARTICIPATION**

Since the birth of the modern planning theory, when the capitalist system and the increasing growth of the middle class have faced the contradictions of the urban development models, shifting from the project to the plan, the political science has overlapped the methodological and conceptual field of the planning discipline and vice versa, entailing sharp conflicts and strong complicity (McLoughlin, 1969). Indeed, for example, Tugwell (1939), one of the main American practitioners of the contemporary planning, defined planning as “the Fourth Power” of government, which should represent a new social policy that should contrast the political expediency through a greater awareness by the side of planners (Tugwell and Banfield, 1951).

From this perspective, in 1960s and 1970s the planning discipline acquired an increasing political nature owing to the awareness that planning choices influenced the political system and vice versa (Friedmann, 1987; Davoudi 2006). Moreover, in the late 1980s and in the 1990s, both the planning system and the society were

challenged by the horizontalisation of politics concerning a more equalitarian management of power, which was characterised by a shift from government to governance. Indeed, the former was defined by hierarchical and well-institutionalised forms of governmental practices and politics. Meanwhile, the latest was characterized by less-strict planning practices through an interdependence of different viewpoints (Van Tatenhove and Leroy, 2003).

In this conceptual framework, entailing direct implications on future social and political developments of an area, planning discipline is firmly bound up with political science. Indeed, each planning act is a political action for two reasons. First of all, who takes decisions in the planning processes is a public authority. Secondly, plans, based on zoning, entail the definition of values in the community through their physical space. Indeed, defining an area as residential rather than as agricultural changes the qualitative and quantitative value of the zone (Chiodelli, 2009). From this perspective, planning is subordinated to political constraints and, at the same time, it is shaped by the political system (Scott, 1972). As a consequence, participation represents the link between politics and planning. Indeed, the civil society changes the decision-making processes into dynamic processes (Tudor, 2009).

In addition, according to some authors (Flyvbjerg, 1998; Harvey, 1989) the activity of planning is excluded from the power, representing a kind of victim of the power. On the other hand, other scholars (Booher and Innes, 2002; Forester, 1989) believe that planning can exercise power through the communication with citizens and officials of public administrations. In that way, planners should attract great attention in relation to particular issues.

In conclusion, despite the fact that international conferences such as the Rio Summit in 1992 emphasized the concept of participation in the decision-making processes, governments at any level sometimes influence the planning choices in order to obtain a greater consensus among citizens. Indeed, national, regional and urban planning choices, expressed through plans and programs, could have both negative and positive effects on the social, political and economic spheres of a community.

## **2.5. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The concept of participation reveals a significant evolution from a form of protest against the modern society to a way to legitimate the existing power relationships. Moreover, although the acknowledgement of the limits and criticisms related to the participatory processes, the idea of participation as a democratic prerequisite, continues to be dominant within the literature. Indeed, Arnstein considers participation as a continuous and improvement based processes with different levels of participation from the lowest to the highest. On the other hand, the ladder of participation was interpreted by different authors in different ways. Wilcox (1994) adopts an impartial value judgement. Indeed, he thinks that each level is appropriate to meet the community interests and expectations at different times. From this perspective, Wilcox indicates that awareness about the limitations of participation is needed. As a consequence, the inclusive moments cannot solve all the problems of the planning processes. On the other hand, Arnstein developed his theory in 1969, when participation was viewed as a critique to modern society, and the time was not ripe to understand both the real importance and the limitations of the participatory processes.

Moreover, Rowe and Fewer analyze the participatory processes in relation to direction of communication flows. However, although it is necessary a two-way dialogue among participants, this situation does not guarantee a real participation. Moreover, the lack of awareness and willingness to conduct a real participatory process could entail a multi directional communication only among strong stakeholders. Indeed, as Cooke and Kothari (2001) suggest, participatory practices sometimes can reinforce the existing power relationships. On the other hand, under no circumstances should the idea of implementing the participatory processes in support of the decision-making processes be shelved. Indeed, although their ineffectiveness could cause reverse effects with respect to the goals of participation, citizens' inclusiveness represents a necessary prerequisite. However, real awareness about the importance of participation and on the other hand an effective consciousness that the participatory processes cannot solve all the problems is also very important. Therefore, the concept of participation has an ambivalent nature that is evident in the daily experiences. This dualism reflects the difficulty of translating theoretical participatory processes into practice due to the controversial relations



between theoretical considerations based on the idea of democracy and equity and pragmatic issues.

Moreover, the participatory processes imply an ethical consideration. Indeed, in the literature review participation is viewed as a democratic right. On the other hand, stakeholders do not always participate actively due to a disinterest or a lack of a real utility of the processes. As a consequence, participating in the decision-making processes should represent a right and also a duty.

In conclusion, the participation is a very complex concept in continuous evolution. Its actual meaning and explanation has been composed by different contributions of different authors. From this perspective, as Hickey and Mohan (2005) suggest “learning from failing” could represent an important factor in the implementation of the participatory processes.

### **3. RESEARCH STRATEGIES, DESIGN AND METHODS**

The implementation of social research entails the definition of three significant aspects: research strategy, design and methods. Moreover, different types of strategies, designs and methods exist. Their analysis represents an important step in order to elaborate an appropriate and effective social research.

This chapter aims at defining the methodological framework that represents the basis of the research proposal. In particular, the chapter discusses the key questions concerning the choice of a specific research strategy in the first paragraph. The second and the third paragraphs analyse research design and methods. The final section contains the concluding remarks. In addition, each paragraph is structured in two parts: the reasons and the framework of the research strategy, design and methods.

#### **3.1. RESEARCH STRATEGY**

In relation to the methodological issues of social research, two main strategies exist: quantitative and qualitative. This paragraph aims at analysing the differences among these research strategies in order to identify the motivations of the final choice.

First of all, the differences between qualitative and quantitative research strategies are not significant. Indeed, it is possible to combine methods that are traditionally associated with one of the two strategies. For example, it is possible to triangulate different methods within a quantitative or qualitative research in order to corroborate findings. Moreover, in relation to the nature of the research approach implemented in the thesis, the triangulation of different methods within a qualitative research strategy represents the best option. In this paragraph, motivations, reasons and framework, linked to this particular choice, are analyzed in order to better understand the nature and the purposes of this research proposal.

According to Bryman (2008), despite the traditional distinction, quantitative and qualitative strategies diverge in relation to three important comparative aspects: the role of theory in connection to the research, epistemological and ontological orientations. First of all, in relation to the first issue, the quantitative research strategy is based on a deductive approach meanwhile the qualitative research strategy uses induction. In a nutshell, the latter considers findings as input and theory as output. On the other hand, the deductive approach follows the opposite process. Due to the

complexity of the research proposal concerning participatory processes in support of decision-making processes, findings, in general, represent important inputs. Indeed, the concept of participation, as explained in the literature review (see chapter 2, pp. 6-21), entails different issues based on subjectivity and/or objectivity. For example, the importance to involve stakeholders in the decision-making processes is an objective necessity. Indeed, the implementation of participatory practices is absolutely useful and necessary in order to make the planning process effective and transparent. However, the participatory processes need to be grounded on a sound basis that is connected with theory. Indeed, as it is explained in the literature review chapter (see chapter 2, pp. 6-21), the meaning of participation has historically evolved. Nowadays, the awareness of the past failures of participatory processes is evident. As a result, participatory practices need to be adjusted and adapted in connection to past failures. On the other hand, for instance, participants' responses to their involvement in the planning processes reveal a subjective nature. Indeed, one of the main problems in the failure of participatory experiences is represented by the disengagement of people or groups who should participate in the processes. From this perspective, it is necessary to have both a strong theoretical basis and a deepened knowledge, in terms of social behaviours, about the specific context in which the participatory processes have to be implemented. However, a qualitative research strategy allows identifying the problems in relation to the Sardinian Regional Landscape Plan (RLP) in order to identify possible issues and recommendations that could be useful in relation to a comprehensive theory of participation.

From the epistemological orientation perspective, quantitative research strategy is based on positivist position meanwhile the qualitative research strategy moves towards the interpretivism position. The latest rejects the practices of positivism because it emphasizes the ways in which people interpret their social world. Therefore, interpretivism reflects the aims of the research proposal. Indeed, as emphasized by the literature review (see chapter 2, pp. 6-21), the concept of participation reveals an intrinsic ambivalent nature due to the coexistence of theoretical and practical issues. The former are connected to the role of laws and regulations that highlight the concept of participation as a democratic right, and do not identify a clear and sound framework of the participatory processes within the decision-making processes. The latter are linked to a subjective character that is represented by stakeholders in terms of human behaviours. As a result, not only

does the research proposal explain the stakeholders' behaviours, but also it aims at interpreting and understanding them. For this reason, the interpretation of the reality by different social groups represents a prerequisite. Indeed, when all actors have the same views on particular cultural, social, and economic phenomena, the participatory processes will not be necessary, because one of the main objectives of these processes is to guarantee the involvement of the different stakeholders' viewpoints.

Moreover, in relation to the third aspect, that is the ontological question, constructivism represents the best choice. Indeed, the concept of participation is continuously evolving. In addition, the Sardinian case study (see chapter 4, pp. 33-49) also reveals a change in the participatory processes. Indeed, the Sardinian RLP developed through two distinct stages: the elaboration phase, during which the RLP was elaborated, and a second step, where the plan was revised. Moreover, as explained in the data analysis (see chapter 5, pp. 50-87) the effectiveness of the two inclusive processes was influenced by the participants' behaviours. From this perspective, the ontological objectivist position of the quantitative research strategy is not appropriate. Indeed, the social actors had active roles in the participatory processes. In other words, social phenomena are not an external reality which cannot be influenced.

In conclusion, in the research strategy of this proposal (see figure 1), the findings in relation to the Sardinian case study represent inputs.

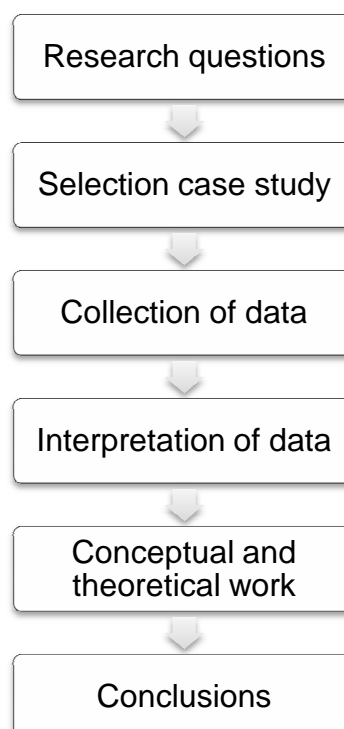


Figure 1 The main phases of the qualitative research strategy (adapted from Bryman, 2008)

These data are analysed and interpreted in order to examine both subjective and objective dimensions of the case study. As a result, it could be possible to verify if a correspondence exists between theory and a specific case study. Indeed, this purpose is closely connected to one of the most important selected aspects of the research area: the difficulty to apply theoretical aspects to practical cases in terms of participatory approaches in support of the decision making processes. The penultimate stage concerns a conceptual and theoretical work, where in relation to the inputs of the data analysis a procedural protocol is elaborated in order to integrate the participatory moments into the planning processes.

### **3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design allows defining a structure for collecting and analysing data. Moreover, different types of research design exist such as experimental, cross-sectional, longitudinal, case study and comparative. The choice of the research design is fundamental in order to identify the more appropriate methods. The research proposal is based on a case study design. This paragraph intends to analyse motivations, reasons and framework, linked to this particular choice, in order to define the best methodological framework.

From this perspective, a significant question rises from this choice: why just this research design? In order to provide a comprehensive explanation, it could be useful to analyse the other research designs, underlining their weaknesses in relation to the research proposal (see table 3). First of all, although the experimental design is very sound in terms of internal validity, it is not frequently used in social research due to its difficulty to manipulate independent variables. Moreover, in the specific case of the research proposal, different social groups are involved. Indeed, the planning processes, such as the elaboration of the RLP, require the involvement of different stakeholders who have specific, individual and sometimes opportunistic interests that go beyond the common good. In addition, the involved people belong to different social groups. As a consequence, it is easy to understand the practical difficulty to manipulate these variables. Secondly, the experimental design implies the replicability through time. However, the research proposal cannot be subject to replicability owing to the specific characteristics of the Sardinian case study. Indeed,

the elaboration and revision processes of the Sardinian RLP finished in 2006 and 2011 respectively.

In relation to the second research design, the longitudinal design is sometimes used as an extension of a cross-sectional design. However, its implementation within the social research is limited due to excessive time length and costs. Moreover, two typologies of longitudinal designs exist: panel study and cohort study. The former collects data at least during two occasions and from different types of cases. In the latter, people who have certain characteristics or experiences are involved. However, the research proposal does not intend to collect data in different times. In addition, belonging to the same local territory represents the only common characteristic or experience of participants.

The comparative design analyses two conflicting cases using the same methods. This research design is not appropriate to the research proposal because it concerns only one case. The choice to study only one case derives from two questions. First of all, the participatory processes are subject to a certain level of subjectivity. Indeed, the real and effective involvement of all stakeholders reflects specific characteristics of the communities that are taken into consideration. As a result, it could be useful to compare two Sardinian zones. However, Cagliari represents the most important and populated city in the Sardinia. Therefore, it has specific characteristics that are different from the other parts of the region, such as the uniqueness of the metropolitan area that is composed of Cagliari and the medium-small towns around it. Moreover, the main interests are concentrated in this province as well as the main regional services such as university, public institutions and central public administrations, and so on.

<b>Research Design</b>	<b>Weakness</b>	<b>Strength</b>
<i>Experimental</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manipulation problems of independent variables;</li> <li>• Replicability in the course of time;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong internal validity;</li> </ul>
<i>Longitudinal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time and cost;</li> <li>• Use of different types of case;</li> <li>• Use of people who share a specific characteristic;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow causal inferences</li> </ul>
<i>Comparative</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparison of conflicting cases</li> </ul>	

**Table 3 Weakness and strength of experimental, longitudinal and comparative research designs in relation to the research proposal**

In relation to the previous considerations, the case study design represents the best choice, concerning the complexity and particular nature of the Sardinian case study. Moreover, the case study designs investigate a single event, process or phenomenon within a specified period through a combination of data collection methods (Creswell, 1994). From this conceptual framework, Cagliari represents a critical case study in the Sardinian context due to the complexity of interests at stake. Indeed, the incapacity of managing the participatory processes in the elaboration phase compromised the effectiveness of the planning process. Indeed, the lack of a real involvement of stakeholders prevented the implementation of the RLP at the local level. Therefore, the choice of this specific research design reflects the aims and the structure of the research proposal.

In conclusion, the methodological framework is structured around different observations in relation to one case and a complex variable represented by the physical territory. Indeed, the chosen case represents a single event that concerns the problematic issues concerning the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases of the Sardinian RLP, in relation to the specific context of the administrative territory of Cagliari.

### **3.3. RESEARCH METHODS**

The third stage in relation to the implementation of social research is the methodological issue. In particular, as explained in the previous paragraphs (see paragraph 3.1 and 3.2 pp. 22-27), the research proposal is based on a qualitative research strategy and a case study design with a triangulation of different methods that traditionally are included in qualitative or quantitative research approaches. This paragraph aims at defining the methods that the research proposal intends to use, distinguishing between data collection and data analysis methods. Moreover, the motivations, reasons and frameworks, linked to this particular choice, are analyzed in order to define completely the methodology of the research proposal.

In relation to the data collection methods, although different instruments exist, such as questionnaires, interviews and observations, the research proposal uses two investigating tools: questionnaires and interviews. However, within each of these categories, the literature identifies different types of interviews and questionnaires. In particular, in relation to interviews, the research proposal implements data collection

through semi-structured interviews. This choice reflects different issues. First of all, one of the main purposes of the research proposal concerns the importance of interviewee's viewpoints. Meanwhile, a structured interview reflects in some way the researcher's vision. So, the research proposal intends to understand the aspects that may have impacts on the effectiveness of the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases without influencing the answers of the interviewees. Indeed, in qualitative research, the approach is not so much structured because the interviewees' viewpoints are the main focus. Moreover, the semi-structured interviews allow obtaining further information that is not strictly connected with the used schedule or model. Indeed, in this way it is possible to ask new questions in relation to the interviewees' replies. Therefore, the semi-structured interview method represents a more flexible instrument that allows obtaining subjective answers from the interviewees. Indeed, it is possible to identify significant issues that emerge during the interviews.

The semi-structured interviews involved eight participants: four academicians and four officials of the regional government (see table 4), in order to get in depth information from two different perspectives: the authority that organizes the participatory process and the experts who are involved in the planning and participatory processes. In particular, the category of academicians includes different educational figures, such as PhD student, professor, and researchers. The choice of these specific scholars is related to their knowledge about the specific case study of the Sardinian RLP due to their researches or personal interests. From this perspective, their levels of experience in the planning field and the age are different from each other. In relation to the second category, all the officials have an experience of more than five years in the regional government and their age varies between forty to sixty. On the other hand, this information is not detailed because the interviews have to be anonymous without the possibility of recognizing the interviewees. In addition, within the elaborated model of the interviews (see appendix, enclosure II, pp. 148-150), it is possible to identify two typologies of questions. The first concerns specific issues about the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases of the RLP. Meanwhile, the second regards general aspects concerning the modalities, tools and techniques that should be used in order to guarantee real participatory processes. These interviews were



conducted face to face with the aid of a digital recorder in order to avoid problems, such as misunderstanding or loss of fundamental information.

<b>Instruments</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Number of involved people</b>
<i>Semi-structured interview</i>	Academician	4
	Officials of regional government	4
<i>Self-completion questionnaire</i>	Official of local government	7
	Official of provincial government	1
	Technician of building enterprises	1
	Practitioners	7
	Member of environmentalist organisation	2
	Technician of other public institutions	1

**Table 4 Identification of participant in terms of categories, number and data collection methods**

For what concerns the analysis of data, the results of the semi-structured interviews are interpreted through a thematic analysis. This approach allows constructing a matrix of central themes and subthemes that represent the result of the reading and re-reading of the transcripts of the interviews. Moreover, Ryan and Bernard (2003) suggest thinking carefully about some important aspects in choosing the themes, such as repetitions, similarities and differences, linguistic connectors, transitions and so on. In particular, three significant themes (see appendix, enclosure III, pp. 151-164) were emphasized by the interviewees as follows:

- a. typology of the participatory processes;
- b. benefits of the participatory processes;
- c. problems of participatory processes.

In addition, each theme is composed of subthemes (see table 5).

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Subtheme</b>
<i>Typology of the participatory processes</i>	Elaboration phase of the RLP
	Revision phase of the RLP
<i>Benefits of the participatory processes</i>	Promotion of social learning
	Better understanding of community's needs
	Higher quality information
<i>Problems of the participatory processes</i>	Political and administrative issues
	Management and organizational issues
	Technical issues concerning methods and techniques

**Table 5 Themes and subthemes used in the thematic analysis**

In relation to the second data collection method, the research proposal use self-completion questionnaires that were administered by email through the use of the Internet. This choice arises from both time and economic considerations. First of all, the use of the Internet entails immediacy of responses from participants. Secondly, no money was spent as in the case of postal questionnaires. However, this type of instruments implies an intrinsic uncertainty about the effective responses of participants. On the other hand, the research proposal aims at identifying various categories of participants such as officials of local and provincial governments, practitioners, technicians of building enterprises, members of environmentalist organisations and other public institutions, in order to include different viewpoints (see table 4). Moreover, no personal information on respondents was requested due to a specific reason. Indeed, the collection of personal information did not guarantee the anonymity of involved people, in particular in relation to technicians of small municipalities. The model of the questionnaires is composed of three sections. In the first, the questions aim at obtaining general information about participatory approaches used in the elaboration and revision phases of the RLP. The second and the third sections concern the specific processes used during the two phases. Moreover, questionnaires are structured around closed questions with a vertical format, identifying the response sets in a linkert scale from one to five (see appendix, enclosure I, pp. 136-147). In particular, the number five and four represent satisfaction in relation to different aspects of the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases of the RLP. Meanwhile, low numbers, such as one and two, indicate a low satisfaction. However, the results of the questionnaires

were assessed through a statistical analysis, in order to support inferences coming from the interviews. In other words, the data of the questionnaires are used to confirm or reject the concepts and theories of interviews.

### 3.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

As explained in the previous paragraph, the research is based on a qualitative research strategy and a case study design. Moreover, the data are collected through semi-structured interviews, which are typical of qualitative strategy, and self-completion questionnaires, which are used in quantitative research. However, the social research involved different problems and challenges.

First of all, although the preliminary purpose was to involve more participants in term of number, participation was not complete (see table 6). On the other hand, qualitative research strategy tends to use small-sized samples for different reasons. Indeed, values, beliefs and attitudes, which are the most aspects within a qualitative research, are not equally distributed in the society. Secondly, sociologists argue (Marshall, 1996) that not all people are able to observe, understand and interpret their own and other people's behaviours. From this perspective, the size of sample is related to the possibility to adequately answer to research questions (Marshall, 1996).

<b>Category of participants</b>	<b>Theoretic number of involved people</b>	<b>Real number of involved people</b>
<i>Academicians</i>	4	4
<i>Officials of the Regional government</i>	4	4
<i>Officials of provincial government</i>	4	1
<i>Officials of local governments</i>	13	7
<i>Technicians of building enterprises</i>	4	1
<i>Practitioners</i>	10	7
<i>Members of environmental organisations</i>	4	2
<i>Officials of other public institutions</i>	4	1

**Table 6 Theoretic and real number of people involved in the social research through interviews and questionnaires**

However, although the reduced number of participants in relation to some categories could represent a negative aspect that could compromise the results of the research proposal, the viewpoints of a category invited to participate in the inclusive processes was granted in some way by the officials of the local municipalities. Moreover, academicians are expertise bearer within the social research and may probably express unbiased points of views. From this perspective, their involvement was fundamental.

Moreover, as the table 6 shows, participation with respect to the interviews is complete. On the contrary, participation concerning the questionnaires is only partial due to different reasons. First of all, the period was not optimal. Indeed, in July and August many officials of the provincial government and local municipalities were on holiday. Meanwhile, officials, who were not on holiday, were not able to analyze the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases of the RLP due to lack of knowledge about this issue or lack of information. Indeed, in the small municipalities there is only one person who knows and treats issues such as planning and participatory processes. In other words, the management team of the local municipalities is composed by very few people and each of them covers specific issues, such as public and private housing. On the other hand, big municipalities and the provincial government have much more employees and officials. However, their number is directly proportional to overwhelming task due to the larger the territories. From this perspective, they did not have time or interest in filling the questionnaires. Moreover, the majority of the local municipalities accepted to participate in the social research in the first place. However, at the end, although contacted several times, being every time the will to be involved confirmed, they did not give any feedback. In addition, although the elaboration of the RLP echoed to the public opinion, these repercussions concerned only some practical aspects concerning single interests, such as the impossibility to build in new settlements at particular locations.

In conclusion, the practical part of the research proposal does not imply the recognition of important problems. Indeed, the interviews and the questionnaires provided useful and detailed information about the issues concerning the research proposal. Indeed, the interviewees have highlighted important and significant aspects that balanced the problems of the partial involvement of the questionnaire's respondents.

## **4. SARDINIAN REGIONAL LANDSCAPE PLAN (RLP)**

Nowadays, participatory approaches in support of the decision-making processes represent a goal of institutions, organizations and public administration bodies at any level. However, it is difficult to translate theoretical aspects into practice. Indeed, each participatory process is closely linked to a specific reference social context. In this chapter, the milieu of the Sardinian RLP is analyzed. In particular, in the first paragraph, the international and national institutional contexts are examined in order to analyse in what way Europe and Italy have faced challenges of the participatory practices. In the second part, the planning context of the Sardinian region, and the specific participatory approaches, which were used during the elaboration and revision phases of the RLP, are discussed. In the conclusive section, a critical analysis of the two participatory processes is proposed in order to emphasize the elements that compromised the effectiveness of the implementation of the RLP.

### **4.1. PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN AND ITALIAN PUBLIC CONTEXTS**

In recent decades, the concept of participation has increasingly acquired importance and relevance within the European and Italian scenarios. From this perspective, in this section, the international and national contexts are analyzed in order to define the normative framework of the Sardinian RLP. Moreover, the paragraph aims at examining both the negative aspects that have compromised the success of participatory practices in Italy, and the good lessons learned from forward-looking case studies.

First of all, at the international level, the importance of the concept of participation is emphasized by the Brundtland Report. This Report, officially called “Our Common Future”, connects the definition of sustainable development to the concept of participation. Indeed, it states that “...*Meeting essential needs requires not only a new era of economic growth for nations in which the majority are poor, but an assurance that those poor get their fair share of the resources required to sustain that growth. Such equity would be aided by political systems that secure effective citizen participation in decision making and by greater democracy in international decision-making*” (United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, section I, part 3). Moreover, the participation is viewed as a

statutory right by the Aarhus Convention, where one of the main objective is *“...In order to contribute to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being, each Party shall guarantee the rights of access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters in accordance with the provisions of this Convention”* (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1998). In addition, participation is one of the eight characteristics of good governance, with reference to the vertices of the governance octagon<sup>1</sup> defined by UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2011). In other words, it is recognized as essential for implementing a continuous dialectic relationship between public administration and local communities. Common and expert knowledge are the two necessary ingredients of this two-faceted knowledge. From this view, a dialectic and multi-directional relationship should support the implementation of a new general conscience, and at the same time, the development of cooperative decision-making processes. For example, promoting the cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation is one of the main goals of the EU's regional policy. Moreover, this objective is guaranteed through different programmes such as INTERREG IVC and URBAN II (European Commission, 2010).

Moreover, although the concept of participation is strongly emphasised by several international organisations, modalities of implementing the participatory practices in support of decision-making processes need a more precise and systemic definition. In addition, nowadays national governments have tackled the problem of translating theoretical questions about participation into practice in different ways. For example, in the United Kingdom, public participation and community involvement have acquired a central and fundamental importance in the governmental policy programmes. Indeed, in England, in recent years, different experimental forms of participatory practices have been implemented, such as the election of representatives on decision-making bodies, public meetings, consultations and forums (Newman, 2001). The main goal of the English governmental policy is to promote the citizens' involvement in the decision-making processes and transfer a part of the control to citizen groups. This is supported by considerations such as the

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCAP defines the good governance as a accountable, transparent, responsive, equitable and inclusive, effective and efficient, participatory, consensus oriented and follows the laws. Each of these characteristics is allocated in a vertex of an octagon which represents the good governance.

following “...by enabling communities to help shape decisions on policies and services we will support civil renewal and strengthen the legitimacy of the institutions of government” (Home Office, 2005, p. 7).

In Italy, although the crisis of traditional planning models entailed the consolidation of new paradigms based on communicative approaches, the Italian legislation does not establish a comprehensive structure of a possible participatory process. Indeed, there is not national participation policy, a minister responsible for participation or an established systemic approach to participatory practices. The main problems are: the separation of public responsibilities for policy implementation; the protection of interests by the political lobbies; the incapacity of public officials to deal with participatory processes; the lack of strategic consistency, resources and vision; the citizens' lack of interest and the digital divide which prevents an effective use of the available information (European Institute for Public Participation 2009). Indeed, nowadays the Italian context shows lack of participation due to different reasons. First of all, in the definition and elaboration of plans, participatory practices are represented by formal revisions, which are presented ex-post, in the majority of cases, when the plan has been already defined in all its parts. Secondly, public administrations do not like to take into account these formal observations. From this perspective, citizens do not have a real feed-back in relation to their inputs in the decision-making processes. Thirdly, citizens have a limited period when they can express their observations. In conclusion, these critical issues discourage participation and even if these practices occur, they have only a formal role in the planning process (Zoppi, 2007). Moreover, politicians consider public participation as a threat because the political lobbies' purpose is to maintain their power and to weaken the political power of oppositions as well. For example, during the last political mandate, no independent information was guaranteed by the two main television stations called Rai and Mediaset. Indeed, the former is a public TV network meanwhile the latter is privately-owned controlled by “Fininvest”, which belongs to Silvio Berlusconi's family, the former Prime Minister. Under these conditions, there was undoubtedly a problem of concentration of the main Italian broadcasting networks under the control of the very same person. Thirdly, the decentralization of the political power implies that each central and local authority rules only over specific questions. In addition, poor regions do not have resources available to support effectively participatory practices and to train-up public officials to support

and facilitate participatory processes (European Institute for Public Participation, 2009).

On the other hand, a reference to public participation appeared in the first place in the Italian legislation in the Law no. 278 in 1976, which aimed at promoting the participation of citizens in the administrative management of the local communities. Moreover, in the 1980s, the participatory practices were strongly connected to the radical ideologies that have inspired them, becoming unbiased (Fera, 2002). In the 1990s, participation acquired a more genuine definition, representing a significant stimulus to regional transformations (Savoldi, 2006). Indeed, the definition of “complex programmes” aimed at integrating the public and private sectors through forms of negotiated planning. Moreover, these programmes were supported by tools such as “Conferenza di servizi<sup>2</sup>” [Local Authorities’ planning conference], “Accordo di Programma<sup>3</sup>” [Program Agreement], and “Protocolli d’intesa<sup>4</sup>” [Agreement Protocol] that, on the one hand, streamline the administrative processes, and on the other hand, they intend to coordinate the different interests at stake.

However, the most significant aspect in terms of participation is part of the Legislative decree no. 267 in 2000, which establishes that the participation of local authorities in the elaboration of regional plans is a competence of the regional government through the definition of a statute. From this perspective, the participation should be guaranteed at the local level, where the experimentation of participatory practices is based on the specific context. For instance, in 2007, the regional government of Tuscany approved the regional Law no. 69, which represents an innovative case within the Italian scenario. It aims at promoting the involvement of citizens in political choices through the definition of inclusive processes that are managed by an independent authority in order to prevent possible negative outcomes due to the community’s distrust of politicians. Moreover, the regional law has to be ex-post-appraised in order to evaluate the effectiveness of participatory processes (Autorità Regionale per la Partecipazione della Toscana, 2010). Other

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<sup>2</sup> “Conferenza di servizi” [Local Authorities’ deliberative conference] is an administrative official meeting of all the public bodies of a decision-making process where all the involved bodies are bound to officially express their points of view. This simplifies the tasks of the public administrations in deliberative processes, since through this Conference they can acquire all the mandatory positions, permits and licences (Italian Law n. 1990/241).

<sup>3</sup> “Accordo di programma” [Program Agreement] is an agreement between public bodies, such as regions, provinces, cities and municipalities etc. in order to implement programs that need integrated actions on behalf of two or more public bodies (Italian Law enacted by Decree n. 2000/267).

<sup>4</sup> “Protocollo d’intesa” [Agreement Protocol] is an agreement among public and private bodies concerning mutual tasks each of them declares to take care of (Sabatini and Coletti, 2007).



Italian regions followed Tuscany and they elaborated processes and procedures, such as the regional administration of Emilia Romagna, which approved the regional Law no. 18 2010 with the purpose of promoting social cohesion and the identification of shared objectives concerning regional and local planning policies through the definition of a participatory system (Regione Emilia Romagna, 2010).

From these points of view, we could say that at the international level, the concept of participation is effectively emphasized. However, although public institutions put in evidence the importance of using participatory approaches, however, they did not define the modalities to translate into practice these theoretical principles. European countries did experience different participatory approaches in support of decision-making processes. Some of them, such as UK, established different initiatives and departments in order to guarantee a real participation of all stakeholders. On the other hand, despite of some Italian regions experimentation of successful procedures in support of participatory practices, in the majority of cases, they assume only a formal and abstract application.

#### **4.2. A SARDINIAN CASE STUDY: THE REGIONAL LANDSCAPE PLAN**

Sardinia is one of the main Italian islands, located in the South-West of the Italian territory. In this paragraph, its principal physical, economic and social dynamics are analysed in order to figure-out the context in which the RLP is included.

The Region has a population of around 1.7 million residents in 2010 (SardegnaStatistiche, 2010) and an area of around 24,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2006c). Sardinian region is divided into eight provinces: Cagliari, Carbonia-Iglesias, Medio Campidano, Nuoro, Ogliastra, Olbia-Tempio, Oristano and Sassari in territorial and administrative terms. Cagliari is the Sardinia's capital.

Moreover, it is characterized by a low residential density and urbanized land per square kilometres. Indeed, in 2008 the ratio between resident population and the regional area territorial was 69.36 (SardegnaStatistiche, 2008). That is why some areas of Sardinia are in a natural status. In addition, these naturally-preserved areas have an important environmental and landscape value. Indeed, a 22 percent of the regional territory is included in the Natura 2000 network of protected areas (Istat, 2011). From this perspective, it is pretty straightforward to see why the concept of participation is fundamental in the Sardinian landscape planning context.

<b>Province</b>	<b>Resident Population</b>	<b>Surface (Km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Density (resident population/Km<sup>2</sup>)</b>
<i>Cagliari</i>	557,679	4,552.85	122.49
<i>Carbonia-Iglesias</i>	130,856	1,498.4	87.33
<i>Medio Campidano</i>	103,436	1,522.5	67.94
<i>Nuoro</i>	161,684	3,939.7	41.04
<i>Ogliastra</i>	58,019	1,851.9	31.33
<i>Olbia-Tempio</i>	151,346	3,333.6	45.40
<i>Oristano</i>	167,941	3,051.8	55.03
<i>Sassari</i>	334,656	4,259.3	78.57

Table 7 Resident population, area and density in the eight Sardinian Provinces

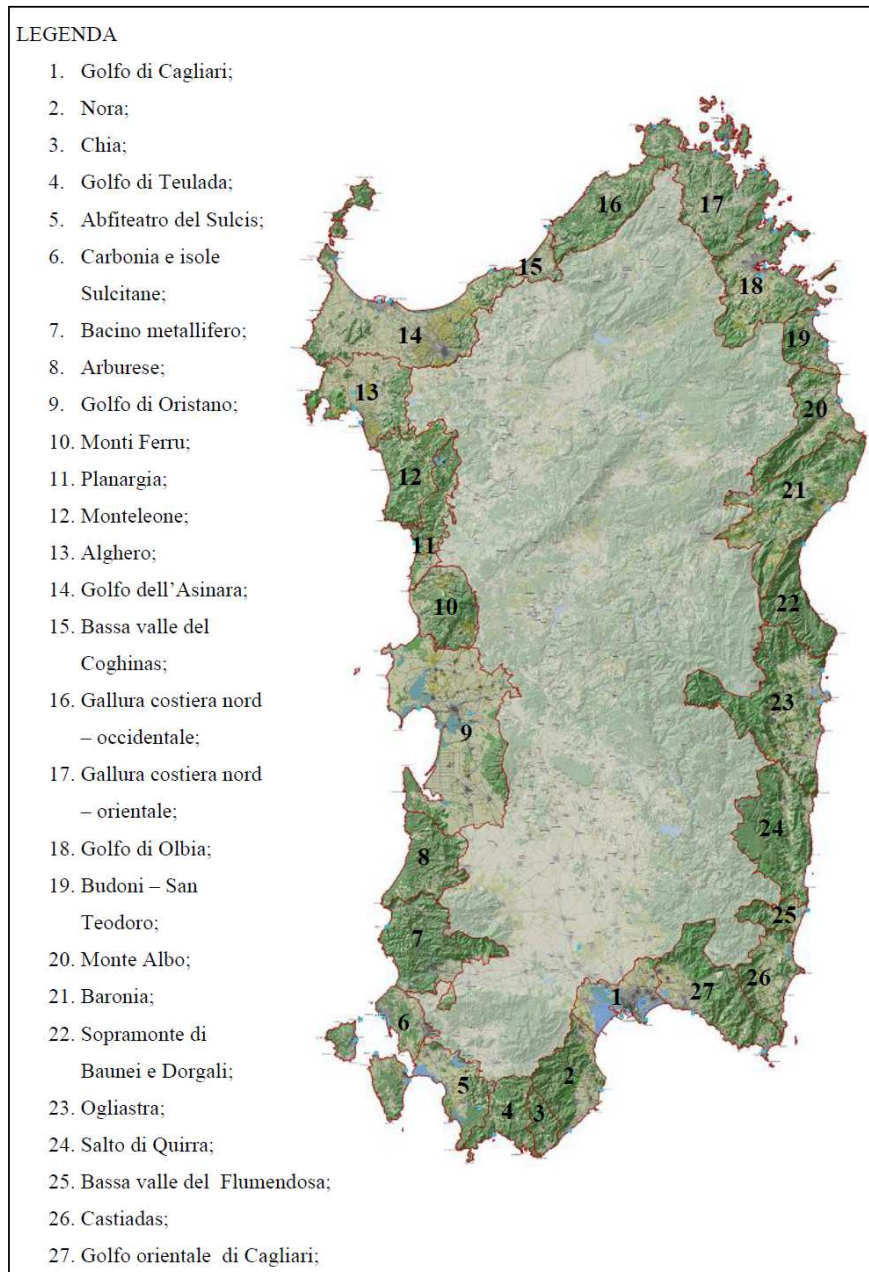
From the normative point of view, as we saw in the previous section (see paragraph 4.1 pp. 33-37), in the Italian planning system, regions have specific competences in terms of orientation, control and coordination of regional planning. Moreover, Sardinia has an autonomous competence (Legge costituzionale n.3/48, art. 3, lettera f - Statuto Speciale della Sardegna) for legislation concerning regional and local planning according to which the Regional Parliament can establish laws concerning those matters. However, regional landscape planning is not an exclusive competence of the regional administration. Indeed, the RLP is under the national competence according to the national decree n. 42 called the “Urbani Code”. In particular, the RLP was elaborated by the Regional Government in 2005-2006 and it aimed at defining strategies and orientations in relation to the regional territory. In 2006 the RLP was approved by the regional government. In its present version, it represents mainly a tool for managing coastal territory. Its main goals are: protecting, conserving and increasing the value of the environmental, historical, cultural and settlement identity of the Sardinian territory. Indeed, although the original intention was to define a planning tool, which should have had the role to rule over the entire regional territory, however, the RLP concerns exclusively the coastal territories that are divided into 27 zones, which have homogenous landscape, environmental and economic characteristics (see figure 7). Moreover, each coastal municipality should elaborate its Masterplan in line with the RLP (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2006c).

In particular, we consider here the landscape zone no. 1 called “Gulf of Cagliari”. It is located in Southern Sardinia; its area is 884.13 km<sup>2</sup>. It includes thirteen municipalities : Assemini, Cagliari, Capoterra, Elmas, Monserrato, Quartu Sant’Elena, Quartucciu, Selargius, Sestu, Settimo San Pietro, Sinnai, Soleminis and

Uta. The “Gulf of Cagliari” is characterized by a strong environmental context, which is composed by:

1. the large Wetland of Santa Gilla and Cagliari;
2. system of the Miocene hills;
3. the coastal system characterized by the Poetto beach and the wetland of Molentargius and Santa Gilla,;
4. several Sites of Community Importance which are part of the Natura 2000 network, salt pan of Macchiareddu, the Towers of Poetto and Sant’Elia hill.

In addition, the urban settlements, based on the environmental systems of hills and wetlands, are characterised by a high residential density, a functional and relational complexity, the presence of industrial, commercial, and port infrastructures. In particular, the main historical settlement is constituted by a continuous urban area, which includes different local municipalities such as Cagliari, Pirri, Monserrato, Selargius, Quartucciu, and Quartu Sant’Elena. Moreover, in the recent decades, the settlements along the two main thru-traffic roads named state roads no. 131 and no. 554, have been showing increasingly traffic flows due to the cheaper housing costs (see table 8).



**Figure 2 Landscape areas in relation to RLP (adapted from Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2006c)**

From the productive viewpoint, the economy is based on tertiary and industrial sectors and on commerce (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2006a). In 2001, a 10.8 percent of population in the metropolitan area of Cagliari was unemployed. Moreover, the unemployment rate is twice as high as the national figure that is 5.6 percent (Ufficio del Piano Strategico, 2007, p. 22). Moreover, the foreign resident population in the total area represents a 1.17 percent of total population. However, a 50.8 percent of foreigners live in Cagliari (Ufficio del Piano Strategico, 2007, p. 25). In relation to education, in 2001 a 1.5 percent of the total population of the metropolitan area of Cagliari was illiterate, a 8.5 percent was able to read and write but without any qualification, and only a 9.8 percent has a bachelor or a master

degree. However, in the same year, the national percentage of graduated people is a 7.5 percent of the total population (Ufficio del Piano Strategico, 2007, pp. 28-29).

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>
<i>Assemini</i>	24,480	25,343	26,056	26,575	26,979
<i>Cagliari</i>	545,807	550,697	555,409	559,820	563,180
<i>Capoterra</i>	21,889	22,466	23,187	23,672	24,030
<i>Elmas</i>	8,137	8,475	8,852	8,947	9,112
<i>Mon serrato</i>	20,828	20,768	20,785	20,755	20,240
<i>Quartu Sant'Elena</i>	68,508	69,818	70,569	71,253	71,779
<i>Quartucciu</i>	11,176	11,418	11,996	12,431	12,844
<i>Selargius</i>	27,911	28,548	28,868	29,073	29,169
<i>Sestu</i>	15,798	16,988	18,237	19,338	19,921
<i>Settimo San Pietro</i>	5,981	6,079	6,158	6,390	6,576
<i>Sinnai</i>	15,490	15,968	16,249	16,567	16,785
<i>Soleminis</i>	1,625	1,698	1,795	1,834	1,854
<i>Uta</i>	6,774	6,915	7,071	7,390	7,831

**Table 8 Resident population in the local municipalities, which belong to the “Gulf of Cagliari”(adapted from Sardegna Statistiche, 2012)**

The RLP was elaborated in this social and economic context. However, different problems entailed the necessity of a revision phase, which has not finished yet. In the following paragraphs, the different participatory approaches that the regional government implemented are analyzed. In particular, it is possible to recognize two different moments: the first is connected to the first phase during which the RLP was elaborated; the second is relative to the revision process of the RLP. Indeed, as explained in the next paragraphs, two different approaches were used.

#### **4.2.1. FIRST PHASE: THE ELABORATION OF THE RLP**

During the RLP’s elaboration phase, participation was promoted through both the inclusive moments established by the normative framework, and a series of meetings called “co-planning conferences”.

First of all, the RLP's objectives and procedures were defined by the regional Law no. 8 2004. In terms of participatory approaches, this law established only one participatory moment after the adoption of the plan proposal. Indeed, the plan was made available in each Sardinian municipality for sixty days. During this period, anybody could read the RLP's documents. After this term, anybody could have expressed their opinions and observations and send them within the following thirty days. These observations were examined by the regional government. However, the law did not establish a feedback in relation to these comments.

Moreover, 24 co-planning conferences were conducted from 9<sup>th</sup> January 2006 to 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2006, in order to promote the circulation of information and the confrontation among the public authorities. In particular, 22 meetings concerning the involvement of the local municipalities, one with provinces and one with organizations and associations of the industrial, commerce and craft sectors, were conducted in order to extend the co-planning process to a large share of the public and private bodies.

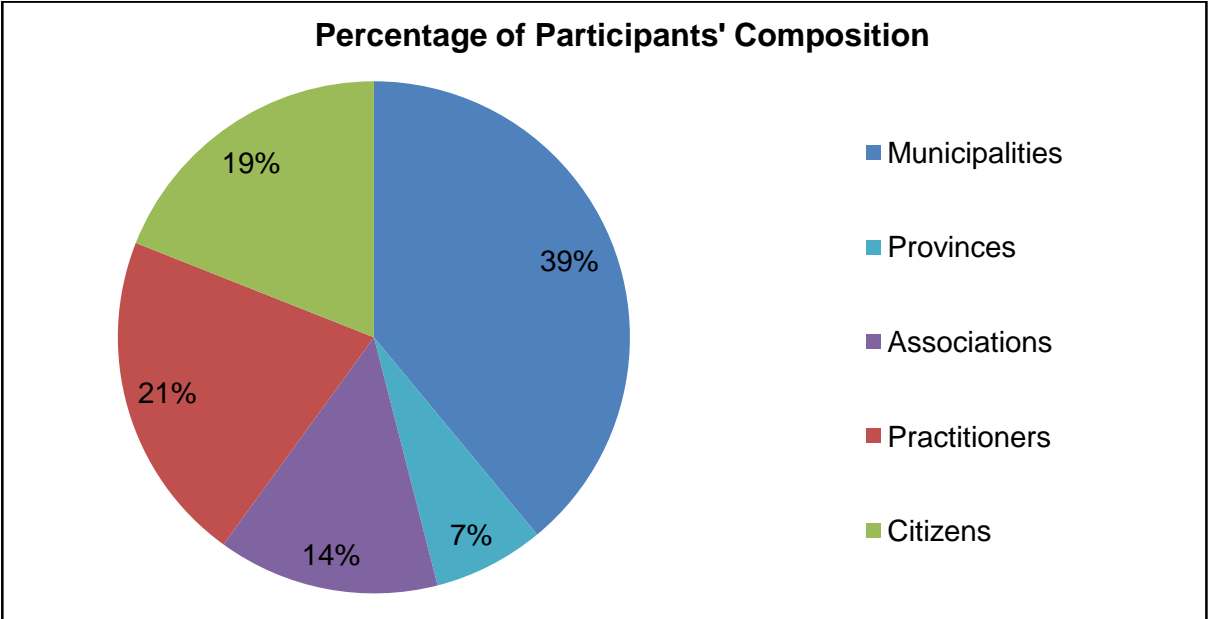


Figure 3 Taxomy of participants (adapted from Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2006b)

These conferences were public, and anybody could participate even if they were not expressly invited. Moreover, at the end of each meeting, a resume was available on the regional administration web-site in order to make all the interested people aware of what was discussed in the public hearings (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2006b). Moreover, a further series of technical meetings with single local municipalities, and officials of the provincial governments were implemented from March to July 2006 in order to broaden the level of the co-planning activity, allowing a

more effective knowledge of the final version of the RLP. In addition, not only did the conferences aim at sharpening the cognitive frame but also they intended to acquire possible specifications in relation to the conditions of the areas. However, some of the thirteen local municipalities of the “Gulf of Cagliari” were missing at the meetings (see table 9)

<b>Local Municipality</b>	<b>Participation</b>
<i>Assemini</i>	Yes
<i>Cagliari</i>	No
<i>Capoterra</i>	Yes
<i>Elmas</i>	Yes
<i>Monsestosu</i>	Yes
<i>Quartu Sant'Elena</i>	Yes
<i>Quartucciu</i>	Yes
<i>Selargius</i>	No
<i>Sestu</i>	Yes
<i>Settimo San Pietro</i>	Yes
<i>Sinnai</i>	No
<i>Soleminis</i>	Yes
<i>Uta</i>	No

**Table 9 Participation of the thirteen local municipalities of the “Gulf of Cagliari” to the technical conferences**

Moreover, information was guaranteed through two websites, the RLP website and the thematic website “Sardinia Territory”, and the mass media.

First of all, the RLP website aims at releasing information in order to implement a new form of institutional communication. The website is composed of six sections: procedure, reports, regulations, cartography, conference and schedule of meetings. Moreover, each part contains information in relation to specific subjects. Indeed, for example, the “Procedure” section provides modalities and timetable of the elaboration and approval of the RLP. Secondly, only after the RLP was made available to the public was the website “Sardinia Territory” published on the Internet. On this platform, it can be possible to consult geographical information, aerial pictures and regional, provincial and local planning tools, through the use of GIS-based tools. Thirdly, mass media such as regional television channels and newspapers, represented important sources of information. Moreover, not only did the mass media follow the entire process of elaboration of the RLP, but also these communicative channels made available to everybody the information on the landscape and on the necessity to protect it. On the other hand, they put in evidence

the controversial relationship between the regional government and the local municipalities. Indeed, newspapers and television represented the political arena where officials of the local and regional governments clashed over the modalities of implementation of the RLP.

In conclusion, although the participatory process used during the elaboration phase aimed at defining a new planning tool that could be shared by local municipalities and community in general, the approaches did not guarantee a real inclusive process due to a lack of effective participatory techniques or methods. Indeed, the implementation process was a failure that made it necessary to revise the RLP.

#### **4.2.2. SECOND PHASE: THE REVISION PROCESS OF RLP**

The RLP was criticized in terms of contents, modalities to analyze the regional territory, administrative competences and participatory approaches. Indeed, first of all, the RLP did not undergo a SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) procedure, and by doing so, it did not comply with the directive no. 42/2001/EC of the European Union. From this perspective, the RLP can be considered unlawful. Secondly, this plan analyzed the regional territory considering four aspects: environment, history, and culture and the settlement characteristics. This idea was absolutely new and innovative in the Sardinian context because local plans are based on zoning rules concerning the land use. The zoning rules define segregating uses, which make the representation of physical space difficult to understand without the zoning. However, it is easy to understand how the two modalities to analyze the territory, with and without zoning, diverge, and the difficulty of local municipalities to use this new system. Moreover, in terms of administrative competences, municipalities have only a secondary role in the planning choices. Indeed, only if does the Regional government need their support, they come into play. From this perspective, the Regional government established its control over the planning issues, and as a result, the involvement of different stakeholders became to have a very poor influence. Moreover, no local municipality did implement its local plan in relation to the RLP, which represents an important failure of the regional administration, which lost the 2009 regional elections.



The new regional government activated the revision of the RLP, where the involvement of stakeholders acquired a fundamental importance through a participatory process called “Sardinia New Ideas”. The aim of this process was to build a multidirectional dialogue between the regional government and the other stakeholders (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2010a).

The new participatory process was organized through operative and informal meetings called “RLP workshops” where representatives of the coastal local municipalities were involved. Moreover, an expert group of facilitators had the role of managing and conducting discussions in order to stimulate participation and to observe agenda times. Each “RLP workshop” implied three different stages called “landscape structure”, “new ideas in relation to landscapes”, and “landscape projects”. Each of these stages involved only officials of public institutions who should have represented the social and economic interests of their communities (see table 10). Moreover, the different steps aimed at establishing collaboration among the regional government and the other public institutions in relation to specific themes. In addition, each conference took place in one of the local municipalities that participated in the meeting. This aspect was really important because, for the first time, participants had the impression that the regional government was trying to meet their needs and expectations.

The first type of conference concerned the definition of both positive and negative aspects in relation to the Sardinian region, in order to identify the values and the criticisms of the territory. The “landscape structure” conferences were fourteen, grouping together the municipalities that belonged to different landscape areas with the exception of the meeting no. 1, which involved only the thirteen municipalities of the “Gulf of Cagliari”. Moreover, participants had the possibility to convey their ideas and opinions, broadening the cognitive framework of the RLP. As a result, at the end of each meeting, a conceptual map of possible actions, and the objectives, which were recognised, and shared by all the stakeholders, was drafted. On the other hand, the participation was not very effective. Indeed, for example, in the case of the meeting no. 1, not all the potential participants were there, probably because of a distrust of the regional government. In particular, only ten municipalities participated in this first conference (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2010d)

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Landscape Structure</b>	<b>New ideas in relation to landscapes</b>	<b>Landscape projects</b>
<i>Aim</i>	Definition of critical areas and topics through identification of values and criticisms	Local specification of rules, bonds and normative system	Synthesis moment
<i>Category of participants</i>	Representatives of coastal local municipalities	Representatives of coastal local municipalities	Representatives of coastal local municipalities
<i>Number of meetings</i>	14, one for each macro-area from 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2010 to 29 <sup>th</sup> July 2010	10, one for each macro-area from 13 <sup>rd</sup> December 2010 to 21 <sup>st</sup> December 2010	18 <sup>th</sup> February 2011
<i>Comments</i>	It was partially useful. Indeed, a map of sharing objectives was elaborated. On the other hand, the graphical representation of these goals was confused. Moreover, one conference for each macro area was not sufficient.	It was useful in order to identify specific issues relating to the normative system. However, one conference for each macro-area was not sufficient.	It was useful

**Table 10 Aims, Participants, Meeting and comments of the three different stages of “Sardinia New Ideas”**

The “new ideas in relation to landscapes” workshops concerned the discussions in relation to different topics regarding the landscape. In particular, the aim of this step was to define shared strategies and rules (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2010c). Moreover, as a consequence of the first series of conferences, and in relation to further studies, the 27 landscape areas were reorganised in 40 new zones. However, the number of meetings was ten, joining different landscape areas as in the first place. As a result, at the end of each workshop, a report and a concise description of the main strategies that could be pursued were elaborated. However, only five local municipalities of the “Gulf of Cagliari” took part in this second stage of meetings (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2010e)

The third step, the “landscape projects” phase represented a synthetical moment in relation to the previous steps, which aims at defining the general principles, methodologies to govern the region and clear strategies in relation to the

Sardinian landscapes. The latest was divided into four main aspects: natural landscape<sup>5</sup>, settlement landscape<sup>6</sup>, social and cultural landscape<sup>7</sup> and productive landscape<sup>8</sup>. For instance, thirteen general principles were elaborated, which rule over the land use patterns and the identity of the region (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2011).

Moreover, the information was guaranteed through the website “Sardegna Territorio” [Sardinia Territory] and mass media as in the case of the elaboration phase. However, in the website “Sardegna Territorio” a tool “Sardegna Geoblog” [Sardinia Geoblog] was available in order to support the dialogue among different authorities, which govern the territory. In a nutshell, this tool allowed the continuity of the participatory process. Moreover, it was possible to collect and share observations and suggestions in relation to planning (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2010b).

In conclusion, although the process “Sardegna Nuove Idee” [Sardinia New ideas] ended up at the beginning of 2011, the revised version of the RLP has not been elaborated yet. As a result, it is not clear whether the participatory process may have possibly consequences and influences on the new RLP.

#### **4.3. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In conclusion, in Italy the participatory practices are mainly bureaucratic practices which are pursuing of specific purposes of the public governmental agencies and bodies, as explained in the previous paragraphs. In a nutshell, despite few looking-forward cases, the Italian participatory approach is essentially a top-down process, where the involvement of citizens is only apparent. This issue is linked to Cooke’s and Kothari’s works (see paragraph 2.1 pp. 7-10) and Rowe’s and Fewer’s works (see paragraph 2.2 pp. 10-14).

In the Sardinian context, during the elaboration of the RLP, it is revealed that the participatory approach was only an informative phase. Indeed, the process was implemented without using any particular methodology or technique of participation. Moreover, the co-planning conferences were not sufficient in terms of time and number of meetings. Indeed, the RLP was elaborated and approved in two years only, and, as a consequence, the participation timetable was not appropriate. In

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<sup>5</sup> Natural landscape concerns environment and landscape and the protection of these natural systems.

<sup>6</sup> Settlement landscape concerns urban, touristic and commercial settlements.

<sup>7</sup> Social and cultural landscape concerns human and social capital.

<sup>8</sup> Productive landscape concerns rural landscapes, infrastructure and productive settlements.

addition, the participatory process began after a strong proposal of the RLP was already available, and, as a consequence, a real level of co-planning among different institutions was not guaranteed at all. As a result, the inclusive process did not influence the contents and the objectives of the RLP. A possible cause could be the role of the regional government, which aimed at proving its ruling role over the provincial and local governments with reference to planning decisions. A proof of this behaviour is that during the last political elections, the Regional government was not supported by any coastal municipality and it lost the elections. Secondly, only a few local municipalities have implemented their local plan in relation to the RLP. This aspect represented one of the main factors that determined the failure of the elaboration phase. Indeed, one of the principal goals of the RLP was to define a new planning tool to rule over the regional territory in order to update the obsolete local plans, their adjustments and compliance with the RLP regulations. On the other hand, not only did the elaboration process was a failure, but also it caused a strong conflict between the Regional government and the local municipalities. Indeed, this conflicting relation originated at the beginning of the process due to the restrictive rules established by the Law no. 8 2004, such as the impossibility to build within two-kilometres from the coast, hindering the landowners and building firms expectations covering future coastal developments.

Moreover, the inclusive process underwent a very poor participatory process. Indeed, for example, in the landscape unit “Gulf of Cagliari”, the process involved 1,014 people, which is only a 19 percent of the potential participants (Istat, 2006). In addition, scarcely did the officials of the local municipalities participate in the co-planning conferences. Indeed, as explained previously (see paragraph 4.2.1 pp.41-44) only nine municipalities out of thirteen took part in these meetings. Moreover, no official of the Cagliari’s municipality, which is the most important city of the coastal landscape unit in Sardinia, participated. However, at least one representative of each provincial administration participated in the meetings with Provinces (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2006b). In addition, not only did the co-planning conferences show some critical aspects but also the legally established term for the observations presented problems in terms of participation. Indeed, first of all, only after a comprehensive proposal of the RLP was elaborated, were participants asked to express their opinions. Secondly, the lack of responses or feedbacks from the

regional administration on their comments and criticisms made the quality and the effectiveness of the participatory process very poor.

On the other hand, the elaboration of the RLP was an innovative element within the Italian planning scenario. Moreover, as explained previously (see paragraph 4.2.2 pp.44-47) the RLP was imposed by the national government, establishing that landscape protection was competence of the regional government. Indeed, Sardinia was the first region that elaborated and approved a RLP, representing a pioneering case. Therefore, we can say that the regional government had looking-forward vision and innovative ideas. On the other hand, the lack of experience of the regional government due to a lack of a deeply-rooted culture and practice of participation and the poor capacity of the local municipalities compromised the success of the elaboration process of the RLP.

From these perspectives, the revision process of the RLP modified the participatory approach through “Sardinia New Ideas” process. The new inclusive moment faced some problematic aspects of the first phase. Indeed, not only were its main objectives directed to inform the different stakeholders and to legitimate the regional strategies, but it also aimed at building a shared scenario of the regional landscape values. On the other hand, this new inclusive process entailed some criticisms. First of all, the individuation of participants was intentionally oriented towards public institutions without a direct involvement of citizens. This was inappropriate since a real participation was not guaranteed at all. In addition, although municipalities and public bodies were invited, they did not actively participate. For instance, during the conference on the “Landscape structure” of the “Gulf of Cagliari”, only ten municipalities, and no official of the Port Authority participated.

However, the revision process of the RLP has not finished yet. Therefore, it is hard to understand if the new participatory process will eventually entail on the new RLP. Certainly, the new participatory approach is more open-minded than the previous one, since it is oriented to the goal of including the municipalities’ viewpoints from the beginning of the process through the definition of shared objectives. However, it is not clear if this new approach was motivated by a real awareness of the importance of participation or by the goal of strategically-influencing the local municipalities.

## **5. DATA ANALYSIS**

The chapter aims at analyzing and interpreting data provided by interviews and questionnaires. Moreover, the section is structured in three main parts that concern three topics: typology, benefits, and problems of the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases of RLP. These themes have drawn on the issues that are analyzed in the literature review (see chapter 2 pp. 6-21) in order to elaborate a central thread between the theoretical part of the social research and its practical components concerning the case study of RLP. In each paragraph, the results from interviews and questionnaires are examined together in order to elaborate a more careful analysis. Finally in the conclusion, a total interpretation is conducted to elaborate final considerations from the social research, including different viewpoints.

### **5.1. TYPOLOGY OF THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS<sup>9</sup>**

The Sardinian RLP was elaborated in a first phase from 2005 to 2006 and now its revision process, which has not finished yet, is being implemented. In the elaboration and revision phases, two different participatory approaches have been conducted in terms of aims and contents. In this paragraph, the data from interviews and questionnaires are analyzed in order to identify the typologies of the participatory processes used during these two stages.

In relation to the elaboration phase, the interviews seem a consistent opinion with each other with reference to the participatory process by the side of both university scholars and officials of the regional government. Indeed, all interviewees do not define this process as participatory because, in their opinion, it represents only an informative phase since the plan is already structured in all its parts. The significant aspect is that this view has been expressed also by the officials of the regional government who were members of the management team during the elaboration of the RLP. From this perspective, the aims of the process were to inform provincial and local municipalities about a new planning process, without the possibility of discussing and arguing towards shared objectives, strategies and contents. Indeed, for example, one official of the regional government argues “...*The*

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<sup>9</sup> The thematic analysis of interviews is in the appendix, enclosure III, pp. 151-164. Meanwhile the statistical analysis of questionnaires is in the appendix, enclosure IV, pp. 165-179.

participatory process represented only an informative phase of a finished product. From this point of view, a constructive dialogue on the objectives and the contents of the RLP was not possible any more”. Moreover, an academician claims “...The participatory process was conducted in order to introduce the RLP. The aim was not to establish a dialogue and a debate among participants”.

This opinion is partially confirmed by the results of the questionnaires. Indeed, a 52.63 percent of the respondents (see figure 4) considers the participatory process used during the elaboration phase, useless or absolutely useless.

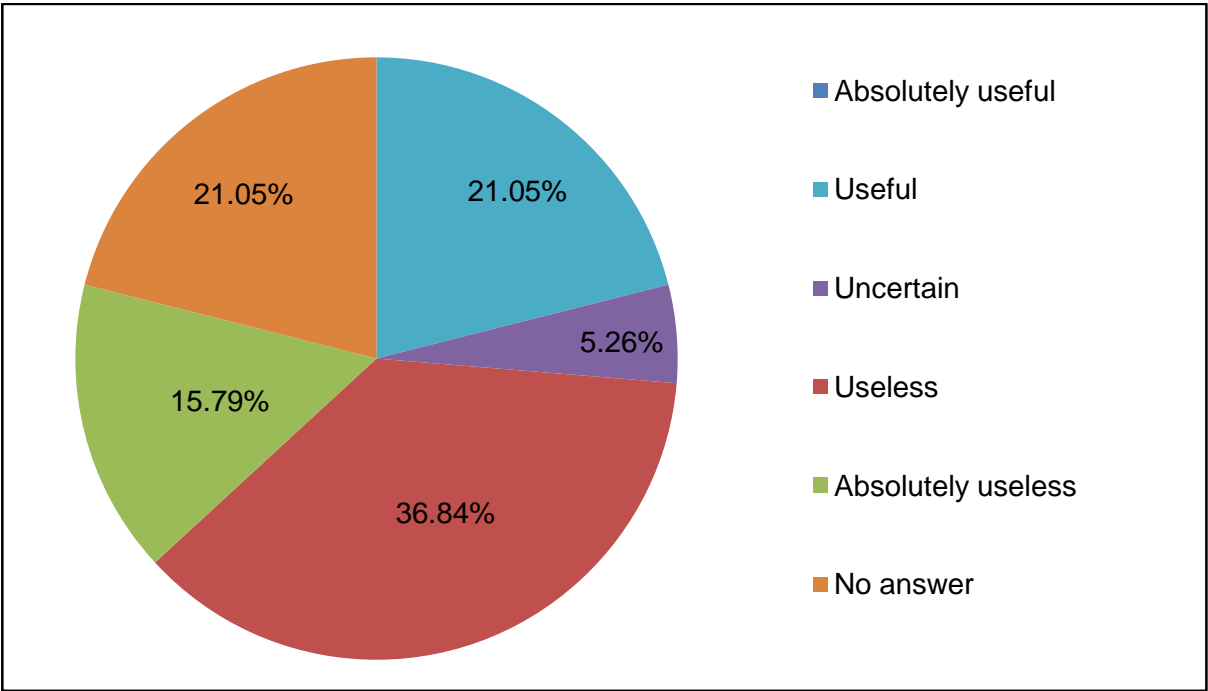
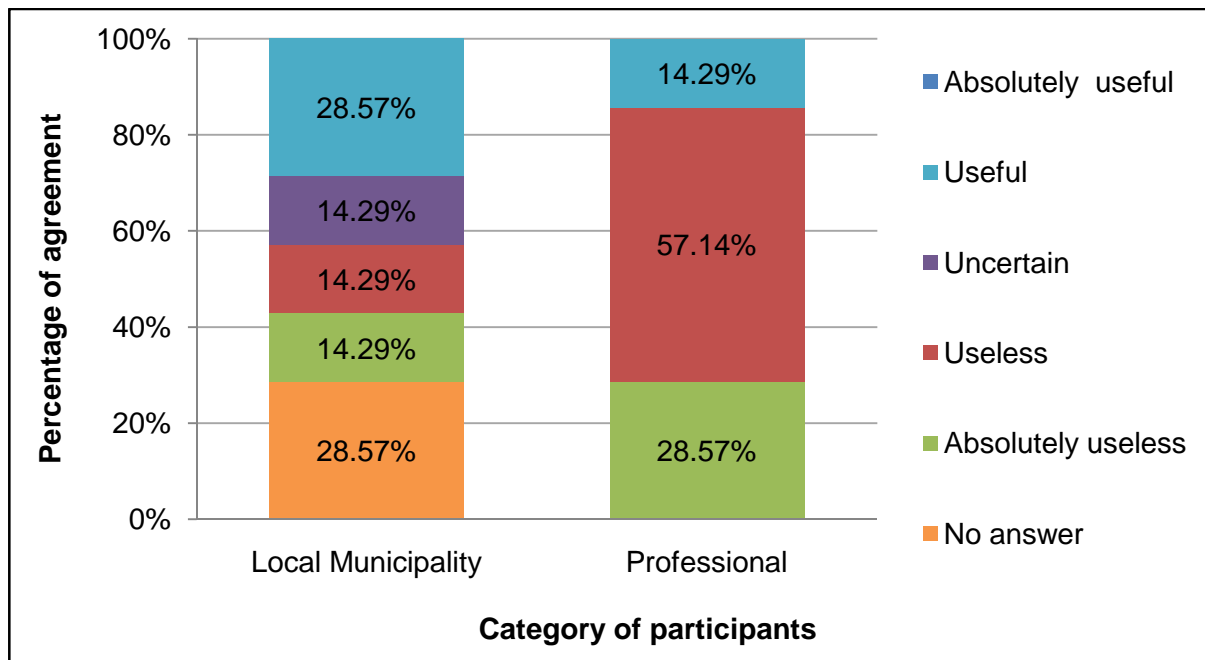


Figure 4 Level of agreement in relation to the utility of the participatory process used during the elaboration phase

Moreover, although this trend reflects the overall view of professionals, characterized by a 85.71 percent, however the officials of the local government do not have a clear and a homogeneous view (see figure 5). This consideration comes as follows. First of all, a significant element is that a 42.86 percent either did not answer the question or they did not have a clear idea on respond. This high percentage may be explained either by the total confusion of the officials of local municipalities with respect to the participatory process implemented during the elaboration phase, or by a strategic behaviours since these people belong to municipalities, which support the regional government that approved the RLP. Indeed, this percentage is represented by local municipalities that belong to the same political alignment of the regional government that elaborated the RLP. From this perspective, despite the evident unsuccessful

participatory and planning processes, acknowledging the failure of their political party could represent recognition of possible faults to municipalities which support the regional government that approved the RLP.



**Figure 5 Level of agreement of local municipalities and professionals in relation to the utility of the participatory process used during the elaboration phase**

Secondly, the majority of officials of the local municipalities recognize the lack of a real participation due to approaches that have entailed only an informative moment as one of the main problems of the participatory process. Therefore, it is not clear the utility the officials of local municipalities acknowledge to the participatory process used in the elaboration phase in relation to the first chart.

Moreover, the largest part of respondents agree on defining the individuation of participants and the choice to begin the participatory process after the elaboration of a strong RLP proposal of RLP, as inappropriate or absolutely inappropriate (see figure 6).



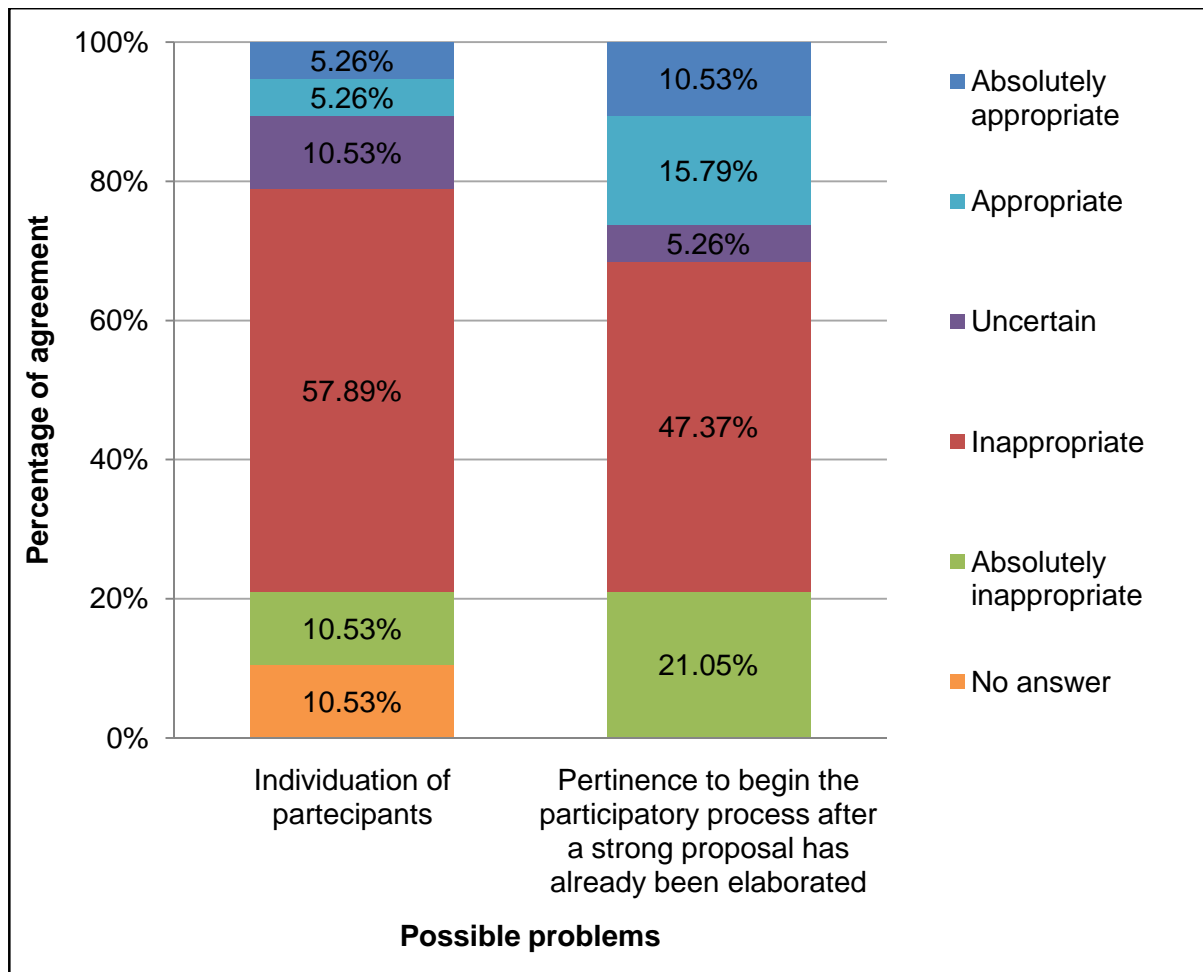


Figure 6 Level of agreement in relation to the individuation of participants and the pertinence to begin the participatory process after a strong proposal has been already elaborated

According to these analytical considerations, the inclusive process was not conducted in order to discuss objectives and strategies. Indeed, the participatory approach aimed at informing participants about planning choices, which had already been decided. From this perspective, the participatory process was essentially top-down and the regional government had a fairly managerial role. On the other hand, single participants have not been prepared to face the challenges of this new process in terms of skills, capacities, competences and computer technologies. Indeed, the elaboration process of the RLP was a kind of revolution in the Sardinian planning scenario because landscape was recognized as a territorial value, which has to be protected in order to encourage and promote sustainable development. Moreover, this view is absolutely innovative because these new concepts were not translated into the RLP implementation code through the zoning representation. In addition, from the institutional viewpoint, the elaboration of a RLP was imported by the national legislation. Indeed, Sardinia was the first region that performed the national law in a limited time, because the plan was elaborated, adopted and approved in one year

only. From this perspective, taking a top-down process could be necessary since completion with national requirements was mandatory. On the other hand, the planning and participatory processes could be managed in a better way in terms of time, because a one year timescale was not a reasonable time, given the degree of innovation of the RLP. As a consequence the limited time and the inexperience in conducting and managing a new planning process had negative impacts on the elaboration of a well-structured participatory process and on efficient implementation of the plan's contents as well.

In relation to the revision phase, most of the interviews show a shared opinion on the role played by the regional government. According to the respondents, the government took a step forward in terms of time, experience and of a more genuine participation. Therefore, greater attention was given to specific aspects that were omitted in the previous phase, such as dialogue between the regional government and the local municipalities, and the definition of sharing strategies and objectives. However, the elaboration phase represented an important antecedent. Indeed, although the results of the participatory process were unsatisfying and ineffective, this failure had a helpful function in order not to repeat the same mistake. Indeed, for example a university scholar argues *"...The participatory process has taken the dialogue with local municipalities into greater consideration..."*

On the other hand, it is possible to recognize a widespread distrust concerning the results of the participatory process in terms of contributions and suggestions that will be really translated into the new plan's contents. This is possibly due to the first negative phase, where the regional government had the only decision-making role. Moreover, this distrust is shared by all the academicians. For instance, a university scholar suggests that *"...The consequences and the results that this inclusive process will have on the content of the new plan are not clear because the revision phase has not finished yet"*. In addition, meanwhile two officials of the regional government agree with the connection between distrust and first negative phase, the other two have different views. Indeed, they do not perceive the participatory process as efficient due to the formal and traditional way of conducting the inclusive moment. Indeed, an official argues *"...When I attended one of the RLP workshops, I felt that the communication flow was one-way. Indeed, the workshop had the formal and traditional structure of a conference, where someone talks and the other people listen..."* However, an official argues that the new participatory process was based on

a conceptually-wrong choice, since the inclusive moment aimed at knowing views and scenarios of local municipalities without explaining its own perspective. Indeed, the officials of the regional government suggest “...*The participatory process was conducted in conceptually-wrong terms because participation means a balanced comparison and dialogue among different wills, visions, strategies and objectives...*” In at nutshell, the regional government had an opposite attitude with respect to the local municipalities towards the first phase, where it imposed its role of unique decision-maker in connection with the planning questions. On the other hand, in the revision phase, the regional government sought to obtain a greater consensus among local municipalities, without establishing a bidirectional dialogue where also the regional government’s viewpoints could be argued and discussed as well.

The results of the questionnaires partially confirm the interviews’ data. Indeed, a 42.11 percent of respondents (see figure 7) does not have a clear idea about the utility of the participatory process used during the revision phase. Moreover, a 31.58 percent considers the inclusive process as useless or absolutely useless.

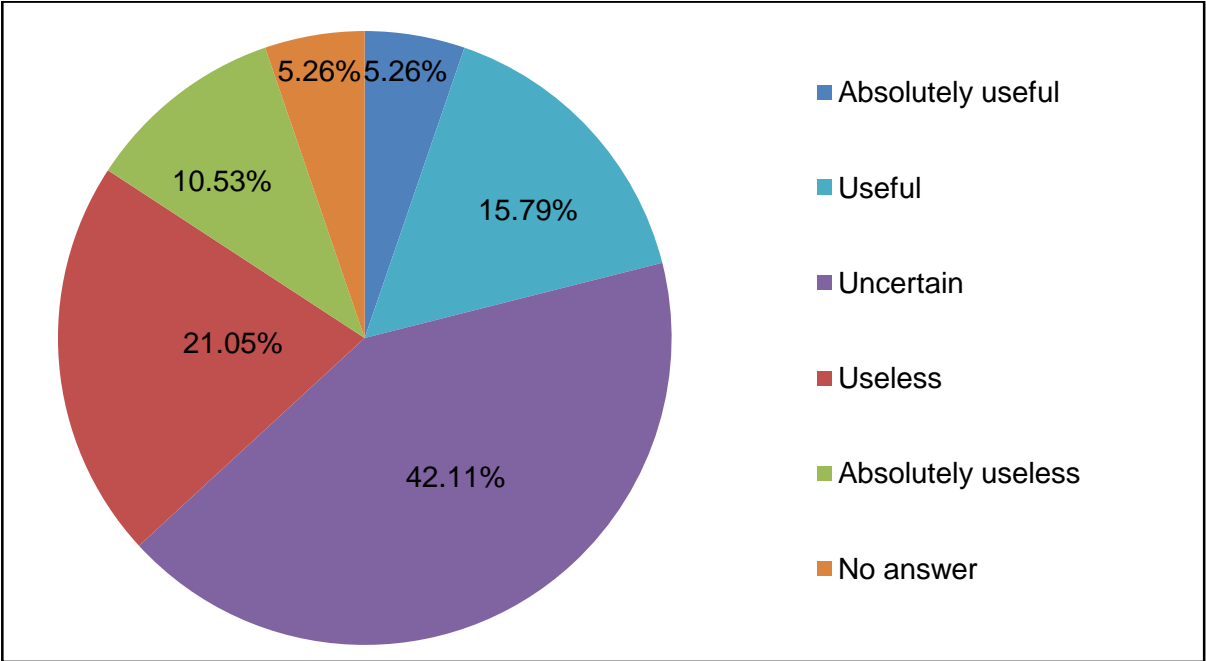


Figure 7 Level of agreement in relation to the utility of the participatory process used during the revision phase

In addition, this undefined opinion may be explained as follows. First of all, the revision process has not finished yet. From this viewpoint, it could not be clear whether the inclusive phase could influence efficiently the planning process and the plan’s contents or not. If the previous hypothesis holds, it will confirm the interviews’ data. On the other hand, uncertainty could be caused by lack of participation. Indeed,

although the RLP workshops were public and anybody could participate, only the public institutions have been expressly invited. From this perspective, no first-hand information could be the possible cause of their uncertain opinion. Therefore, it could be useful and significant to analyze the distribution of different categories of respondents (see figure 8). Indeed, professionals and technicians of the building enterprises, who represent the majority of undecided respondents, have not been involved in the inclusive process. Therefore, respondents who have not participated actively, such as professionals and building enterprises have not had sufficient direct information and documents to understand if the participatory process has been conducted with a suitable attention to the participants' viewpoints, and if the participation was really useful and efficient. Nevertheless, although local municipalities participated in the RLP workshops, little do they have a strong and homogenous opinion about the utility of the participatory process.

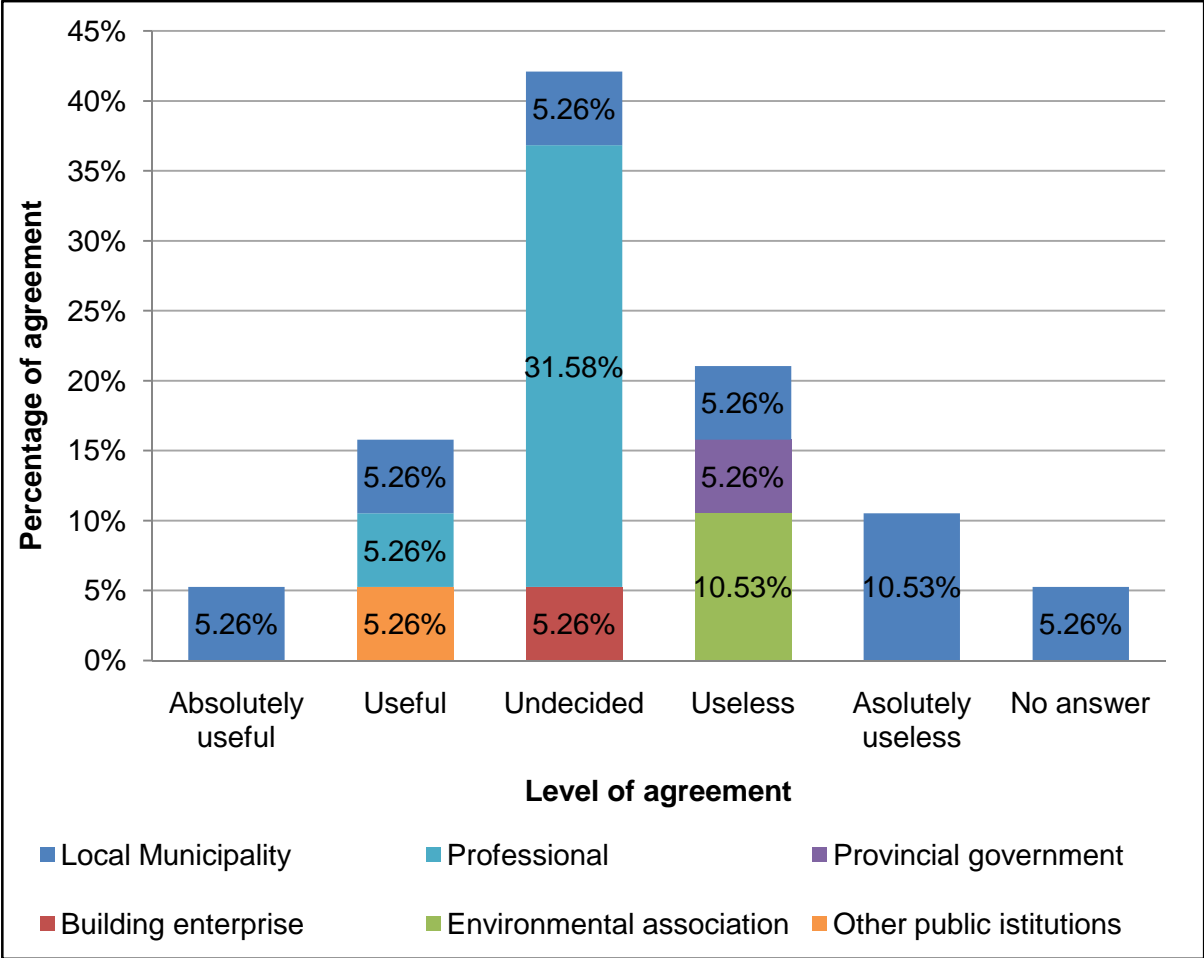


Figure 8 Level of agreement in relation to the utility of participatory process used during the revision phase in connection with the category of respondents

In conclusion, the managerial role of the regional government has had important negative effects on the participatory process, which has purely been an informative

phase. Indeed, the lack of a dialogue between the regional government and the local municipalities has not allowed a real participatory process, due to limited time, and to poor awareness on the importance of participatory practices in terms of the efficiency of the planning process. On the other hand, in the revision phase, despite the resolution of some problems, such as the attention to participatory practices, the inclusive process has increased confusion and uncertainty in the majority of the respondents and interviewees. It seems that uncertain opinions could probably derive from distrust towards the regional government. Indeed, the lack of a final RLP does not make the comparison between results of participation and plan's contents feasible. Therefore, it has not been clear if the participatory practices have been really useful. From these conceptual observations, the inclusive processes used during the elaboration and revision phases can represent the step "informing" and "consultation" respectively in Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969). Moreover, the elaboration process was based on pragmatic considerations, which do not consider the normative aspects. Indeed, the regional government has not been aware of the importance of conducting effective participatory processes. On the other hand, although the inclusive process in the revision phase has emphasized the concept of participation as a democratic right, becoming the key element in the advertising campaign of "Sardinia New Ideas", some pragmatic considerations, such as the identification of participants and the modalities of communication, have been completely undervalued by the regional government.

## **5.2. BENEFITS OF THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS<sup>10</sup>**

The literature identifies different benefits that spring from participatory processes (see paragraph 2.3 pp. 15-18). In this paragraph, the data, provided through interviews and questionnaires, are analyzed in order to identify the advantages of the participatory processes used during the elaboration phase. The revision process has not been examined because the revised version of the RLP has not produced yet. From this perspective, the absence of a final RLP makes the analysis of its benefits not feasible.

The interviewees identify only two benefits of the inclusive process: the promotion of social learning, and the higher quality of RLP-related information. The

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<sup>10</sup> The thematic analysis of interviews is in the appendix, enclosure III, pp. 151-164. Meanwhile the statistical analysis of questionnaires is in the appendix, enclosure IV, pp. 165-179.

former assumes two different meanings in the specific Sardinian case study. Indeed, not only could the social learning be analyzed in terms of more awareness of the value of the landscape, but also it has represented a more consciousness of the local municipalities' role within planning scenarios. From these conceptual considerations, the majority of interviewees agree that the elaboration of RLP has sensitized public and political opinion about the importance of landscape protection in relation to the sustainable development. Indeed, for example, an official of the regional government argues *"...Although the participatory process is not defined as real and inclusive, it informed local community on the qualitative and quantitative values of a good landscape. Indeed, the regional government has conducted advertising campaigns through mass media, and the press..."* From this perspective, one of the main goals of the regional government was to present the planning process and the plan as innovative. From this view, advertising campaigns through newspapers, television and the Internet, echoed on public opinion, which become more conscious of the landscape as a common good that need to be protected. Moreover, despite the failure of the participatory process, interviewees argue that the unbalanced power relationships between regional and local governments caused a greater awareness and maturity of their role in relation to the planning discipline of local municipalities. Indeed, an academician argues that *"...The disappointing results of the elaboration process of the RLP have entailed a greater consciousness of local communities and governments through a greater attention to the planning issues. Therefore, in the revision phase, the local public administrations have become accustomed to assert their authority and rights in a more qualified manner..."* Moreover, although in no circumstances has the regional government aimed at achieving an increased awareness of local municipalities as a benefit, this unwanted advantage has had two important consequences. First of all, this growing maturity has balanced the power relationships during the revision phase, in which the regional government has taken a step backwards. Indeed, an official of the regional government suggests that *"...The local municipalities have claimed their right to be involved in the decision-making process of the RLP, which has been perceived as a constraint rather than as an opportunity of development..."* In other words, during the revision phase, little has the regional government aimed at legitimating its supremacy acknowledged over the planning choices. Indeed, including the local municipalities' perspectives has become a key element of the new participatory process. On the other hand, in the elaboration

phase, according to the officials of the regional government, the involvement of local municipalities has been considered useless due to a lack of skills and competences in order to improve the plan. Moreover, this growing consciousness has determined an increased capacity of the local municipalities to represent and understand community's needs.

In relation to the last, the participatory process has allowed correcting some errors of physical maps, enhancing the quality of information. Indeed, maps were not drawn accurately due to a scale of representation entailing an insufficient detail. For instance, an official of the regional government argues that *"...The participatory approaches, used during the elaboration phase, have had the positive results of correcting physical mistakes due to the scarce detail of the cartographic maps. Indeed, some zones, which are part of the same landscape area, do not have the same characteristics, and, for this reason, a greater accuracy of this element was necessary..."* It seems that the local municipalities have a more careful, and detailed vision of their region. For example, the RLP has identified and defined the city centres' boundaries in an imprecise way and this situation has had negative effects. Indeed, city centres are protected because they represent the historical identity of a community. From this perspective, an incorrect identification could cramp the residential expansion of these areas. On the other hand, three of the eight interviewees, one academician and two officials of the regional government, do not recognize any benefits of the participatory process used during the elaboration phase.

The results of questionnaires are divergent from the interviewees' groups (see figure 9). Indeed, only a 5.26 percent and a 10.53 percent of participants identify promotion of social learning and higher quality information respectively as benefits. The majority argues that the participatory process has not achieved any advantage expressed in the literature, without identifying other possible benefits. Indeed, the respondents suggest that the absence of advantages derives from the lack of real participatory processes. Moreover, the divergent view could be caused by a more looking-forward perspective by the side of the academicians due to their unbiased position. However, on the one hand, local municipalities have expected more practical and immediate benefits, unconsciously ignoring the advantage of having covered their role in the planning discipline. On the other hand, practitioners are more connected to economic and practical aspects rather than social issues. These

two observations reflect the trends in figure 10 and 11, where the opinions of practitioners are totally negative with the exception of a significant indecision with respect to the higher quality information.

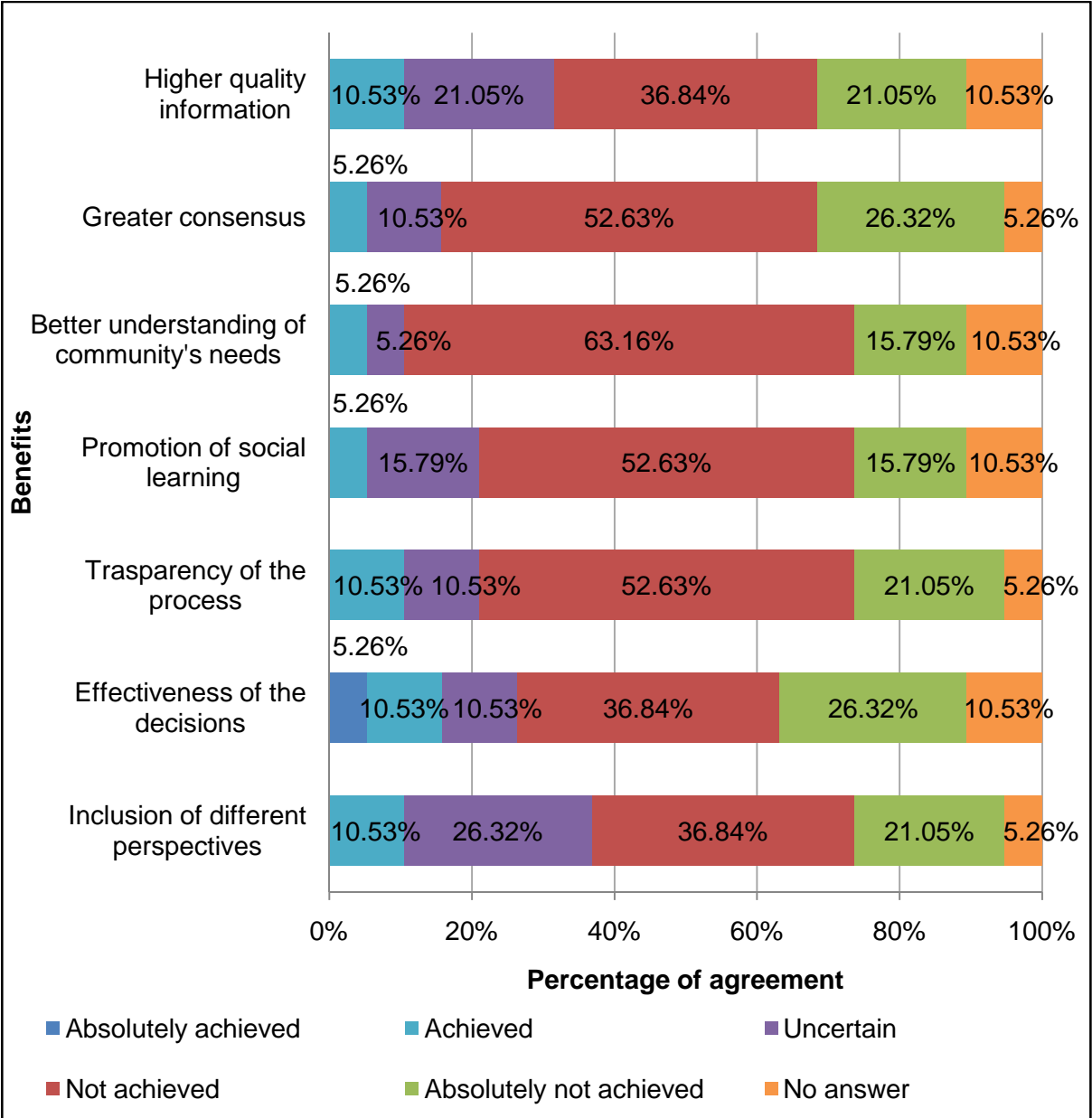


Figure 9 Level of agreement in relation to the achievement of the benefits, identified by literature, by the part of participatory process during the elaboration phase of the RLP



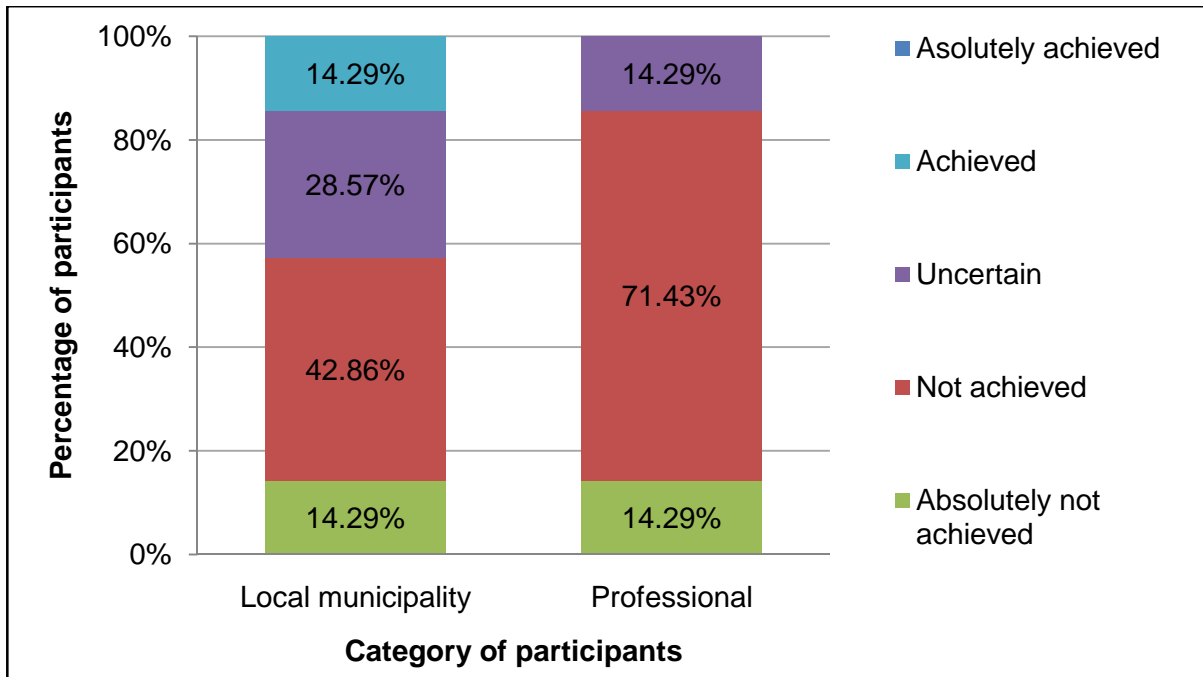


Figure 10 Level of agreement of local municipalities and professionals in relation to the achievement of the benefit “promotion of social learning” during the elaboration phase of the RLP

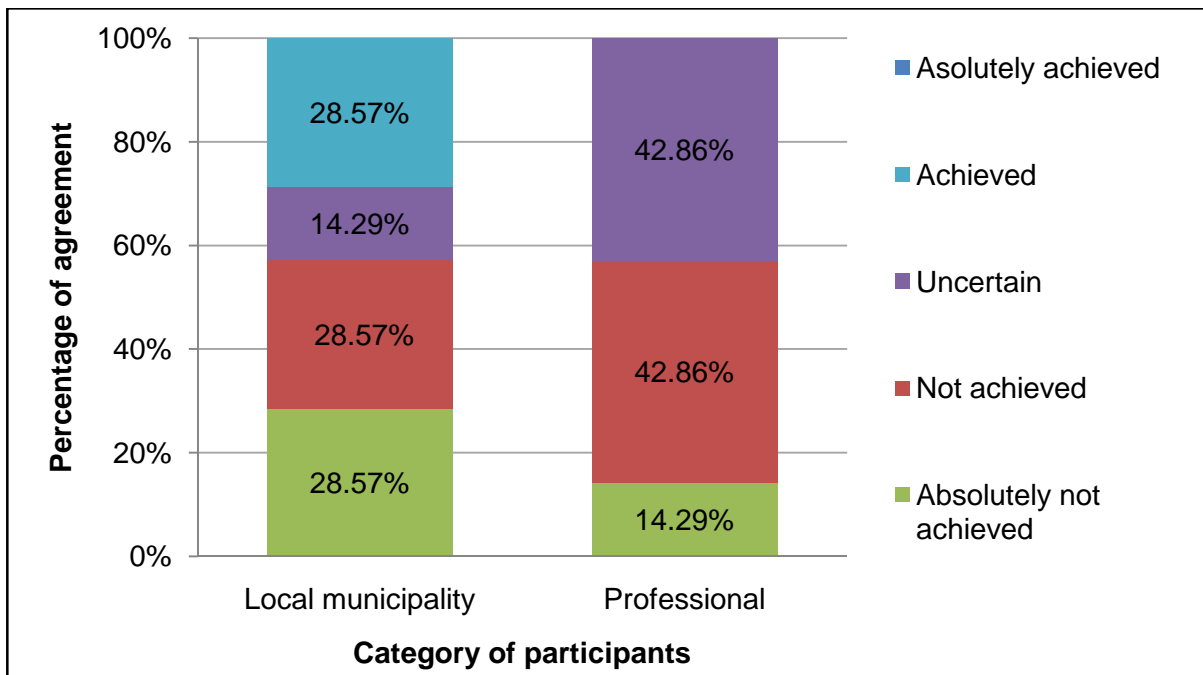


Figure 11 Level of agreement of local municipalities and professionals in relation to the achievement of the benefit “higher quality information” during the elaboration phase of the RLP

In conclusion, it is easy to understand that the participatory process, used during the elaboration phase, has not had benefits by the side of practitioners, local municipalities and building enterprises. Meanwhile, academicians and officials of regional government have identified two possibly positive aspects resulting from the participatory process. This disagreement derives on the one hand from a more experienced acknowledge by the side of scholar and officials of the regional

government about participatory planning processes. On the other hand, respondents of questionnaires, such as practitioners and officials of the local municipalities expected to achieve more concrete and immediate benefits. Moreover, not only do the results of questionnaires prove a wide distrust towards the actions of the regional government, but also they show the need of efficient participatory processes.

### **5.3. PROBLEMS OF THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS**

The participatory processes, used during the elaboration and revision phases have involved different questions that have been identified and classified through a thematic analysis into three categories: political and administrative issues, problems relating to management of the participatory processes and technical questions concerning methods and techniques. In the following paragraphs, the three topics are analyzed in order to identify the negative aspects that have caused the failure of the participatory processes.

#### **5.3.1. POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS<sup>11</sup>**

In Italy, and particularly in Sardinia, planning choices are influenced by political and administrative questions, such as the length of the political mandate. Indeed, any national or regional government wants to achieve real and positive results in order to be elected again. The majority of the interviewees argue that the failure of the participatory process during the elaboration phase has been caused by a lack of willingness to conduct a real participatory process by the side of the regional government. Indeed, an academician argues that *"...The main problem of the participatory moment concerns the essentially-conservative approach of the inclusive process, which has been intentionally aimed at informing local community about a kind of revolution in the regional planning framework, without allowing to establish negotiations taking account of the viewpoints of the regional government and the needs and expectations of the local municipalities..."* From this perspective, according to some interviewees, the aim of this process aimed at establishing the supremacy of the regional government over the planning choices at the regional and local levels. Indeed, in no way was the participatory process conducted to build a

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<sup>11</sup> The thematic analysis of interviews is in the appendix, enclosure III, pp. 148-164. Meanwhile the statistical analysis of questionnaires is in the appendix, enclosure IV, pp. 165-179.

multidirectional dialogue between the regional government and the local municipalities, where the individuation of the communities' needs and the definition of sharing strategies and objectives could represent two important priorities. From these conceptual observations, the RLP represented a strong imposition on behalf of the regional government, which wielded a managerial role. Indeed, for example, an academician argues that *"...The regional government conducted the participatory process with the intention of defining the general planning framework of the RLP, giving the role of completing the knowledge base with detailed information to the local municipalities. Therefore, despite agreeable objectives, this top-down approach entailed the elaboration of a completely unfeasible plan..."*

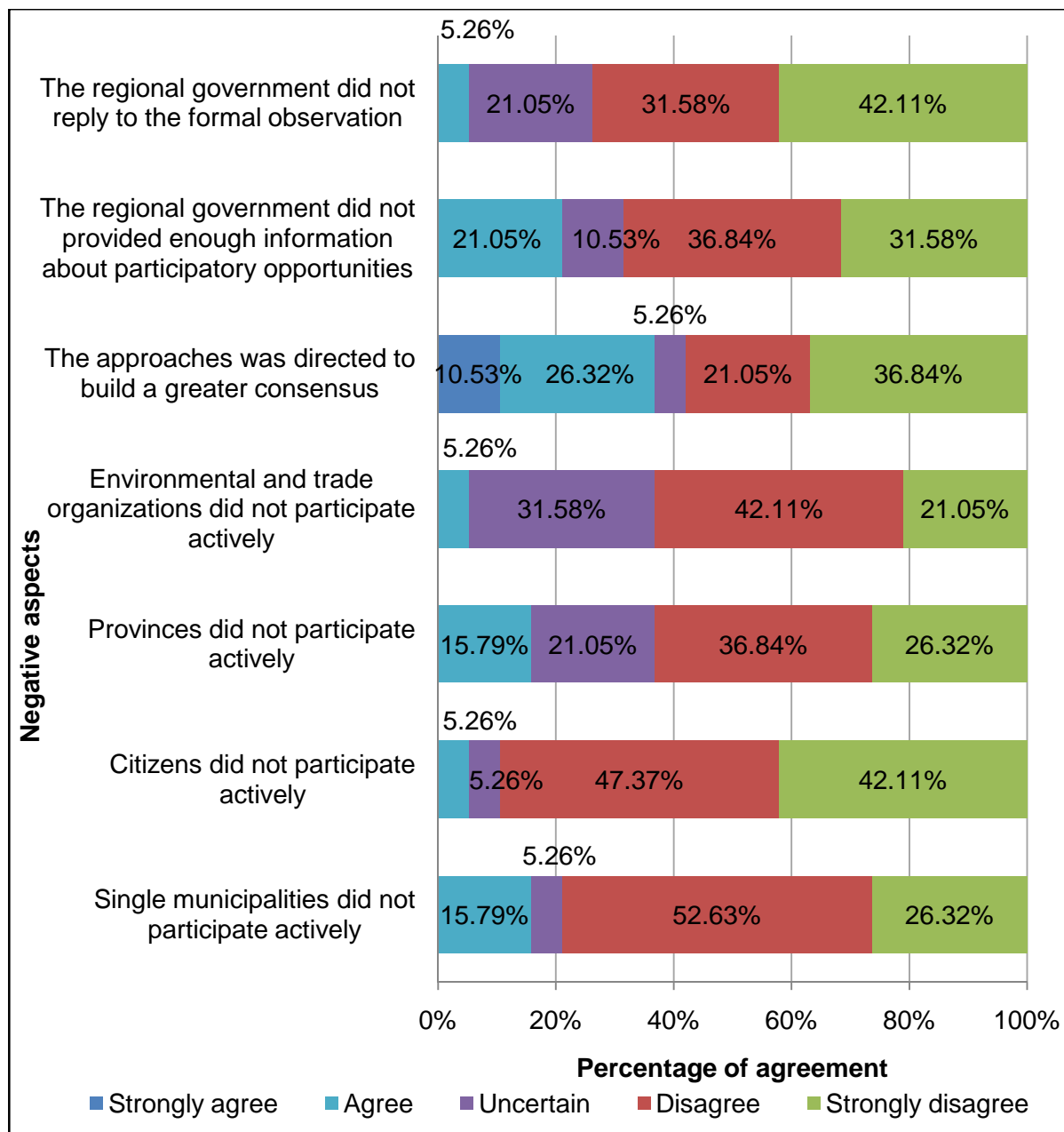
Moreover, during the elaboration phase, the power relationships were imbalanced. Indeed, the strong and managerial regional government structured the participatory process in relation to the idea that local municipalities did not have skills, competences, capacities and culture in order to take part in the planning process in an efficient way. However, not only did the regional government conduct effective information campaigns in order to train-up the technical personnel of the local municipalities, but also it did not elaborate strategies for enhancing skills and competences in order to enable participation. Therefore, the regional government seemed incapable at listening carefully to observations and suggestions of the local municipalities. Moreover, the regional government was not able to implement an effective participatory process, which represents by itself a serious point of weakness. Indeed, for example during the co-planning conferences, no facilitators, who could interact with audience, were involved in the process. Therefore, the dialogue between the regional government and the local municipalities was formal, unidirectional and non-innovative. On the other hand, the local municipalities showed a kind of weakness, no perceiving their territory as familiar due to the technical complexity of the RLP and to a process that was conceived as external and useless.

Moreover, the managerial role played by the regional government influenced the participants' behaviours. They did not contribute to improve the RLP's contents and results. In addition, although explicitly invited, the local municipalities did not participate for three main reasons: two of them are shared by the majority of the interviewees; meanwhile the last is identified only by a few respondents. First of all, participants perceived their role as inefficient and useless. Indeed, as explained by an academician *"...The managerial role of the regional government negatively*

*influenced the participants who did not contribute to the improvement of the RLP. Indeed, the negative perception of their role and of the way the regional government considered their suggestions discouraged the local municipalities and citizens from becoming involved in the participatory process...*” Therefore, although the impossibility to elaborate an entirely acceptable plan was evident, the regional government did not implement a planning process aimed at producing a plan, which could be acceptable, at least partially. Secondly, the local municipalities were not conscious about their role within the planning process. Finally, local municipalities have not had the capacities and skills to take part in the planning process in an efficient way.

Moreover, some interviewees argue that the failure of the participatory process in the elaboration phase is connected to a wider issue. Indeed, in Italy, and particularly in Sardinia, there is not an entrenched culture concerning participatory practices due to a lack of awareness of the importance of participation in support to the decision-making processes by the side of politicians. Indeed, politicians consider participatory practices as bureaucratic obstacles that extend the time length of the planning processes without benefits.

In addition, the majority of respondents puts in evidence that neither actively participation of single municipalities, citizens, province and environmental and trade organizations, nor information about participatory opportunities and replies to formal observations by the side of the regional government occurred problematic aspects of the participatory process during the elaboration phase (see figure 12). On the other hand, in the case of the negative aspect concerning the building of a greater consensus, the imbalance seems less marked. Indeed, the regional government did not aim at achieving political consensus at all as explained previously. The participatory approach was conducted for the purpose of making the local municipalities aware of their limited authority over the local planning choices that were oriented to define a plan implemented by an external authority, which is the regional government.



**Figure 12** Participants who agree in identifying the listed aspects as problems of participatory process used during the elaboration phase

Moreover, the results of questionnaires confirm the outcomes of the interviews. Indeed, a 57.89 percent and a 47.37 percent of respondents (see figure 13) agree that the main causes of no participation were determined respectively by technical complexity that inhibits the citizens' participation and the perception of a respondents' own role as useless. Moreover, respondents identify the distrust in bureaucracy in terms of transparency as a reason for lack of involvement. On the other hand, a 73.68 percent of the respondents disagree with the identification of the absence of interest as a possible cause. Indeed, an official of a local government argues that

“...The participants had the maximum interest which was thwarted by the impossibility to interact within the planning process because the decisions were already taken...”

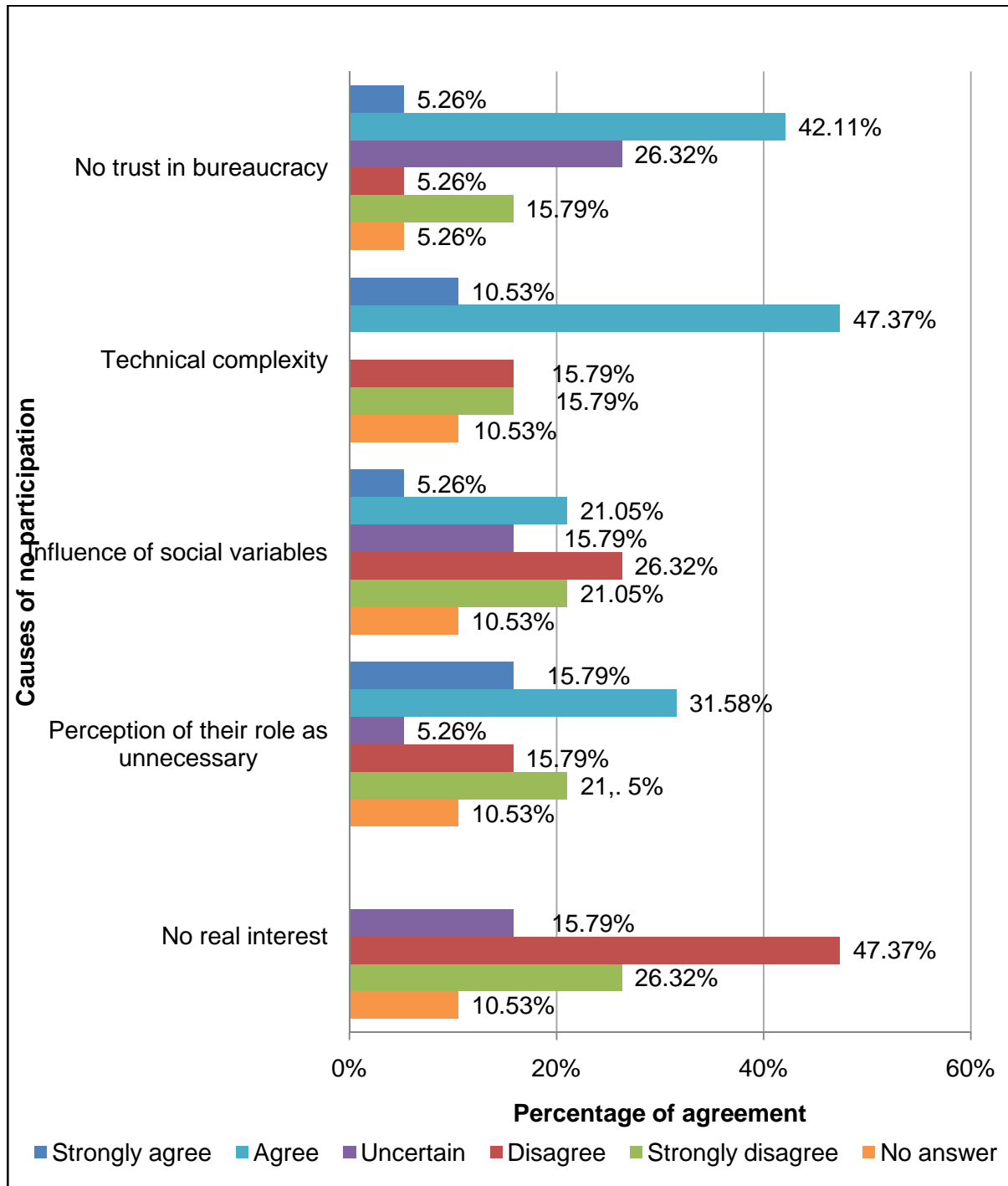


Figure 13 Participants who agree in identifying the listed aspects as causes of not participation during the elaboration phase

In addition, it appears interesting to analyze the specific opinions of the local municipalities (see figure 14) because they were directly involved in the process. First of all, the officials do not see “technical complexity”, “influence of social variable”, “perception of their role as unnecessary”, and “no real interest” as possible

causes of a non-active participation. Moreover, respondents show a certain degree of uncertainty that reaches a significant value of around 30 percent in the case of “no trust in bureaucracy” and “influence of social variables”. In addition, although officials of the local municipalities identify their no real participation as a problem, they do not have a clear idea about the real reasons of this failed inclusion with the exception of “no trust in bureaucracy”. This attitude proves their unconsciousness to understand the political dynamics that have controlled the planning process.

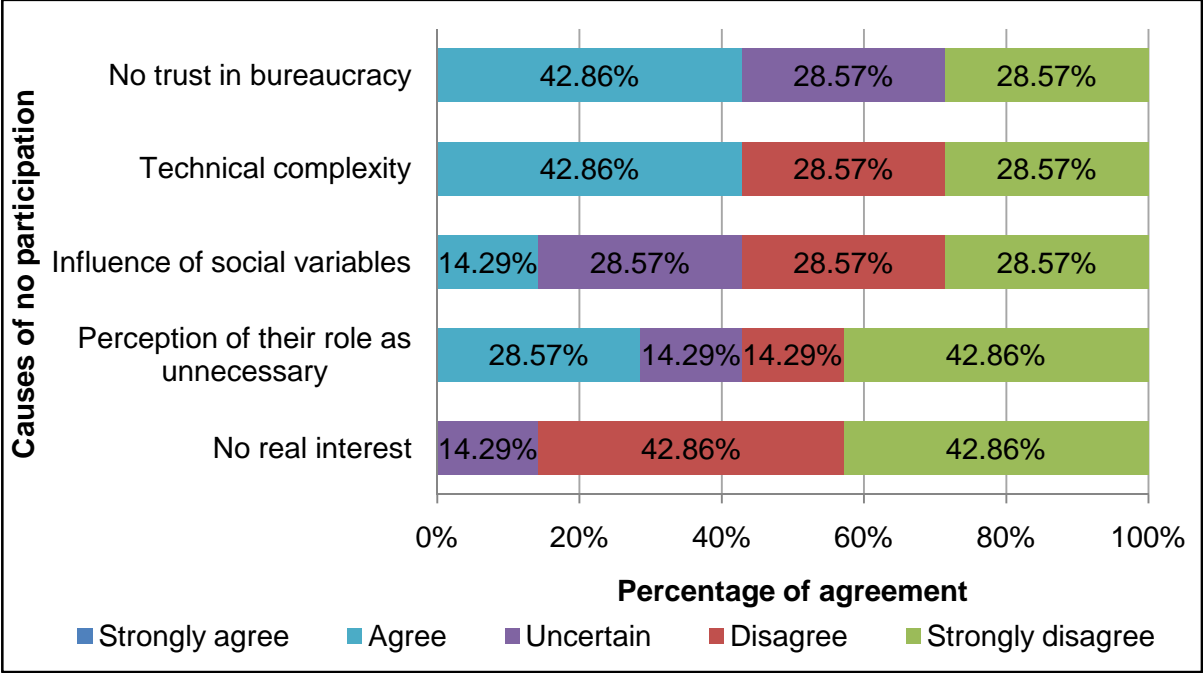


Figure 14 Officials of local municipalities who agree in identifying the listed aspects as causes of not participation during the elaboration phase

On the other hand, practitioners see all these aspects as decisive with the exception of “no real interest” (see figure 15). This certainty could be connected to either their unbiased role or the lack of first-hand information.

In conclusion, although the lack of participation of the interested citizens and groups are analyzed in detail in the next paragraphs concerning the management and organizational issues (see paragraph 5.3.2 pp. 74-81), it could be said that it represents a deliberate tactical stance by the regional government to establish its supremacy over the planning choices at the regional and local levels.

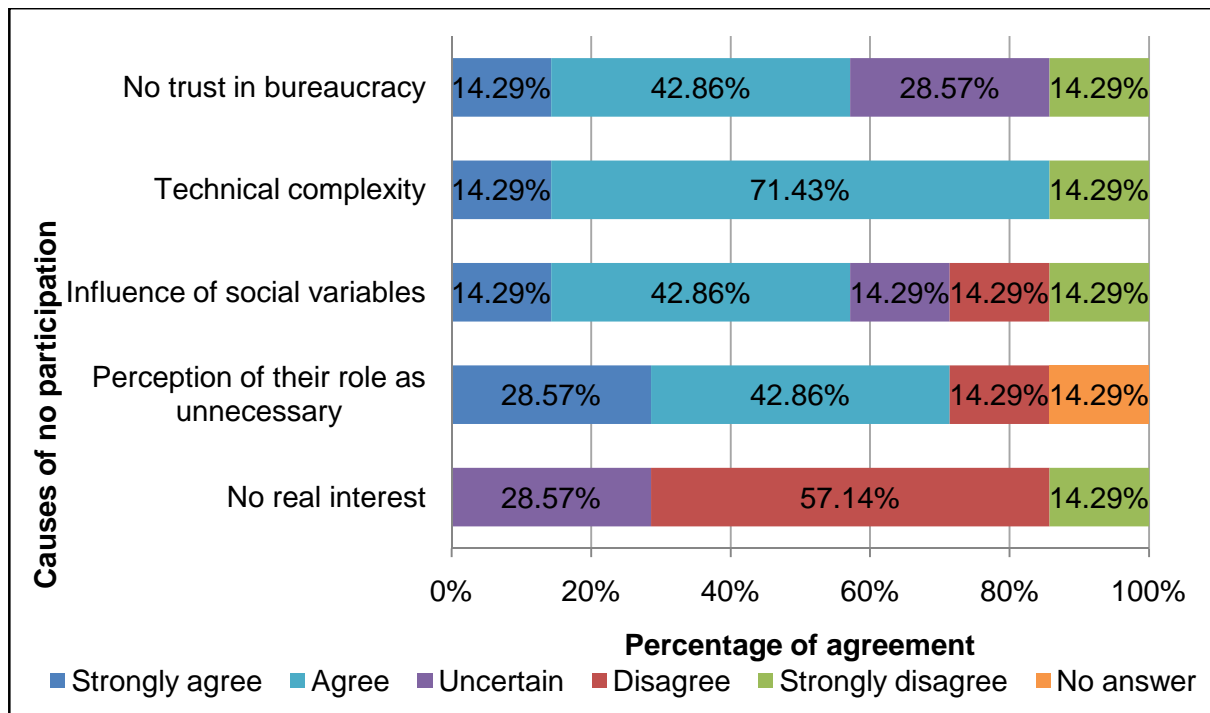


Figure 15 Practitioners agree in identifying the listed aspects as causes of not participation during the elaboration phase

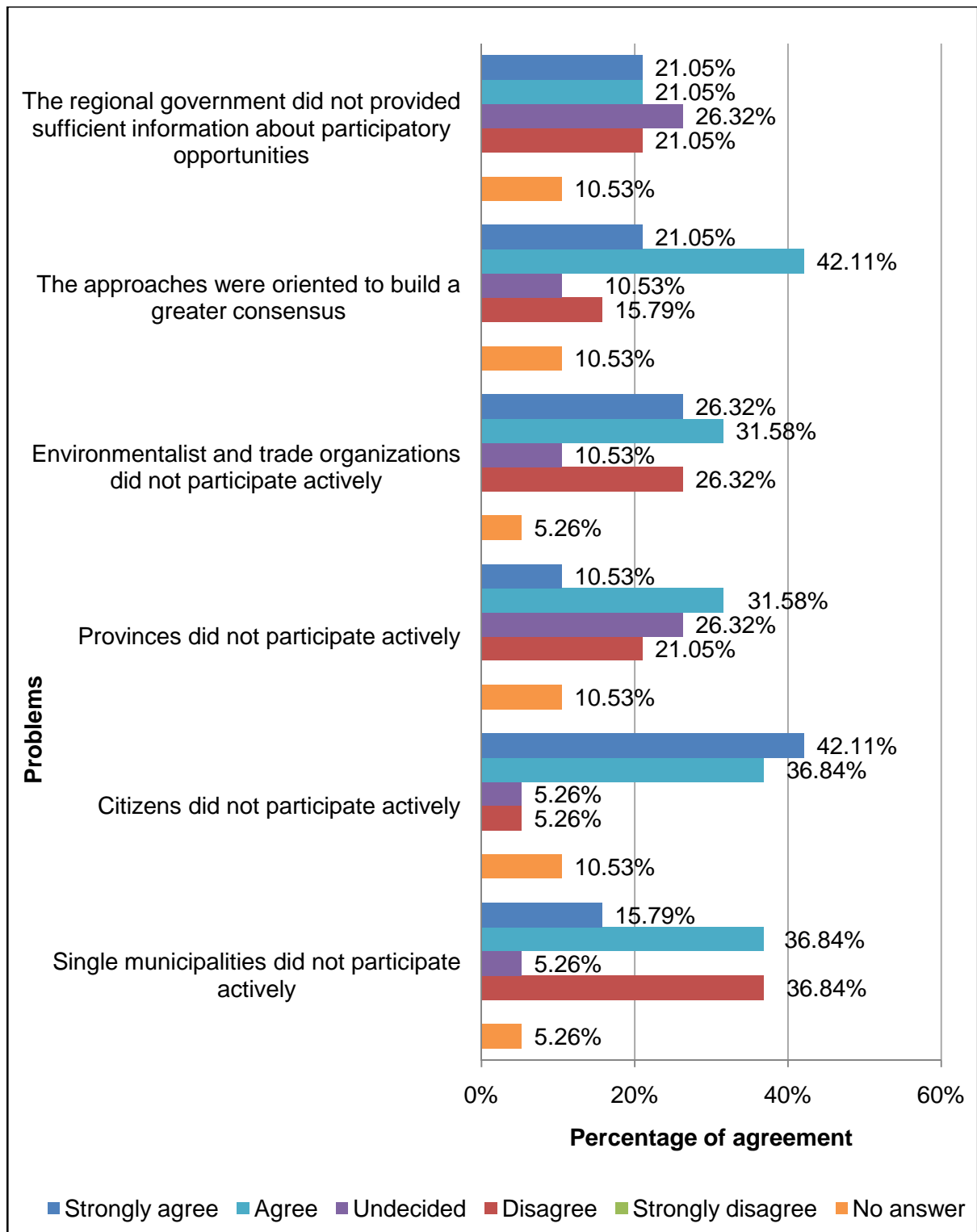
In relation to the revision phase, the results of interviews show the lack of a real and meaningful culture of participatory practices. Indeed, the absence of a shared awareness on the importance of participation in support of the decision-making processes entails, as a consequence, that practitioners and politicians do not have enough skills to apply participatory methodologies in an efficient way. Indeed, an academican argues that *“...When decision-makers are not aware of the value of the participatory processes, the effective utilization of specific techniques is not possible. In other countries, such as Canada and Norway, the existing cultural approach allows conducting real participatory processes...”*

Moreover, the most part of interviewees argue that the new participatory process sought to compensate for the problems of the elaboration phase. However, the regional government did not clarify its planning vision. Indeed, an official of the regional government suggests that *“...In the revision phase, the problem of inclusion of different stakeholders was conceived in wrong terms. Indeed, a participatory process is an encounter and, at the same time, a clash between two or more different opinions and wills that should have the same weight within the planning process...”* From this perspective, the new participatory process has aimed to a wider consensus among municipalities without establishing a real and constructive dialogue where also the regional government’s viewpoints could be argued and discussed. This



circumstance caused some misunderstandings. Indeed, on the one hand the regional government expected that local municipalities would explain problems and solutions. On the other hand, the plan's contents were hard to understand by the local municipalities. From this perspective, participants have expected a clarifying and decisive moment that did not occur. Moreover, stakeholders did not participate actively probably due to distrust towards the regional government, based on the experience of the elaboration phase. In addition, although territorial planning is a regional competence, the local municipalities did not accept a secondary role with respect to the regional government.

This situation is not completely supported by the results of the questionnaires. Indeed, approximately a 63 percent of respondents (see figure 16) agree with the opinion that the participatory process was implemented in order to obtain a greater consensus among local governments. On the other hand, although less marked, the majority of interviewees identify no active participation of municipalities and provinces, and the lack of a sufficient amount of information on participatory opportunities as critical aspects of the participatory process. This trend indicates an increased attention and engagement towards understanding and involving the local municipalities by the regional government. However, important problems still persist such as lack of participation of citizens, environmentalist and trade organizations.



**Figure 16** Participants who agree in identifying the listed aspects as problems of the participatory process used during the revision phase

Moreover, in the revision phase a wide distrust towards the regional government and the perception of its role as unnecessary represented an important issue that influenced the results of participation (see figure 17). The two effects of the issue are important consequences of the negative elaboration phase.

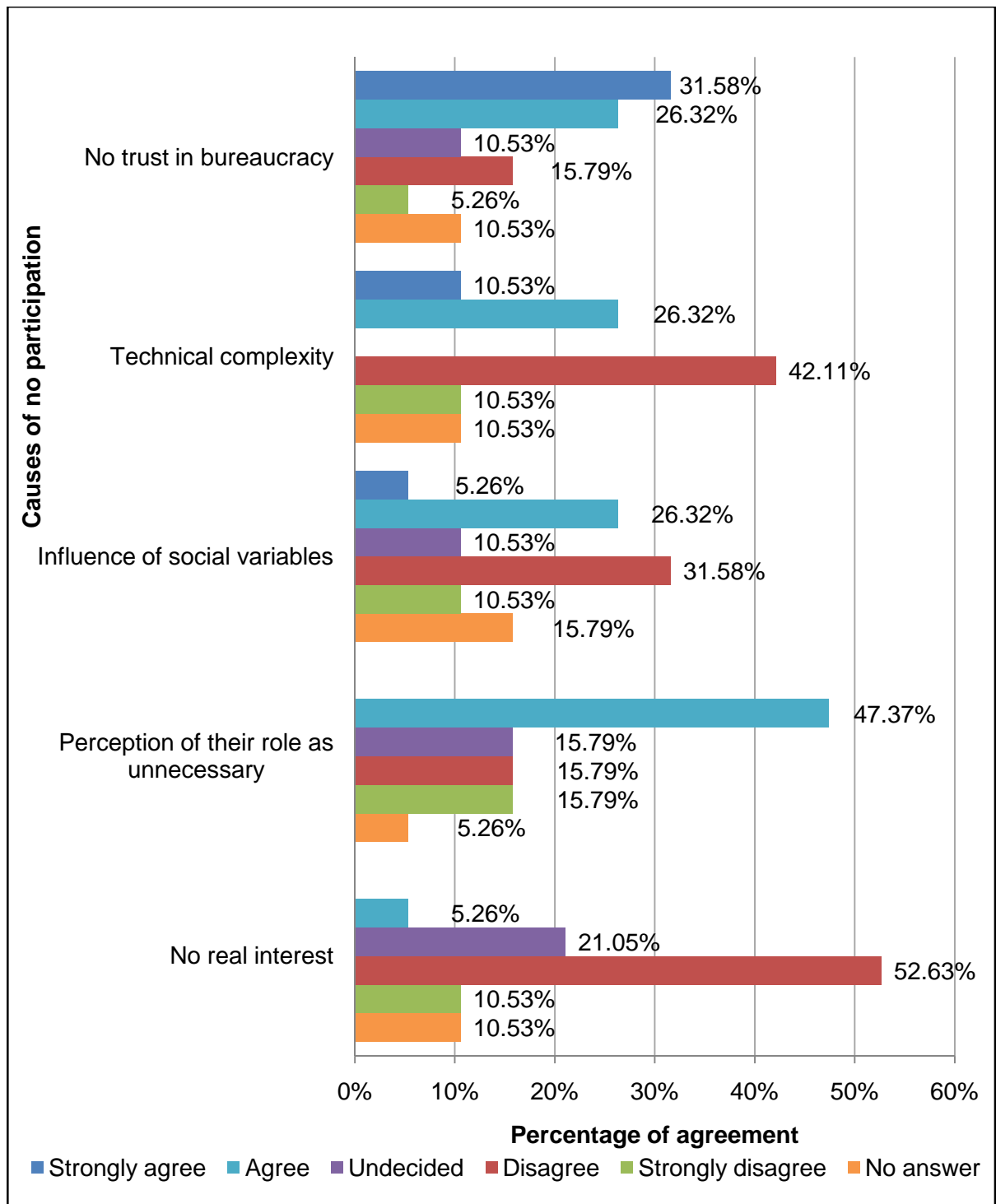
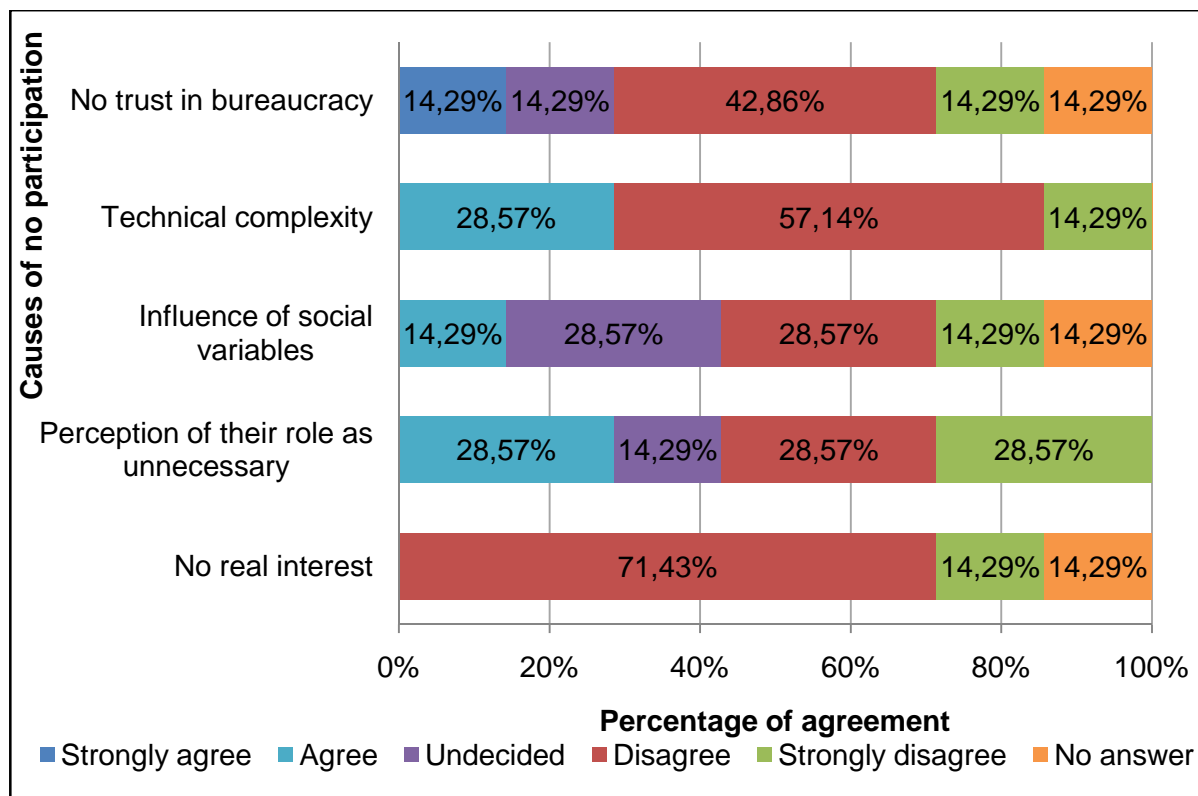


Figure 17 Participants who agree in identifying the listed aspects as causes of no participation during the revision phase

On the other hand, although nearly a 57 percent of officials of local municipalities (see figure 18) identify their no active participation as a problem of the participatory process, a 58 percent of officials of local governments disagree with each possible cause of this failed involvement.



**Figure 18 Officials of local municipalities who agree in identifying the listed aspects as causes of not participation during the revision phase**

Moreover, not even a local municipality has answered to the following question where other possible causes of inactive participation were underlined. This observation continues to indicate the local municipalities' general confusion about the problematic aspects concerning the participatory processes. In other words, officials express their opinions, which are sometimes particularly negative, without clarifying the critical issues that are the fundamentals of their judgments.

However, comparing the results of the two phases (see table 11), the percentage of respondents who agree with defining the aspects put in evidence in the questionnaire as problems, decreases with the exception of the approach which aimed at building a greater consensus. In conclusion, although all problems continue to persist in the revision process, their effects seem less negative. On the other hand, uncertainty increases from the elaboration to the revision phase. Indeed, nobody answers to the question concerning the first process, meanwhile the percentage rises in connection with reference to the second. This trend could be determined by the typical indecision due to unfinished planning processes that do not allow obtaining a precise picture of the situation.

	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>No answer</b>
<i>Single municipalities did not participate actively</i>	elaboration	78.95%	5.26%	15.79%	0
	revision	52.63%	5.26%	36.84%	5.26%
<i>Citizens did not participate actively</i>	elaboration	89.47%	5.26%	5.26%	0
	revision	78.95%	5.26%	5.26%	10.53%
<i>Province did not participate actively</i>	elaboration	63.16%	21.05%	15.79%	0
	revision	42.11%	26.32%	21.05%	10.53%
<i>Environmentalist and trade organizations did not participate actively</i>	elaboration	63.16%	31.58%	5.26%	0
	revision	57.89%	10.53%	26.32%	5.26%
<i>The approaches were directed only to build consensus</i>	elaboration	57.89%	5.26%	36.84	0
	revision	63.16%	10.53%	15.79%	10.53%
<i>The regional government did not provide sufficient amount of information about participatory opportunities</i>	elaboration	68.42%	10.53%	5.26%	0
	revision	42.11%	26.32%	21.05%	10.53%

**Table 11 Participants who agree in identifying the listed aspects as problems of the participatory process used during the elaboration and revision phases**

### 5.3.2. MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES<sup>12</sup>

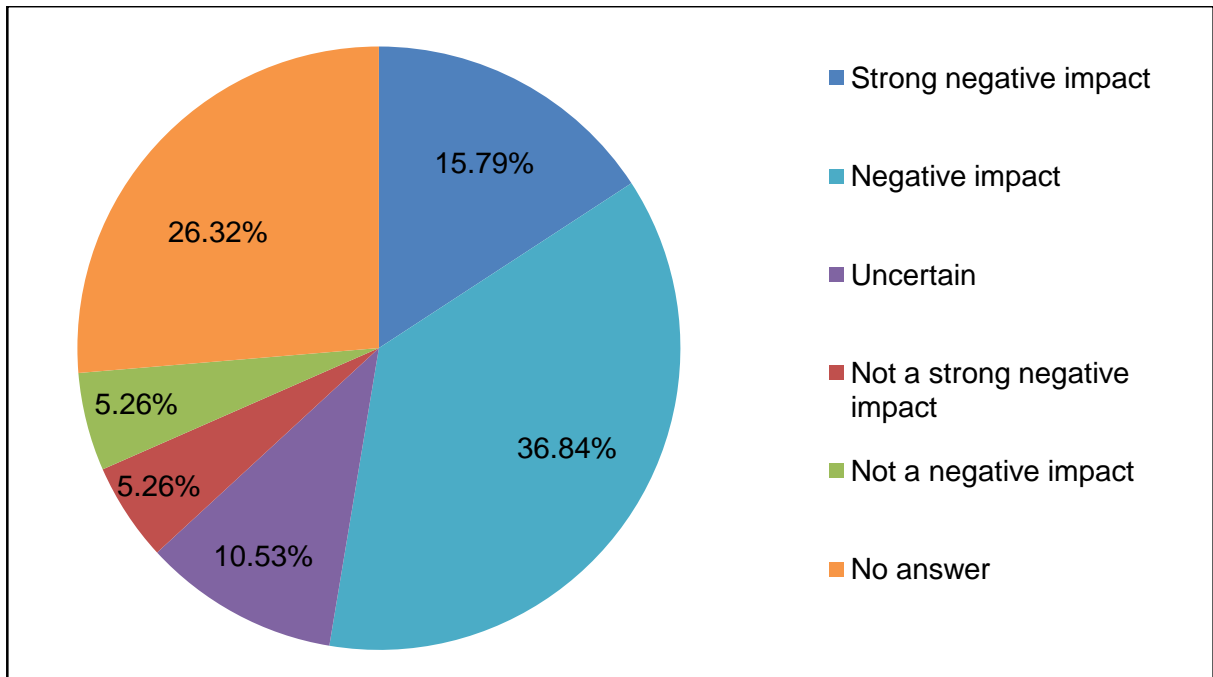
Management and organizational issues influenced the outcomes of a participatory process. Indeed, although based on forward-looking ideas and objectives, the definition of a participatory process needs management competences and skills. From this perspective, the interviewees identify three important issues in the elaboration phase concerning the identification of participants, the stage of the planning process, in which participatory approaches begin, and financial and time questions.

First of all, all interviewees agree with defining the identification of participants as absolutely inappropriate in order to guarantee a real participation in the elaboration and revision phases. For example, an academician argues that *“...The participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases were directed to local municipalities, and by doing so, they excluded some important stakeholders and, as a result, they did not guarantee that the real interests were involved in the process. In Sardinia, the inexperience and immaturity in conducting participatory practices do not allow structuring the process in a proper and efficient way so that all the relevant interests could be taken into account...”* Moreover, an official of the regional government emphasizes that *“...The officials of a local municipality are mediators instead of a community group who should be represented in the public meetings....”*

These data are confirmed by questionnaires. Indeed, nearly a 53 percent of the respondents (see figure 19) considers that the individuation of participants influenced, in negative terms, the success of the participatory processes used during both the elaboration and revision phases.

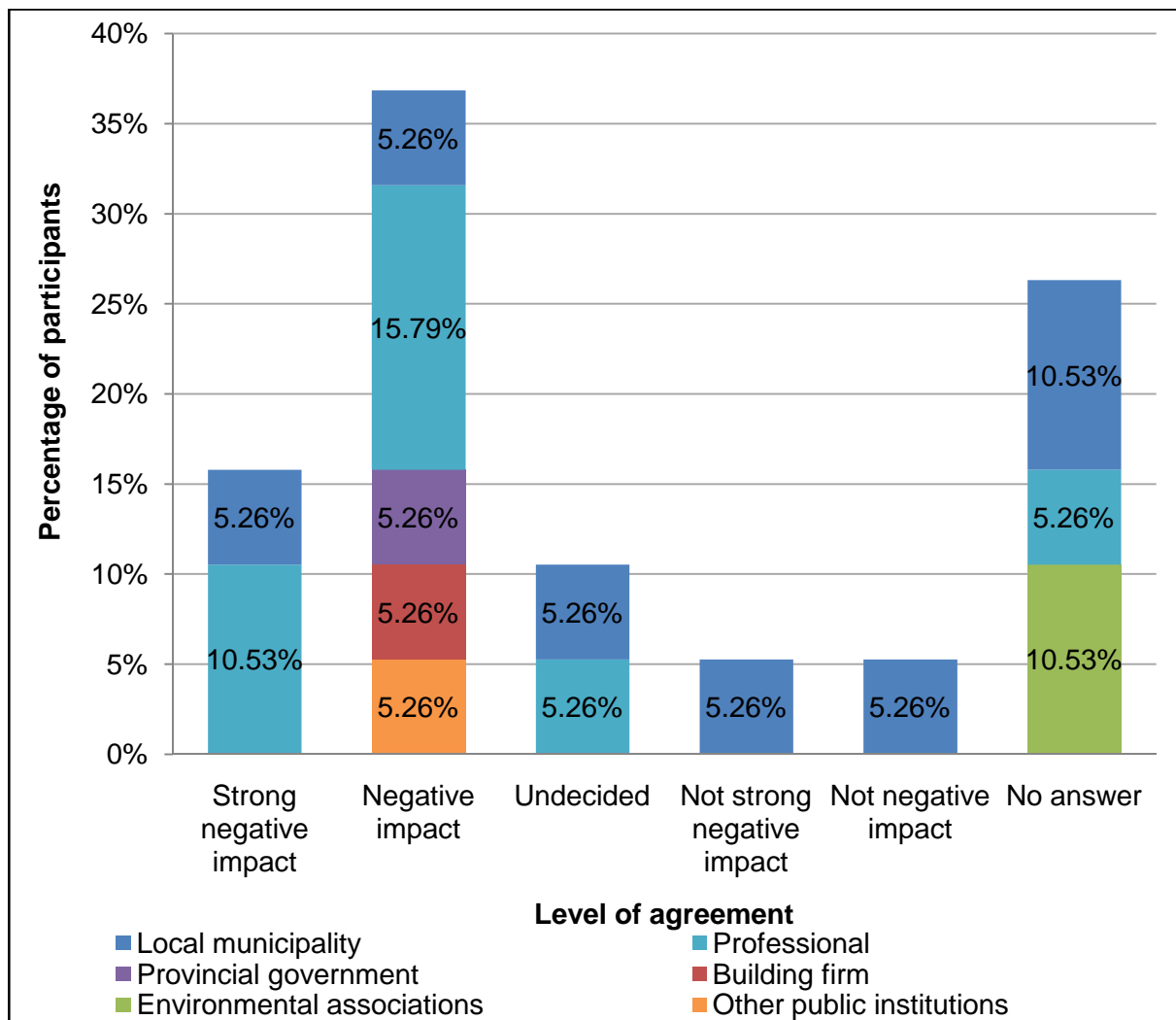
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<sup>12</sup> The thematic analysis of interviews is in the appendix, enclosure III, pp. 148-164. Meanwhile the statistical analysis of questionnaires is in the appendix, enclosure IV, pp. 165-179.



**Figure 19** Level of agreement in relation to the negative influence that the individuation of participants has had on the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases

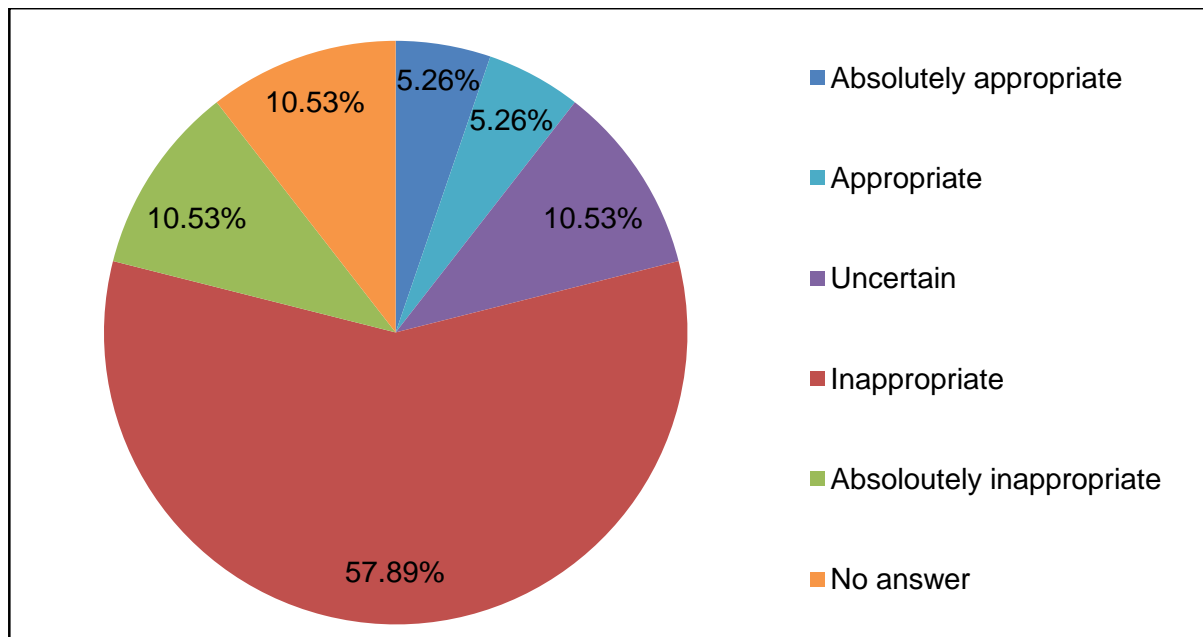
However, as in the previous cases, all the categories, with the exception of local municipalities and environmentalist associations, express a strong negative opinion (see figure 20). In relation to local municipalities, the group of officials does not have a homogenous view. Indeed, a 15.79 percent is either uncertain or it does not give any answer.



**Figure 20** Level of agreement with the negative influence that the individuation of participants has had on the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases in relation to the different categories of participants

Moreover, a 68 percent of respondents (see figure 21) considers the exclusive involvement of public institutions as either inappropriate or absolutely inappropriate. Indeed, according to them, all people and organizations that have interests in the planning process should be involved.



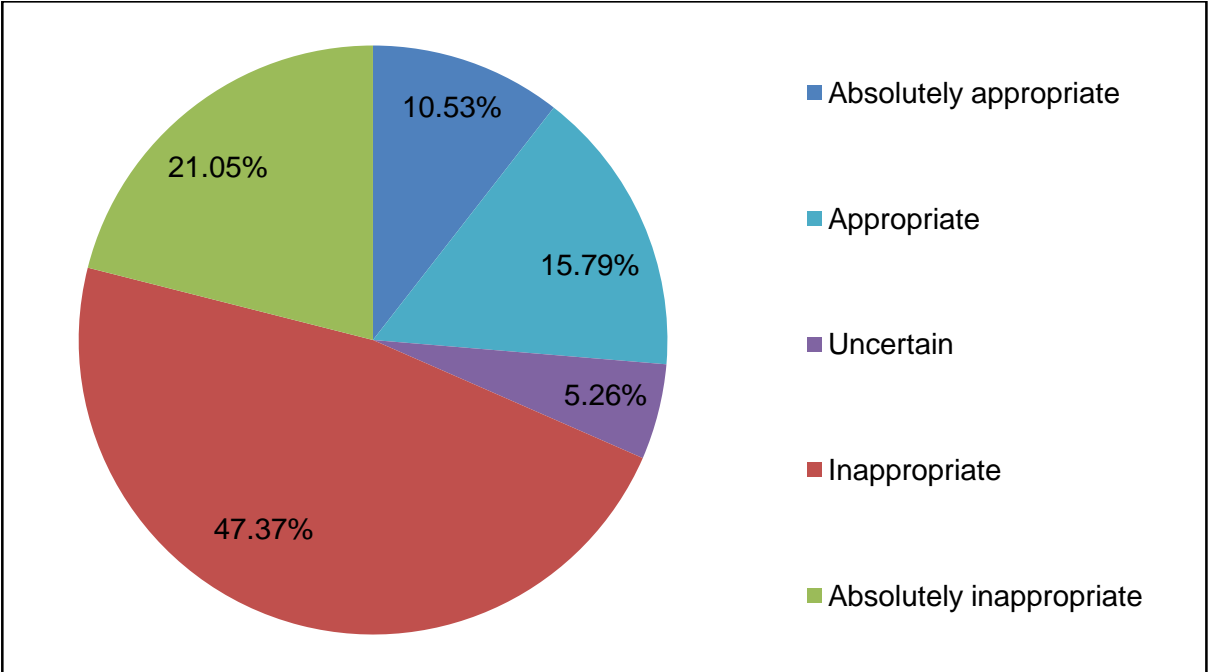


**Figure 21 Level of agreement in relation to the appropriateness of the exclusive involvement of public institutions in the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases**

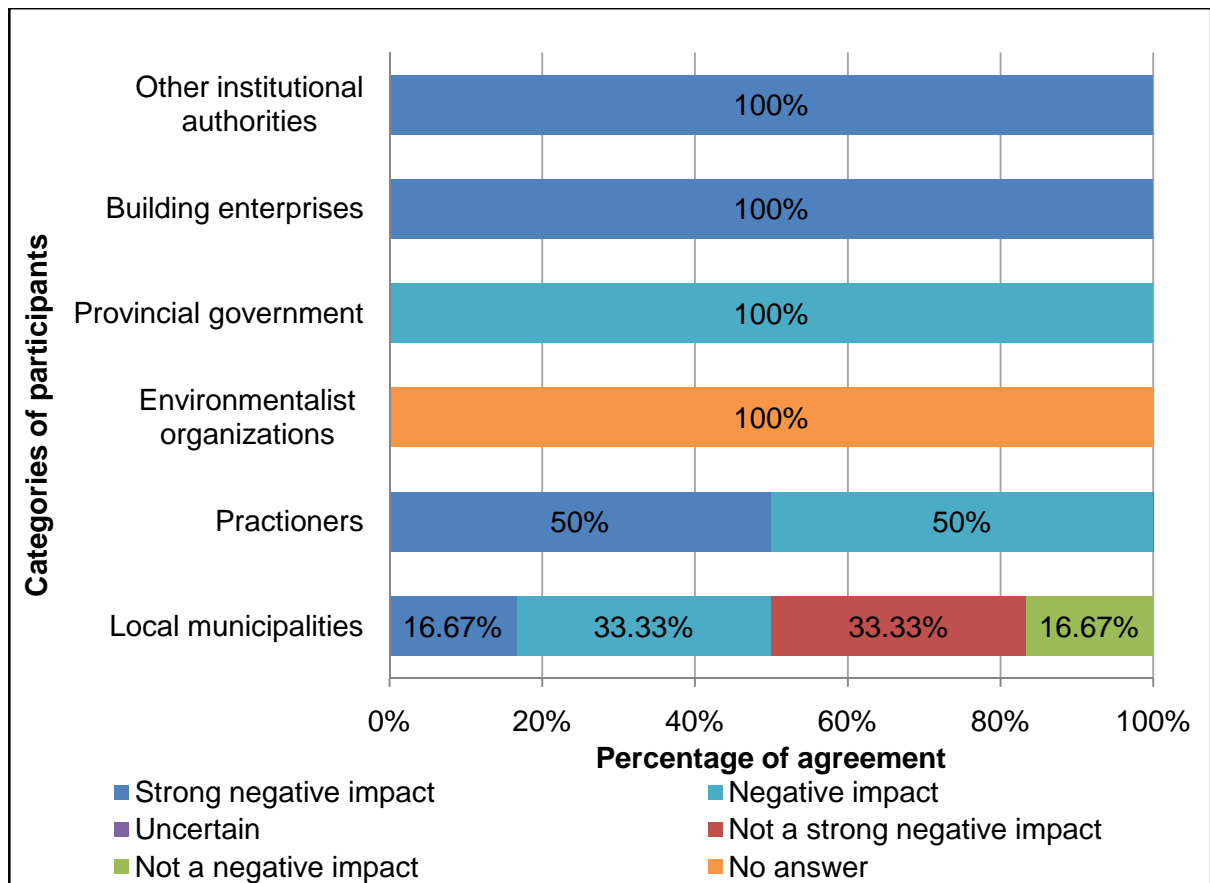
One important reason of this inappropriateness could derive from the lack of precise identification of the stakeholders. Indeed, one interviewee argues that “... The *regional government did not implement any social analysis in order to identify the interests at stake. Indeed, not all the stakeholders were involved in the participatory process, such as the economic, productive and social sector. Moreover, the information and awareness-building campaigns were not been sufficient...*” In addition, this inappropriateness represented a significant fault of the participatory processes. Indeed, according to some interviewees, the involvement of provincial and local administrations in the participants’ identification phase could guarantee a better identification of stakeholders at local level. However, only public institutions were involved, meanwhile other important stakeholders, such as the economic, productive and social sectors should be involved. Moreover, the exclusive involvement of public institutions did not guarantee a real participation because officials of local municipalities do not represent all the local community’s interests and needs exhaustively.

Secondly, interviewees argue that the participatory process was conducted once an advance plan proposal had already been defined due to a specific strategic stance as discussed previously. From this perspective, the definition of shared objectives and strategies has not been possible. Moreover, an interviewee suggests that “...*On the contrary, a real participatory process should be implemented parallel to elaboration, implementation and monitoring of the planning process through the*

establishment of new public institutions, which study and implement participatory practices...” This opinion is also confirmed by the results of questionnaires. Indeed, a 68 percent of respondents (see figure 22) considers implementing the participatory process once an advanced plan proposal had already been elaborated either inappropriate or absolutely inappropriate. Moreover, a 63 percent argues that the stage of the planning process in which the participatory processes begin had a negative impact on the success of the participatory process. On the other hand, although this opinion is strongly shared by the most part of the respondents, the officials of the local municipalities do not share the same sound opinion (see figure 23).



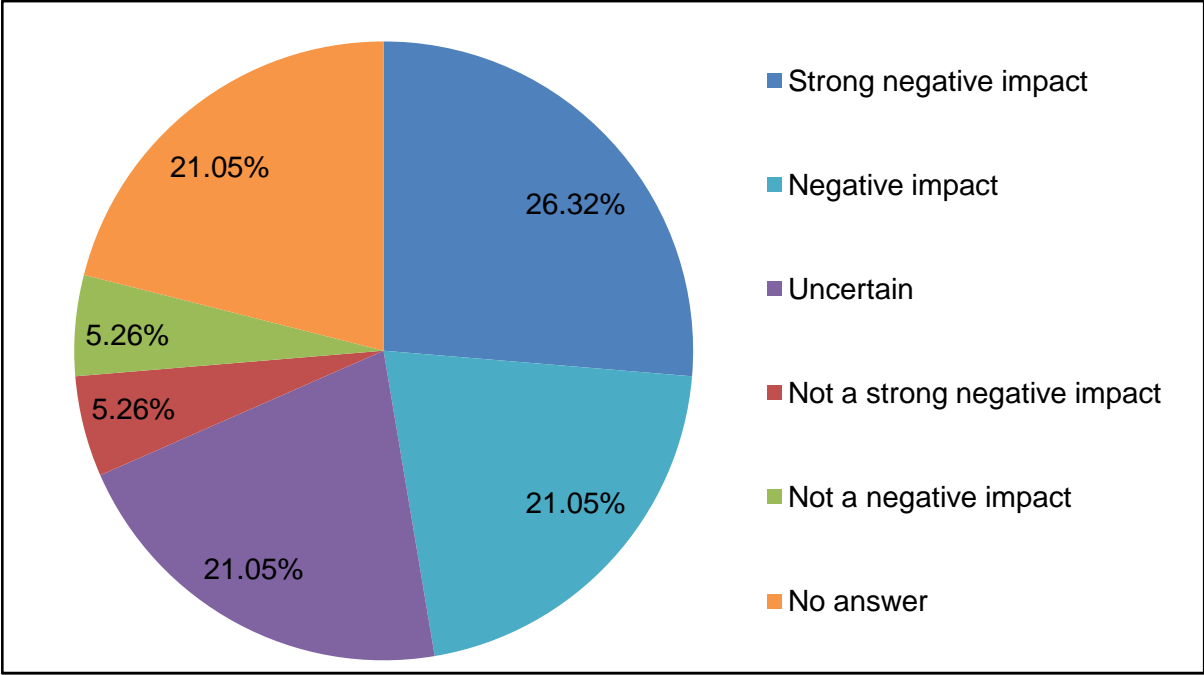
**Figure 22 Level of agreement on the negative influence that the stage of the planning process in which the participatory approaches begin had on the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases**



**Figure 23** Level of agreement on the negative influence that the stage of the planning process in which the participatory approaches begin had on the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases in relation to the different categories of participants

Thirdly, the time problem represents an important factor in relation to the effectiveness of the participatory process in the elaboration phase. Indeed, according to the interviewees, the regional government did not spend sufficient time in order to allow a real involvement of participants. Moreover, this limited time had an important consequence that is inactive participation of the local municipalities. Indeed, the time to analyze and examine the plan was really limited in order to understand the contents and objectives. On the other hand, in the revision phase the regional government spent excessive time among the three typologies of conferences. From this perspective, it is not clear if the regional government really meant to implement the new plan in relation to results of the participatory process. In addition, the financial problem represents an important negative aspect, as well. Indeed, the regional government did not spend sufficient financial resources to train up officials of local municipalities in order to implement informative and awareness campaigns about the plan's principle and about the reasons of some planning choices in both the elaboration and the revision phases. Moreover, only in the elaboration phase, no experts of participatory practices such as facilitators were included in the

management team. In addition, the lack of willingness to implement a real participatory process and the shortage of funds did not allow to develop a deep analysis of the territory. Indeed, landscape includes material and immaterial values, which are sometimes difficult to understand for people who do not live there. In other words, a community recognizes some parts of the region as representative of its historical and cultural identity, and, for this reason, these places need protection, although they do not possess a universally-recognized value. Moreover, the negative impact of time and financial problems is also recognized by the respondents. Indeed, a 47 percent of the respondents (see figure 24) argues that the costs of the process in terms of money and time influenced the effectiveness of the participatory processes negatively during the elaboration and the revision phases of RLP. On the other hand, a significant element is represented by the high percentage of those who are uncertain or do not provide any answer, which reach around a 42 percent.



**Figure 24 Level of agreement on the negative influence that the costs of the process in terms of money and time has had on the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases**

In conclusion, the management and organizational issues were important problems in the elaboration phase. Indeed, the identification of participants, the stage of the planning process in which the participatory approaches begin and the limited time and resources compromised the results and the quality of the participatory process. On the other hand, the revision phase solved some of these problems such as the limited time and the use of financial resources in order to include experts of participatory practices in the management team. In conclusion, all these problems

can be traced back to a lack of awareness and culture about the importance of participatory practices in support of decision-making processes.

### **5.3.3. TECHNICAL ISSUES CONCERNING TOOLS AND APPROACHES<sup>13</sup>**

The appropriate use of participatory tools and techniques can influence the effectiveness of participatory processes. During the elaboration phase, the regional government used the co-planning conferences and the participatory moments established by law as approaches to define a participatory process. Moreover, the website “Sardinia Territory” is a very effective tool to inform community about the plan’s content (see paragraphs 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 pp. 41-47).

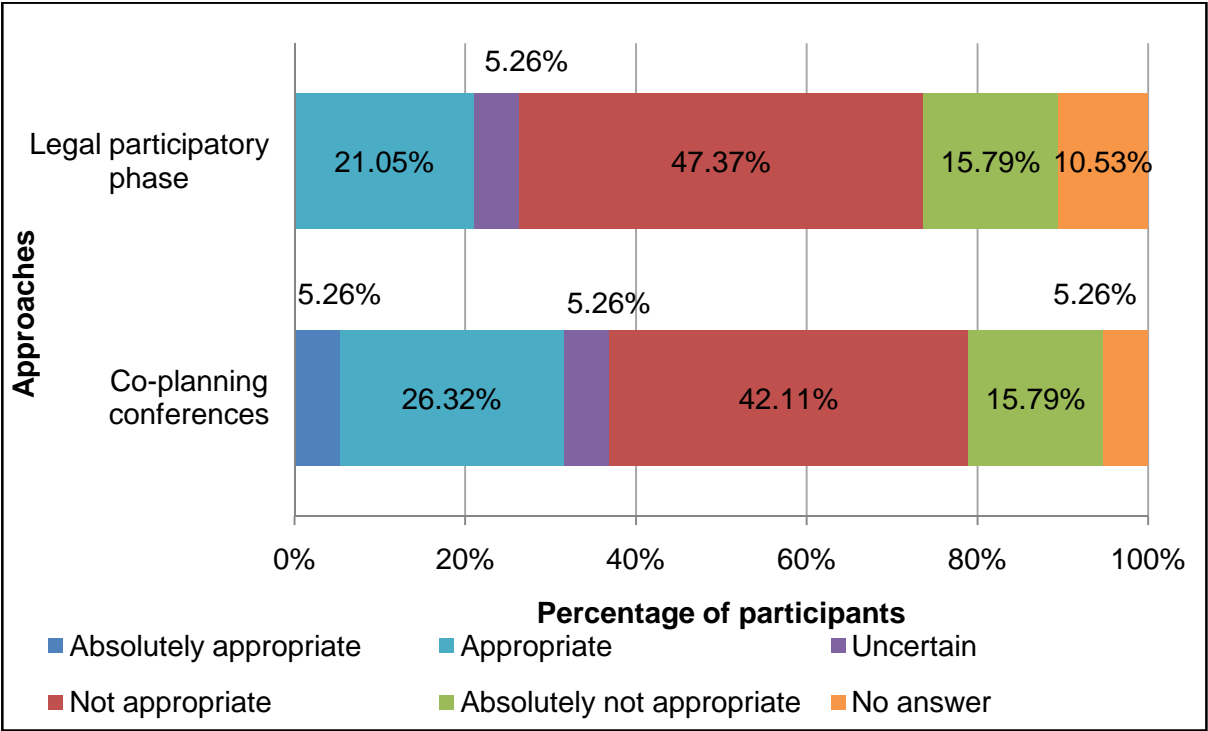
In relation to the elaboration phase, the most part of the interviewees consider the co-planning conferences informative phases instead of a real participatory approach. Indeed, they were characterized by bureaucratic aspects in terms of organization and management of the process, rather than aimed at promoting an effective participation. Moreover, as an interviewee argues, “...*The co-planning conferences did not obtain efficient results because they represented a formal participatory approach in terms of information of the public. Indeed, there were officials of the regional government who spoke in a dogmatic way to local municipalities that did not contribute in terms of plan’s contents...*” From this perspective, the regional government did not use any real participatory method or technique. Indeed, the co-planning conferences were formal and unidirectional. In addition, conferences were organized from February to April 2006. Therefore, local municipalities did not have sufficient time to be really proactive. In addition, no facilitators were involved in the process. These data are confirmed also by questionnaires. Indeed, a 58 percent of respondents (see figure 25) argues that the co-planning conferences were inappropriate in order to build shared scenarios of objectives and strategies.

In relation to the participatory phases established by law, the situation is fairly similar to the previous one. Indeed, all interviewees agree that this participatory approach was not sufficient in order to guarantee a real participation in support of the decision-making processes. Indeed, this phase concerns the possibility of examining the plan proposal of the RLP and of expressing opinions, objections and

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<sup>13</sup> The thematic analysis of interviews is in the appendix, enclosure III, pp. 148-164. Meanwhile the statistical analysis of questionnaires is in the appendix, enclosure IV, pp. 165-179.

observations within 30 days. From this view, as an interviewee suggests, “... *The participatory phases, which are established by law, do not represent a real participatory process for two reasons. First of all, the RLP was a very complex planning tool and citizens did not have skills and capacities to understand its contents. Secondly, the time to express observations was really limited...*” In addition, the final version of the RLP has not explained what issues and considerations had been the upstream of this plan. Moreover, these observations have not received any responses. Therefore, citizens did not perceive their role as necessary. These remarks are confirmed by the questionnaires. Indeed, a 63 percent (see figure 25) of respondents argue that the participatory phases established by law were inappropriate in order to guarantee a real participation. From this perspective, this point is closely connected to the previous problem, according to which, participants did not perceive their role as necessary. Indeed, the participatory phases established by law concern the presentation of observations by the side of citizens, officials of local municipalities and whoever is interested. However, the legislative framework does not establish proper responses to these observations.

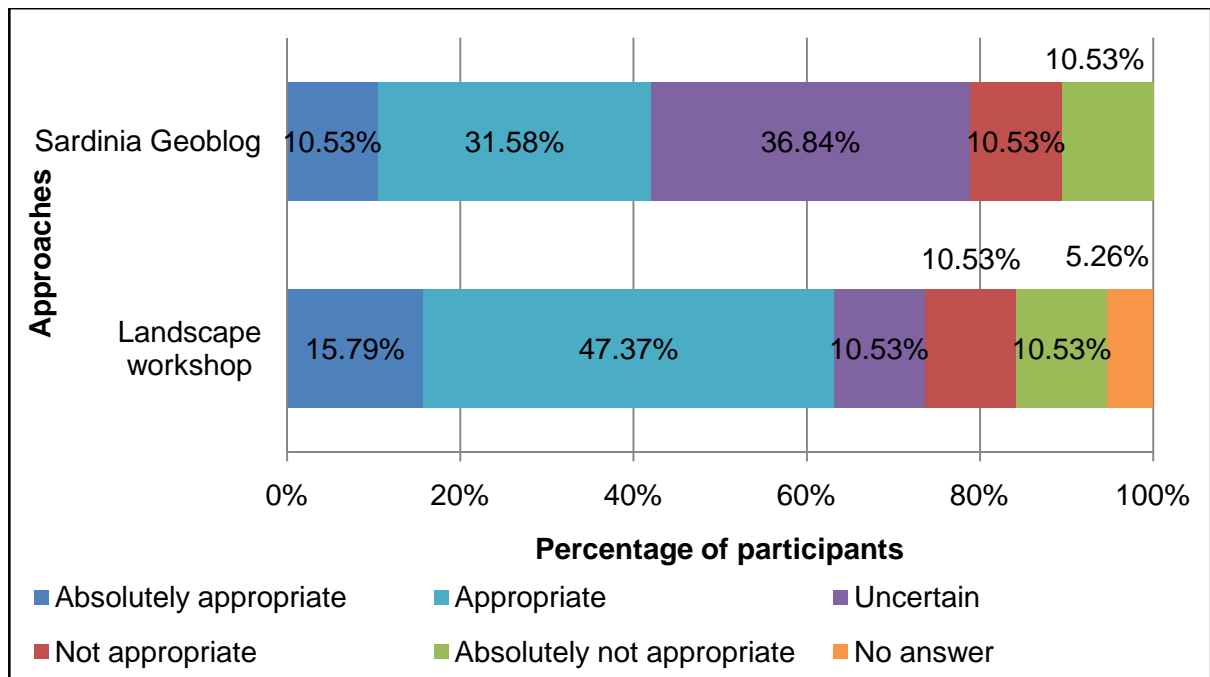


**Figure 25 Level of agreement in relation to the appropriateness of the approaches used during the elaboration phase**

During the revision phase, the regional government used the so-called “RLP workshops” to implement participation into the RLP process and the Sardinia Geoblog as a tool. Some interviewees, in particular officials of the regional

government consider the “RLP workshops” absolutely appropriate and useful in order to guarantee a real participation. However, an academician considers this approach not really advanced, though he notices improvements generated by the new participatory process compared to the previous one. Indeed, a group of facilitators was involved in order to increase the participants’ awareness of their role. These observations are confirmed by the questionnaires. Indeed, a 63 percent of the respondents (see figure 26) considers the “RLP workshops” appropriate in order to build-up shared scenarios of objectives and strategies. Moreover, this opinion is strongly shared also by the officials of local municipalities, who represent a 71 percent.

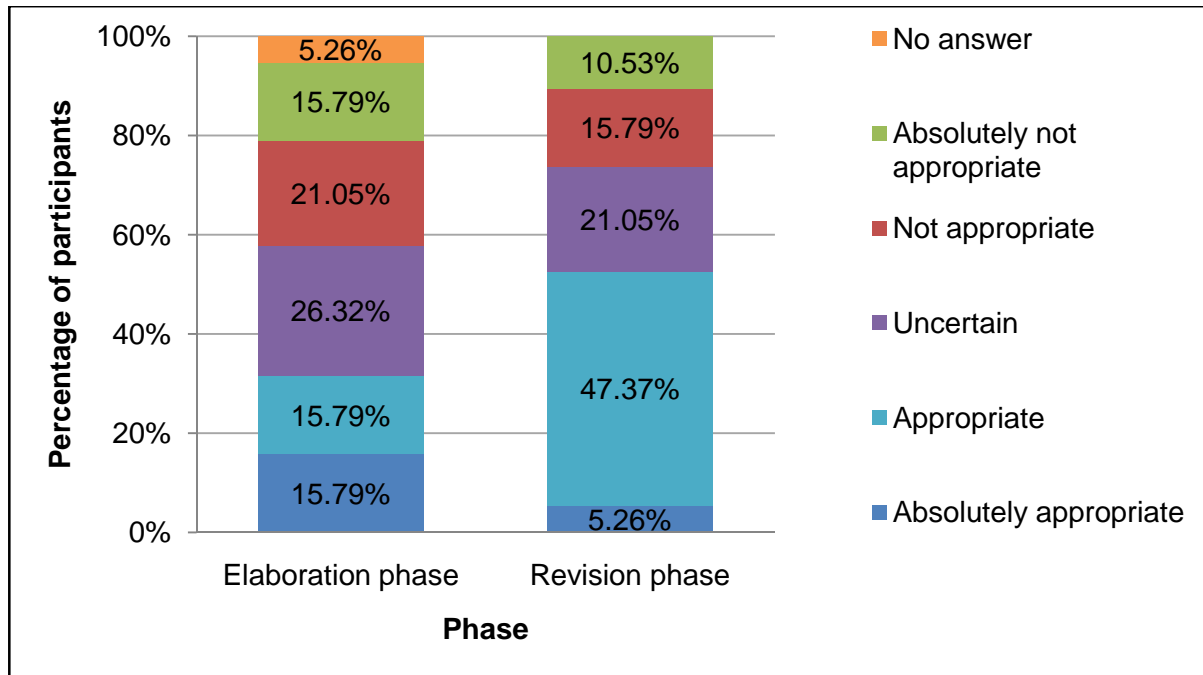
In relation to Sardinia Geoblog, an official of the regional government considers this tool absolutely appropriate. However, the most part of interviewees argue that Sardinia Geoblog was not effective for two reasons, as follows. First of all, there was probably distrust with respect to the regional government’s actions. Secondly, the officials of the local municipalities did not have enough time to interact through this new tool. Moreover, an academician argues that “... *The technological platform of Sardinia Geoblog is efficient even if it copied the free functionalities of Google map. However, there were some management problems, such as the lack of a prior guideline on data elaboration in order to allow the integration among geographic information coming from different sources. Indeed, for example, a church can be represented by a point or a polygon. In addition, there was not a strong connection to the real planning processes...*” These data are not confirmed by the questionnaires. Indeed, a 42 percent of the respondents (see figure 26) argue that Sardinia Geoblog was either appropriate or absolutely appropriate in order to guarantee a real participation. On the other hand, the percentage of this uncertainty is significant, reaching around a 37 percent. Moreover, in the technological platform there are not any posts that should prove the real change of information. From this perspective, it is easy to understand that although this kind of tool shows strong future potentialities, its real use created some management problems.



**Figure 26 Level of agreement in relation to the appropriateness of the approaches used during the revision phase**

Moreover, the website Sardinia Territory was used in both elaboration and revision phases. All interviewees agree that this website should be useful in order to inform the local communities on the plan's contents. An academician argues that *"...The website Sardinia Territory is an innovative tool. However, the utility of some functionality is poor. Indeed, the financial resources, which were spent to develop it, were ten times bigger than other European cases. In conclusion, Sardinia Territory represents an informative phase, not a real participatory tool..."* Indeed, on the one hand, the information was unidirectional without allowing having feedbacks from participants. On the other hand, the information was technically complex, not allowing a real understanding of the plan's contents. In other words, Sardinia Territory was a helpful tool for participation, but it did not guarantee a real participation. These observations are partially confirmed by the questionnaires. Indeed, the respondents of questionnaires highlighted a difference in the use of the tool Sardinia Territory between the elaboration and the revision phases. Indeed, in the first case, the most part of the respondents, around a 37 percent (see figure 27) consider this tool as either absolutely not appropriate or inappropriate. Moreover, the percentage of uncertain respondents is quite high, representing a 32 percent. On the other hand, in the revision phase, a 53 percent defines the website as either appropriate or absolutely appropriate, emphasizing an improvement with respect to its contents and use.





**Figure 27** Level of agreement in relation to the appropriateness of the tool Sardinia Territory in the elaboration and revision phases

In conclusion, in the elaboration phase there was a problem concerning approaches and tools. Indeed, both co-planning conferences and participatory phases established by law did not guarantee a real participation. On the other hand, the revision phase used approaches that took into account the participants' needs and interests. However, a more conscious awareness and culture of the importance of participation would be necessary in order to take further steps forward.

#### **5.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The analysis of data from the interviews and questionnaires shows some improvements of the participatory processes from the elaboration to the revision phases, as the previous subchapters explain. On the other hand, some problems have remained such as the identification of participants.

Moreover, the participatory approach used during the elaboration phase can be assimilated to the interpretation of Rowe and Fewer (2000) that it is based on the analysis of the direction of communication flows (see paragraph 2.2.1, pp. 11-13). From this perspective, the top-down and unidirectional communication flow that characterized the elaboration phase could be interpreted as the lower level of a real participatory process. On the other hand, the participatory process, used during the revision phase, can be included in the last typology identified in the literature review,

(see paragraph 2.2.1, pp. 11-13) where participation is interpreted in relation to goals of the planning processes. In particular, Michener (1998) argues that the planner-centred participation represents a legitimacy form of objectives and strategies in order to make the planning process easier.

In addition, the three different topics point out a main theme concerning the impact of political ideas on the planning decisions. This situation is clearly traceable in the elaboration phase; meanwhile, in the revision phase political influences seem less important. Indeed, some problems of the elaboration phase may be solved if the regional government does not implement a managerial approach to the planning processes. Moreover, the Sardinian regional government sought to identify and define shared scenarios of objectives and strategies. However, an increased attention and awareness of the importance of participatory practices could be ensued by a specific idea. Indeed, the RLP established in the first phase, was elaborated by a regional government which belong to an opposite political alignment. Therefore, this increased awareness may conceal a specific political aim to represent itself as a forward-looking administration in order to increase consensus among citizens, local and provincial administrations, practitioners and the economic and productive sectors. On the other hand, this hypothesis could be confirmed or rejected only by the new RLP that will demonstrate whether the participatory process influenced the planning process.

Moreover, management and organizational issues are closely connected to the strong role of the regional government, as well. Indeed, for example, the timing problem is not purely organizational, because it derives from a political aspect. Indeed, any regional government has remained in office for five years. It is clear to understand that in advance of mandate end, any regional government want to obtain results which could prove its forward-looking job in order to achieve a greater consensus among citizens and community in general, and from this perspective, to be elected again.

In addition, also the appropriateness of approaches and tools can be connected with political and management issues. Indeed, the analysis highlightes that the main problems of approaches and tools are linked to incapacity or not will of the regional government to conduct a real participatory process.

In conclusion, the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revisions phases of RLP show the difficulty, as expressed by literature review, to translate theoretical concepts about participation into practice.

## 6. PROCEDURAL PROTOCOL

This section aims at elaborating a new procedural protocol in order to define a participatory process in support of a plan, elaborated, adopted and approved at the regional scale. On the other hand, the elaboration of the procedural protocol represents an empirical study based on the results of the interviews and questionnaires and on the analysis of the literature.

Moreover, the line of the research intends to shift from the macro to the local level. First of all, we propose a literature review (see chapter 2, pp. 6-21), which is followed by an analysis of the available information (see chapter 5, pp. 50-87) concerning the Sardinian RLP case study. Finally, we define a procedural protocol that could be applied to plans concerning the regional scale independently from the specific context (see figure 28).

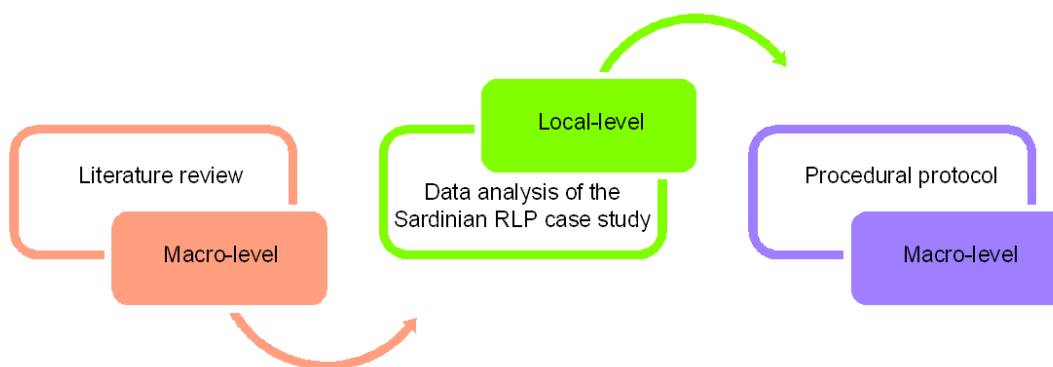


Figure 28 The line of the research

The choice of developing a procedural protocol arises from the literature review and from the analysis of the data coming from interviews and questionnaires. Indeed, according to the literature review, the main problems of the participatory practices are the following:

- a. lack of a meaningful definition of the concept of participation;
- b. abuse of participatory practices in order to legitimate and reinforce the existing power relationships;
- c. difficulties to translate theoretical concepts about participation into practice;
- d. achievement of distorted benefits, such as a greater level of consensus reached as a consequence of public opinion manipulation;

- e. existence of numerous methods to involve the stakeholders, and, on the other hand, the absence of a well-defined structure of participatory processes in which these techniques could be used;
- f. lack of a clear identification of responsibilities in terms of participation management and of its perception on behalf of the public (is it a right or a duty?)

Moreover, the analysis of the Sardinian case study through the results of interviews and questionnaires highlights other important criticisms and unsolved questions that are connected to pragmatic considerations because they are linked to a specific context as follows:

- a. political influences on the participatory process that imbalance the power relationships;
- b. scant interest to participate on behalf of stakeholders who perceive their role as useless;
- c. lack of a clear definition of some important phases such as in the case of the participant identification;
- d. absence of a methodological framework that could address the participatory process;
- e. lack of a culture about the importance of implementing participatory practices in support of decision-making processes that entails the incapacity to implement methodological approach based on a sound theory in an efficient way.

From these conceptual viewpoints, the definition of a procedural protocol is advisable in order to define a univocal system of communication composed by the necessary procedures to implement participatory processes. Indeed, the literature (see chapter 2, pp. 6-21) shows several examples in which only the general orientation and the main inspiring principles are defined. In this way, these guidelines represent recommendations that can be accepted or rejected without any other consequences. On the other hand, the analysis of the RLP case study and the literature review emphasise the necessity of pragmatic solutions rather than general guidelines.

This chapter includes five sections. The first two aim at defining the theoretical framework of the procedural protocol through the definition of the concept of participation, in the first paragraph, and the identification of objectives, scope and

actors of participatory processes in the second. Moreover, the third and fourth parts are linked to the structure of participatory processes in support of decision-making processes at the regional scale. Indeed, the former defines and explains the different phases that compose the process; meanwhile the latter clarifies how the participatory process interacts with the planning process. Finally, in the last section, concluding remarks are defined.

## **6.1. THE DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATION**

The concept of participation experiences an important evolution in terms of definition, and contents (see paragraph 2.1 pp. 7-10). Moreover, it could be possible to identify two different perspectives: theoretical and practical. First of all, from the theoretical viewpoint of academicians, the term participation is often used to legitimate the existing power relationships, abusing its meaning and at the same time diminishing its real potentialities (see Cooke and Kothari works, cited in chapter 2, pp. 6-21). On the other hand, from a practical perspective, although governments at any level have emphasised the use of participation and involvement of citizens within planning decision-making, they have never explained what this concept means, maintaining intentionally its vagueness. Indeed, it seems that each case, in which an official or a technician reports to citizens and communities, represents a form of participation. As a consequence, an explanation of its real meaning and an analysis of advantages and disadvantages of implementing participatory processes could be necessary. This paragraph aims at providing a clear and accurate definition of participation in order to identify the conceptual framework in which the procedural protocol is included. Indeed, it is unthinkable to elaborate a new procedure without specifying the subject in an unequivocal way. Indeed, in the elaboration and revision phases of the Sardinian RLP, the regional government did not define the concept of participation. As a consequence, the effectiveness of the participatory processes was compromised. On the other hand, this subchapter does not aim at identifying a definitive definition due to the changeable nature of the concept of participation in relation to the reference context.

In this particular context, the concept of participation concerns the involvement of participants who could be citizens or groups of politicians or planners. Moreover, a participatory process represents a multi-directional dialogue among different

stakeholders, where the strategies and the objectives are shared by the majority of participants without entailing a consolidation or reinforcement of existing power relations and where anybody can express their opinion.

In this conceptual framework, participation assumes different natures such as ethical, social, and procedural. First of all, not only does an inclusive process represent the involvement of different stakeholders, but also it entails participants assuming responsibility of their decisions within the process. As a consequence, the concept of participation acquires an ethical character. Indeed, since individuals do not take on their responsibilities, the capacity of taking decisions is undermined because the participants do not recognise their role to pursue their objectives through shared strategies. Therefore, the participatory process represents a circumstance in which citizens can improve their participatory skills together with the evolution of the local context.

Secondly, participation can transform a group of individuals into a social community. The social link derives from the act of assuming decisions and from the elaboration of shared objectives and strategies. Indeed, according to McMillan and Chavis (1986) the sense of community is composed by five dimensions: membership, influence, integration, fulfilment of needs and shared emotional connections. From this viewpoint, being part of a project or plan can raise the awareness of the importance of belonging to a community, increasing the trust that their needs could be satisfied through a shared commitment.

Moreover, the inclusiveness does not represent a static element in the implementation of a planning strategy. Indeed, it entails a process that is in a continuous evolution, being influenced by variables, which intervene in the dynamics of the very same process. On the other hand, not only does the concept of participation involve a process, but also its procedural nature is implemented through integration and interdependence of the decision-making and the participatory processes. From this perspective, the participatory process should be parallel, and at the same time complementary to the planning process. In a nutshell, the inclusive moment should interact with the planning process through a constructive dialogue, representing a significant element within the procedures of elaboration and approval of plans without losing their decisional autonomy and independence. From this point of view, in the Sardinian case study, the analysis of questionnaires and interviews (see chapter 5, pp. 50-87) identify the stage in which the participatory processes

started as an important problem that negatively influenced the planning processes. Indeed, the participatory processes were implemented after that a strong RLP proposal had already been elaborated. The important concept of integration between processes is retrievable also in the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC), where art. 1 states *“The objective of the Directive is to...contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes...”* . Moreover, in the article 4, paragraph 2, the Directive establishes that *“The requirements of this Directive shall either be integrated into the existing procedures in Member States for the adoption of plans...”*. Indeed, only if is SEA deeply entangled in the planning process, almost identifying itself as the plan in the elaboration and implementation phases, the assessment can be really effective (Zoppi, 2012, p.18). From this viewpoint, also the participatory process should be an integral part of the procedure of elaboration, adoption and approval of the plans in order to make the inclusive and the decision-making processes really effective. Moreover, although this procedural nature could seem a further cumbersome requirement of the already long and complex planning processes, implementing a parallel participatory process makes these procedures effective, in terms of expected results.

In conclusion, the concept of participation is characterised by many nuances of meanings, which may generate confusion on its real definition. Moreover, participation entails many connotations that should be taken into account when participatory processes are implemented.

## **6.2. WHAT CHARACTERISES PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES?**

The second phase of the elaboration of the procedural protocol is to define the key issues, such as objectives, scope and actors, in order to complete the general framework. In particular, the definition of goals and the context, in which the procedural protocol should be implemented, represents an important stage because it clarifies the principles that inspire the implementation of participatory practices. Moreover, the identifications of the key actors assume an increasing importance. Indeed, as explained in the previous paragraph (see paragraph 6.1, pp. 90-92), participation also means the assumption of the responsibilities concerning decisions. As a result, clarifying which are the responsible subjects, describing their competences and their tasks, is a necessary phase.



### **6.2.1. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE**

In the implementation of the participatory practices, a significant aspect concerns the objectives that address the inclusive process. Indeed, as explained by Michener (1998), the definition of a participatory process can be based on the goals which the inclusive moment is conducted for, distinguishing between planner-centred and people-centred views (see chapter 2, pp. 7-21). For example, from the planner's point of view, the process aims at legitimating the planning decisions; meanwhile, from the common people's point of view, it focuses on the satisfaction of local needs and expectations, and on the empowerment of marginalised groups. As a consequence, the participatory process can assume different forms and frameworks in relation to the purposes that inspire it. Therefore, this paragraph aims at identifying the objectives and the scope that spark the participatory processes in order to define unambiguously the conceptual context in which this research intends to include the participatory practices in support of the decision-making processes. Moreover, although a definition of the objectives of the processes was defined in the revision phase, the elaboration phase of the RLP did not clarify the goals of the inclusive moments.

From this conceptual point of view, the procedural protocol pursues the following goals:

1. promoting social cohesion, by conflict-mitigation through the identification of shared objectives and strategies;
2. increasing the quality and the effectiveness of the decision-making processes through the involvement of different stakeholders;
3. reducing the resources in terms of cost and time of administrative procedures, limiting possible causes of lateness such as controversial circumstances;
4. promoting social learning within the community through a multifaceted dialogue between citizens and public authorities in order to increase the awareness of their role within the planning scenarios;
5. promoting cooperation among different public administrations, which rule over regions, cities and town, mitigating conflicts that may arise;
6. guaranteeing the inclusion of all viewpoints, including the minority groups;

7. avoiding that the decision-making processes become an arena for political struggles.

In conclusion, the procedural protocol concerns the participatory practices in support of the decision-making processes. In particular, each process of elaboration, adoption and approval of a plan needs the integration and the interaction with participatory practices in order to guarantee the effectiveness of the planning decisions and to grant governance at any level. From this perspective, each planning process that involves different interests, needs to be supported by participatory moments. Moreover, legitimate interest represents both an advantage and a disadvantage.

### **6.2.2. THE ACTORS OF THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES**

An important aspect is represented by the issue of the subject “who have responsibilities within the participatory processes”. Indeed, it is unthinkable to define the general structure and the different phases of an inclusive process without identifying the responsibilities, and as a consequence, the key actors. This concept arises from the analysis of the Sardinian case study, where the assignment of responsibilities was not clear, compromising the effectiveness of the participants’ identification phase. Indeed, the regional government was the authority that should implement the planning and participatory processes. Meanwhile, the role of participants was absolutely ambiguous.

First of all, it could be useful to identify the authorities that elaborate and adopt a plan, such as the RLP from now on called “plan authority”. In general, there are public administrations, such as a regional government that rules different phases of a plan-definition process, such as orientation and structure, elaboration and writing, consultation, adoption and approval, and implementation (Gruppo ENPLAN, 2004, p.45)

Moreover, one of the main issues concerns who should elaborate and implement the participatory process. Indeed, the analysis of data from interviews and questionnaires (see chapter 5, pp. 50-87) and the review of the literature (see chapter 2, pp. 6-21) have highlighted the influences that the political choices exercised over the participatory process. As a consequence, the inclusive moment reinforced the existing power relationships, violating the principles that are the

foundation of the concept of participation. From this conceptual perspective, the participatory process should be elaborated and implemented by an authority that should be a different administration from the “plan authority”, from now on called the “qualified authority”. This should be an independent body, composed by a multidisciplinary group of experts in political and social science, and in participatory practices. In this way, the probability that the political decisions could affect the participatory process is less marked. Moreover, It is possible to trace the choice of distinguishing the two authorities from the transposition of the EU’ directive 2001/42/EC. Indeed, in this case, the authority who elaborates the plan is different from the authority who implements the SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Regione Sardegna, 2006d). A second important example appeared in 2007 in the law no. 69 of the Tuscany region, where in the article no. 3 a new authority is instituted in order to promote participation within the planning process. In addition, this authority is a new body composed by experts in participatory practices, and in political and social sciences (Regione Toscana, 2007). Moreover, the presence of two independent but, at the same time, interactive authorities allows the establishment of a continuum qualitative assessment of the planning and participatory processes through a multidisciplinary and constructive dialogue. However, this evaluation does not have to be interpreted as a critical judgement on their actions, but it should be seen as a tool in order to improve the quality and the effectiveness of the processes, granting their transparency.

Finally, the fourth important issue concerns the participants. They are people, organisations, public administrations and whichever person or body which has a legitimate interest in the planning process, even if they do not seize an institutional or formal ruling role. Moreover, as explained in the next subchapters, the participants are identified by the “qualified authority” through a study that analyses the social, economic and political dimensions of the communities.

From these perspectives, although each subject has its responsibilities and its tasks, the coordination and the cooperation among the different actors represent the key factor that can promote the effectiveness of the planning and participatory processes.

### **6.3. THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES SUPPORTING REGIONAL PLANS**

A protocol consists of a series of steps which rule a specific activity with reference to its implementation procedures. From this perspective, the next step in its elaboration is represented by the identification of phases of participatory processes in support of regional plans or plans concerning metropolitan areas. The decision to define a well-structured procedural protocol arises from the analysis of the Sardinian case study. Indeed, the data analysis puts in evidence how the absence of a methodological framework compromised the effectiveness of the participatory and planning processes. In particular, this paragraph is related to the definition and description of these stages, in order to provide a clear structure that could be implemented in different situations. Indeed, although the procedural protocol is partially based on the data analysis of a specific case study, the results could not have a solid and scientific foundation, if were they not based on feasible steps. On the other hand

From this perspective, a hypothetical participatory process at the RLP territorial scale should be composed of seven phases, as follows:

1. context analysis;
2. participant composition;
3. participatory methodology;
4. sharing objectives;
5. internal consistency and performance indicators;
6. consultation phase and synthesis;
7. monitoring and periodical assessment (adapted from Gruppo ENPLAN, 2004).

In the following subchapters, the seven steps are analysed, in order to define goals, tasks, and responsibilities.

#### **6.3.1. CONTEXT ANALYSIS**

The first point concerns the analysis of the social, economic, and political context in which the plan has to be elaborated in order to gather information on the structure of the local communities. Indeed, the context analysis concerns a cognitive process that aims at:

1. providing an integrated scenario of the context in which the plan is to be implemented;

2. estimating the potential direct and indirect interactions and synergies between communities and the plan;
3. defining the strengths and the weaknesses that characterise the participatory process with respect to the plan;
4. identifying the opportunities and threats of the reference context.

Therefore, the success of the participatory process is strongly connected to the availability of information on the local communities. Indeed, the effectiveness depends on the capacity of defining a specific and clear context in relation to different phenomena that can influence the structure and the dynamics of the participatory and planning processes. As a consequence, under no circumstances does the context analysis have to be a general and blurred informative framework, but it has to be directed towards the specific issues identified before beginning the analysis. Moreover, several factors and variables should be analysed before implementing the participatory and planning processes because social, economic and political questions are strongly connected to the reference context that is influenced by their dynamics.

In addition, the context analysis has to be divided into two parts: internal and external. The former concerns the internal structure of the “plan authority” in order to understand if the managerial team has the resources and capabilities in terms of structuring, management, and skills, to support the elaboration and implementation of the plan. The internal context analysis can provide corrective measures with respect to the aspects in which the “plan authority” and the “qualified authority” are less trained. Moreover, this kind of analysis is composed of two levels: macro-structural and micro-structural. The former concerns questions that can condition the decisions of the “plan authority”. These issues are:

- a. political questions that concern the normative structure and cultural models;
- b. structural questions that refer to the organization chart;
- c. technological questions that pertain to tools and techniques.

The micro-structural level examines roles and management processes within the different sectors that the macro-structural level has already identified (URP degli URP, 2010). On the other hand, the external context analysis is composed by all aspects that, despite being independent from the “plan authority” and the “qualified authority”, they can influence the planning choices due to their economic, political

and social nature. For example, an important issue refers to the structure of the community in order to identify the actors who are directly or indirectly interested by the process (URP degli URP, 2009). However, the theme of the participants' identification is analysed in a separate phase due to its priority importance (see paragraph 6.3.2, pp. 99-101).

In addition, this phase aims at elaborating two important documents: a synthetical report and a social impact assessment (see table 12). In the synthetical report, several aspects should be clarified and summarised. Indeed, the first important issue consists of a description of the methodology that is used to conduct the context analysis in order to prove the authenticity and the transparency of the analytical process. The second section relates to a summary of the results of the internal and external context analysis. In particular, the former has to be structured around the macro-structural level, defining political, structural and technological components, and the micro-structural level. Meanwhile, the latter should cover the economic, political, and social dimensions. The last part of the synthesis report concerns the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses; Opportunities, Threats) analysis, where context analysis is summarised in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The SWOT analysis represents a tool of the decision-making processes. Moreover, it allows identifying the variables that can facilitate or obstruct the objectives in a clear and synthetic way, in order to make the next strategic and operative decisions more effective (Hill and Westbrook, 1997).

The second document concerns a preliminary analysis of the impacts of the new plan on the communities and on the other actors of the private and public sectors. Indeed, in relation to each impact, the following have to be defined:

- a. a description of the impacts;
- b. the actors who are likely to suffer from the impact;
- c. the type of impact. The impact should be considered either positive or negative in terms of its positive and negative effects depending on the actors' advantages and disadvantaged. Moreover, each choice has to be motivated;
- d. the level of the impact classified as low, medium and high, depending on its effects on the actors' lives.

Type of document	Contents
<i>Synthetical report</i>	methodology
	internal context analysis
	external context analysis
	SWOT analysis
<i>Social impact assessment</i>	description
	actors
	typology of impact
	Level of impact

**Table 12 Documents of the context analysis phase**

In conclusion, gathering information in relation to needs and expectations of communities, and their elaboration and interpretation are key actions within the planning and participatory processes in order to grant the effectiveness of the planning decisions.

**6.3.2. PARTICIPANT COMPOSITION**

The choice of who should be involved is a complex and tricky issue because the effectiveness of a participatory process is strongly dependent on participants. Indeed, including all the instances of the local communities in a regional plan is unrealistic. As a consequence, mediation is needed. However, some interests could be misrepresented some positions could result stronger than others. Moreover, it is not possible to have a priori comprehensive information about the stakeholders and their interests. In addition, the analysis of the Sardinian case study highlights the importance to conduct social, economic and political studies in order to identify the potential stakeholders. Indeed, in the elaboration and revision phases of the RLP, the participants’ individuation phase entailed different problems (see chapter 5, pp. 50-87).

For these reasons, a detailed analysis of the community structure is necessary. Therefore, the phase of the individuation of participants requires significant efforts in terms of resources, management and coordination. In addition, stakeholders represent a complex and inconsistent range of interests and opinions. In particular, it is possible to identify three main categories:

- a. public institutions, such as local authorities, universities and environmental organizations;
- b. organized groups, such as craft and trade unions, political parties, cultural and environmental associations;
- c. other private bodies and citizens (URP degli URP, 2008).

Moreover, several methodologies can be used in order to identify participants. One of them has been elaborated within the CEMSDI Consortium, a European Union co – funded project that aims at promoting the social inclusion through the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) (CEMSDI Consortium, 2011). This methodology is based on the capacity of influence and of interest. The former is related to several factors, such as specific competences and expertise, representativeness, and actual and potential resources. The latter concerns the pressure that the stakeholders can exercise to claim their interests, and the incidence of the plan with respect to the objectives perceived by the stakeholders. Moreover, it is possible to identify three typologies of stakeholders, whose informative data can be represented by a matrix of “influence-interest” (see table 13):

- a. necessary: actors who have to be involved because they have a high influence and interest;
- b. desirable: stakeholders who have a low interest but a high influence and, as a consequence, their involvement is convenient;
- c. weak: participants that have a low influence and interest because they do not have resources and tools to support their interests effectively (Montini, 2011).

Interest	Influence	
	Low	High
Low		Desirable Stakeholders
High	Weak stakeholders	Necessary stakeholders

Table 13 Matrix influence-interest (adapted from Montini, 2011, p.19)

On the other hand, the context analysis provides a solid cognitive basis to implement the social impact assessment. Indeed, it defines a preliminary mapping of the subjects who have an interest in the planning process, identifying the nature and level of the impacts of the new plan on these actors. From these perspectives, this stage aims at elaborating an important document called “participant composition” that



represents a final map of the stakeholders who should be involved in the participatory process and the key issues concerning their influences and interests (see table 14). In particular, this phase represents the changeover from general macro-categories of participants, identified in the social impact assessment, to specific classes of stakeholders. The first step consists of a detailed analysis based on the context analysis and on a continuous dialogue with the local municipalities in order to understand needs and expectations of people who live there, starting from the bottom. On the other side, the local municipalities have to implement an analysis of their communities in order to represent effectively their fellow citizens' interests. Indeed, local municipalities can obtain more appropriate scenarios of the social composition of their communities. As a consequence, a draft map of possible participants is elaborated. However, it is necessary to define the level of influence, and the level and the area of interest for each stakeholder. In particular, the identification of the areas of interest represents an important issue. Indeed, it allows elaborating a preliminary conceptual map of the key aspects which the stakeholders are interested in and, therefore where their active participation is likely to occur. As a result, in the "participant composition" phase, a clear and sound vision of the stakeholders and their key features has to be developed.

Type of document	Contents
<i>Participant composition</i>	analysis of communities' needs, expectations, and interests
	map of participants
	definition of the level of influence of each stakeholder
	definition of the level and the area of interest of each stakeholder

**Table 14 Contents of the participant composition document**

In conclusion, the phase of the individuation of participants is complicated and complex but it is workable though. Indeed, although a complete inclusion could be considered a utopian idea, the experience shows that a reasonable solution could be elaborated, so that nobody can possibly be excluded. On the other hand, this alternative needs an accurate analysis in order to assure the representativeness of all the involved interests.

### 6.3.3. PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGY

The implementation of a participatory process needs an effective management and organization. Indeed, an inclusive process could work if it is based on a structured methodology. For example, the lack of a strategy can delay the completion of the process and causes a consequent increase of costs. Moreover, on the one hand, this long period makes participants adrift because they perceive their participation as useless; on the other hand, the authority which rules over the process considers these criticisms unfair because they are based on misleading information. From these considerations, this paragraph aims at identifying the main aspects that should be analysed, trying to identify the most appropriate methodology. Moreover, a list of the different techniques is provided in order to develop a cognitive framework.

In the recent decades, several methods, techniques and approaches have been developed in order to promote the implementation of participatory processes. In particular, these methodologies are based on shared principles. Indeed, according to Bobbio (2004) the following four objectives should be pursued:

1. allowing common people to understand what is at stake. Indeed, technicians and officials of local governments sometimes use a technical language, assuming its understanding for granted. As a consequence, the stakeholders are excluded and they do not participate in a proper way;
2. structuring the process in relation to shared rules. Indeed, the absence of a clear framework can entail some problems such as losses of time and lack of interaction among participants. From this point of view, it is necessary to establish rules that could be shared by the most part of the stakeholders. Moreover, on the one hand, these guidelines should be flexible enough to develop adjustments during the process, and on the other hand, they should be quite strict in order to determine the boundaries of the discussion. In particular, three aspects should be taken into great account: phases, timing and spaces. Each of them has to be accurately studied and analysed in order to implement an effective participatory process;
3. encouraging informal relationships in order to make participants feel comfortable. In other words, it is necessary to analyse carefully the modalities of welcome and the accessibility of the meeting places that should be recognized by communities as familiar contexts;

4. promoting transparency through the circulation of information in order to make the development of the process fair and clear to the participants. Moreover, also the results of the interaction among stakeholders should be made available for all participants.

Therefore, the choice of the most appropriate and effective technique should be the consequence of a sound analysis of all these questions.

In addition, it is possible to classify the different techniques with respect to the purposes of their use into three categories:

- a. listening;
- b. constructive interaction;
- c. resolution of conflicts.

The first class concerns methods that can help to understand how the problems are perceived by the stakeholders. Their use is particularly appropriate during the preliminary phases of the participatory process. Moreover, different methods can be implemented. The most famous are the outreach<sup>14</sup>, focus group<sup>15</sup>, brainstorming<sup>16</sup>, etc. The second typology concerns methods that help participants to discuss and to develop effective conclusions. In particular, it is possible to identify different methods such as techniques based on the construction of future scenarios (EASW<sup>17</sup>-European Awareness Scenario Workshop, and Action Planning<sup>18</sup>), methodologies based on the simulation (Planning for real<sup>19</sup>), techniques based on the spontaneity (Open Space Technology<sup>20</sup>) and so on.

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<sup>14</sup> The outreach is a technique based on people consultation, which implies an active role of the body which organises the participatory process. This technique includes different methods such as informative notes, articles in the newspapers and so on (Bobbio, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> The Focus group is a technique based on discussions which develop in small groups on specific themes. Its use is particularly appropriate when there is the necessity to focus on a specific question (Bobbio, 2004; Corrao, 2002; Morgan, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> The Brainstorming is a technique that was developed in the nineties by Alex Osborn. Its objective is to develop possible solution with respect to a specific problem. In particular, it aims at freeing the creativity of participants (Bobbio, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> The EASW was developed in the nineties in Denmark. It is a methodology that focuses on the role of the technological development, inviting people to questioning on the its objectives. Moreover, it is composed of three phases: development of scenarios, mapping of stakeholders and local management (Bobbio, 2004; Fernandez, 1998).

<sup>18</sup> The Action Planning is a method of participation that identifies needs and problems with respect to a specific context through the contributions of local communities (Bobbio, 2004; Hamdi and Goethert, 1997).

<sup>19</sup> Planning for Real is a method that was developed in the nineties by the University of Nottingham. It allows that each participant could express its ideas and opinions in an anonymous way (Bobbio, 2004; Scavi, 2002).

<sup>20</sup> The Open Space Technology is a technique that was developed in the nineties by Harrison Owen. This methodology does not use invited speakers or defined schedule (Bobbio, 2004; Owen, 2008).

The third category is represented by methods that aim at resolving conflicts through negotiation and discussion.

In conclusion, in the recent decades, new participatory methodologies and techniques have been developed in order to promote the involvement of citizens within the decision-making processes. Some of them are more appropriate to stimulate broad communicative processes, meanwhile others are more effective with respect to small groups. From this viewpoint, the choice of the participatory methods and approaches is strongly connected to the goals of the processes and to the reference context

#### **6.3.4. SHARING OBJECTIVES**

In the preliminary phases, the participatory process focuses on the identification of participants, who should be involved in the process, the key issues, which represent the area of interest of each stakeholder in order to group participants with the same interests together, and finally, the most effective methodology, which is based on the context analysis. Indeed, under no circumstances, the choice of the most appropriate participatory model can neglect the social, economic and political context and the participants' behaviours that should be carefully analysed. However, although these steps represent the basis for the implementation of participatory processes, they are mainly related to the management questions.

As a result, the definition of shared objectives and contents represents the first operative phase, where the involvement of several stakeholders becomes real. Moreover, the goals represent the intentions of the future plan or, in at nutshell, what the plan intends to achieve through its strategies and actions. In addition, the integration among economic, social, political, environmental, and legislative objectives represents a fundamental moment within the planning and participatory processes (Gruppo ENPLAN, 2004). Therefore, from the methodological viewpoint, a plan, which is oriented towards the inclusion of different perspectives, should not focus exclusively on environmental, political, economic and legislative goals, but also it should concern the social dynamics that are intrinsically connected to the concept of participation.

Moreover, the definition of shared objectives is fundamental to structure the planning process in the most effective way due to its effects on the implementation of

the future plan. Indeed, one of the main problems in the Sardinian RLP was the lack of shared objectives. In addition, in the elaboration phase, defining shared goals was impossible because the participatory process started after that a strong RLP proposal had already been elaborated. Meanwhile, in the revision phase, conceptual maps with respect to shared objectives and strategies were elaborated. On the other hand, it is not clear if these aims will be included in the revised version of the RLP. The absence of shared objectives could compromise the effectiveness of the planning and participatory processes. Indeed, as explained in the literature review (see chapter 2, pp. 6-21), different benefits can be achieved through a process in which the sharing of contents and goals is a priority. In particular, it is possible to identify the following advantages:

1. inclusion of different viewpoints;
2. effectiveness of planning decisions;
3. transparency of the process;
4. promotion of social learning;
5. better understanding and individuation of communities' needs and expectations;
6. greater consensus among citizens;
7. higher-quality information.

Moreover, the first four benefits are strongly connected to the definition of democracy and equity; meanwhile the last three are linked to more pragmatic considerations. On the other hand, in both cases, identifying shared objectives and contents can reduce the additional costs of the process, such as those deriving from the possible conflicting situations that can delay the expected deadline of the process. One example is represented by the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) syndrome, where local communities oppose specific projects or plan that are perceived as threats to their interests.

Moreover, this phase aims at defining general and specific goals through an inclusive process of dialogue, where different stakeholders and public authorities are involved. The general objectives represent long-term social and economic benefits of the local communities, which can be obtained through pursuing goals. The latter are tangible benefits that can be achieved through the plan's actions. From this perspective, different specific objectives are directly responsible for the achievement

of the same general goals. Meanwhile, implementing the plan's actions represents the modality to achieve the same specific goal.

On the other hand, it is possible to recognise two different categories of objectives: exogenous and endogenous. The former is represented by compulsory goals, which derive from policies established at the higher levels such as national plans or programmes, or national laws. The latter consists of objectives that arise from the economic, social and political context analysis (Gruppo ENPLAN, 2004). As a consequence, the second typology of goals can be discussed and shared; meanwhile the first is excluded from the inclusive processes.

In addition, these discussions are structured in relation to different themes, the so-called "key issues" (see paragraph 6.3.2, pp. 99-101) in order to promote the active participation of the real interested stakeholders. Indeed, a real involvement is sometimes prevented by the lack of real interests in the specific issue or theme. As a consequence, participants do not contribute to improve the plan's contents and the same planning process can appear strongly damaged. From these perspectives, the key issues that represent the areas of interest of each stakeholder can be grouped together into macro-categories in order to identify the so-called "groups of interest". Moreover, as explained in the previous paragraph (see paragraph 6.3.3 pp. 102-104), different methods can be used in the implementation of participatory processes. Indeed, for example, some themes can be discussed by the use of technological platforms. On the other hand, for instance, if a particular theme is of interest of the old people, the use of the Internet could not be effective.

In conclusion, this phase is fundamental because the objectives, identified and shared by participants, and the "plan authority", represent the basis of the future plan. On the other hand, although it is unthinkable that all stakeholders agree with the plan's goals, their definition can derive from a constructive dialogue where all stakeholders have the chance to participate actively.

### **6.3.5. INTERNAL CONSISTENCY AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

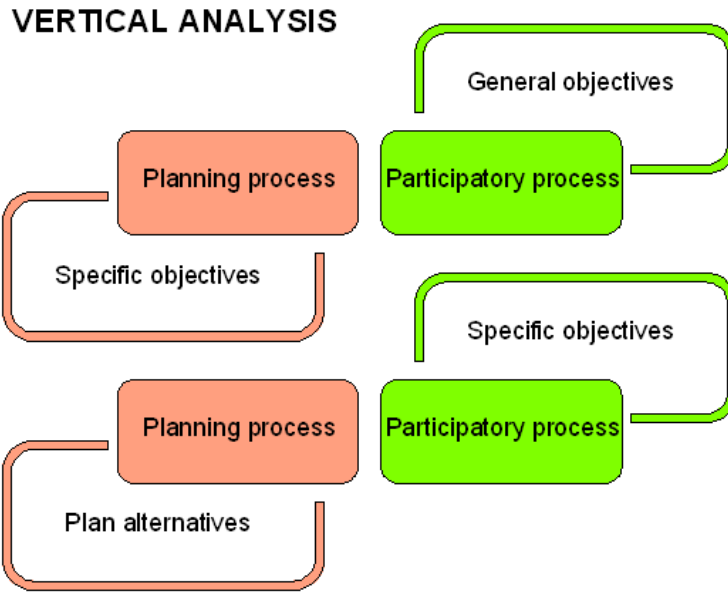
The former section represents a fundamental phase of the implementation of the participatory processes. Indeed, as explained previously, the definition of shared objectives could entail a series of benefits to communities and to the planning authority, reducing the time span caused by possible controversial situations. On the other hand, a correlation between general and specific objectives that are defined

within the participatory processes and the general and specific goals of the future plan is opportune. In this conceptual framework, it is necessary to analyse the existence of these methodological relations.

In particular, this phase aims at studying and analysing the internal consistency among the general and specific objectives defined and shared by stakeholders within the participatory processes and general and specific objectives identified by the “plan authority” in the future plan. Moreover, the analysis of the internal consistency concerns the assessment of possible contradictions within the system of the objectives and strategies in the future plan. Therefore, this system of relations allows identifying problems that did not emerge during the phase of elaboration of the future plan. Indeed, in this phase it is possible to discover missing objectives or goals that are not pursued through the specific objectives and the plan alternatives.

In addition, the analysis of the internal consistency is also an independent phase within the SEA process, where two different typologies of analysis are implemented: vertical and horizontal. The former concerns the relations between general and specific objectives, and between plan's alternatives and specific objectives. Meanwhile, the latter analyses the connections among specific objectives in relation to the same general objective (Gruppo ENPLAN, 2004). On the other hand, in the case of the participatory processes, although vertical and horizontal internal consistencies are analysed, however the relations are different (see figure 29 and 30). Indeed, the vertical analysis concerns the study of consistency of two different typologies of correlations:

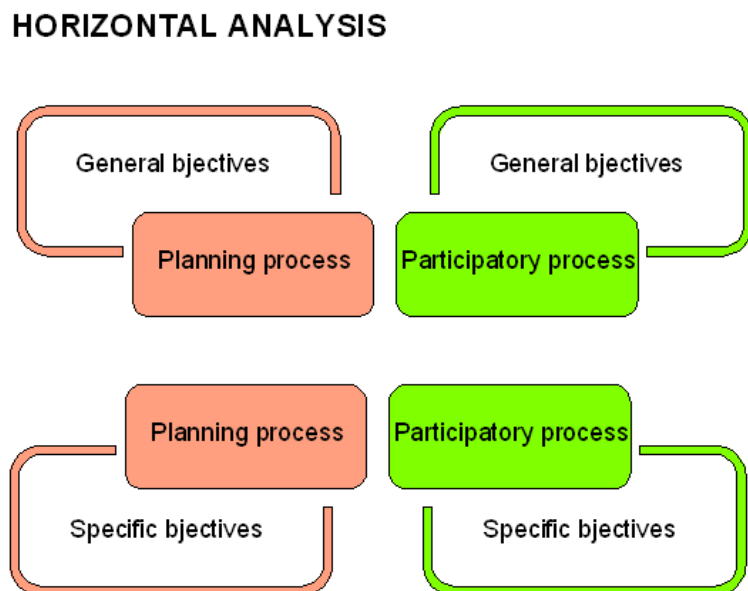
1. the general objectives defined within the participatory processes and the specific objectives identified in the future plan;
2. the specific objectives defined within the participatory processes and the plan alternatives of the future plan.



**Figure 29 Relations in the vertical internal consistency analysis**

Moreover, the horizontal consistency concerns the correlations that exist between:

1. the general objectives defined within the participatory processes and the general objectives identified in the future plan;
2. the specific objectives defined within the participatory processes and the specific objectives identified in the future plan.



**Figure 30 Relations in the horizontal internal consistency analysis**

The analysis of the internal consistency can be implemented through different tools such as coaxial matrixes, SWOT analysis and so on.

On the other hand, it could seem that the definition of the general and specific objectives within the participatory and the planning processes is a repetitive and



useless phase. In reality, it is unthinkable that a plan and its objectives could be elaborated by non-experts, otherwise the role of planners could be useless. Moreover, the general and specific objectives that are elaborated within the participatory process are formulated in a simple and non technical way so that also non-experts could understand. From this conceptual viewpoint, planners should define the general and specific objectives on the basis of the general and specific goals identified within the participatory process in a technical jargon. On the other hand, only if a conceptual correlation and correspondence between these two different perspectives occur, could the participatory process be effective in order to improve the framework and the contents of the future plan.

Moreover, in this phase, the “qualified authority” has to define a series of performance indicators in relation to the context analysis, and the needs and expectations of stakeholders that are expressed during the definition of shared objectives. Its aim is to elaborate a methodological and conceptual basis to monitor the attainment of plan’s objectives with respect to the different areas of interests (see paragraph 6.3.7, pp. 111-112).

In conclusion, this phase represents a kind of guarantee that the objectives, shared by the participants, are really included within the elaboration of the future plan. As a consequence, the inclusive moment acquires a real decision power, which can influence the decision-making processes.

### **6.3.6. CONSULTATION PHASE AND SYNTHESIS**

In the previous section, the analysis of the internal consistency is described as an assessment moment in which the objectives defined within the participatory process and the goals identified in the planning process are compared. Indeed, the participatory process will be useless if it does not have any influence on the future plan. Moreover, as learnt from the past experiences (see chapter 5, pp. 50-87), the lack of a real verification of this correspondence encourages planners and politicians to neglect the observations and the opinions of the stakeholders. Indeed, for example, in the Sardinian case study the participatory process did not impact the RLP. On the other hand, this phase is conducted by the “qualified authority”, which assesses only the consistency of the process. From this perspective, a phase of public consultation is necessary.

The consultation step aims at defining an interactive process of discussion and sharing of opinions and observations in relation to a plan proposal. Indeed, the consultation is a democratic tool that allows stakeholders to express their opinions and viewpoints. Moreover, as the Aarhus Convention established (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1998), the access to the information and the participation to final decisions represent a legally-established right. The exercise of this right implies accessing comprehensive information, freedom of expressing opinions and observations, and information on how the observations are integrated into the future plan (Gruppo ENPLAN, 2004). On the other hand, in the elaboration phase of the Sardinian RLP, the communication flow was one-way. Indeed, the co-planning conferences were characterised by a formal and traditional structure, where someone talks and the other people listen.

From these perspectives, the consultative phase can entail different benefits, by improving the quality of the plan and reducing the costs for both governmental bodies and citizens. Indeed, first of all, it increases the information that represents the basis of the planning decisions. Secondly, it guarantees a good level of transparency of the planning process, motivating strategies and decisions. Thirdly, the consultation could encourage voluntary compliance, expressing the decisions on time, in order to make adjustments and changes possible. Moreover, it gives a sense of legitimacy and shared ownership (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006).

In addition, different instruments can be used in the consultation phase which is related to participants and the typology of the processes. For example, one possible method is represented by the public notice-and-comment, where all the stakeholders have the possibility and the opportunity to receive the appropriate information in order to be able to comment the plan proposal. Moreover, public hearing, another instrument, allows discussing the plan proposal in person, also through written observations (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006).

On the other hand, independently from the method that the “qualified authority” intends to use, the most important aspect concerns the duty to respond to these observations and to motivate the strategies and the policies defined within the plan proposal. Indeed, it is unthinkable that the future plan could be shared and accepted by all stakeholders. Moreover, at the end of this phase a synthetical report has to be elaborated. In particular, it has to explain the modalities to integrate the results of the

consultation phase within the plan proposal, by defining the reasons for the positive and/or negative acceptance of the stakeholders' observations, which was missing in the case of the RLP of Sardinia.

In conclusion, although the analysis of the internal consistency has already granted that the stakeholders' perspectives were included in the plan proposal, the consultation phase concerns an increased transparency and quality of the process, motivating the reasons of the established decisions and strategies.

### **6.3.7. MONITORING AND PERIODICAL ASSESSMENT**

The previous phases concern a plan proposal in which changes and adjustments are possible, entailing direct implications between the participatory and planning processes. On the other hand, although monitoring and periodical assessment are related to an approved plan, their implementation is fundamental. Indeed, it aims at assessing the effectiveness of the plan's strategies.

In particular, the implementation of the regional plan is evaluated by the "qualified authority" in order to avoid direct implications in relation to the "plan authority", which elaborates and approves the regional plan. This assessment is carried out through the implementation of surveys in which the stakeholders who have participated in the process are involved, and through the analysis of the trend of the performance indicators that have been defined previously in the phase "shared objectives and performance indicators" (see paragraph 6.3.4 pp. 104-106).

Moreover, monitoring and periodical assessment results in a monitoring report that the "qualified authority" elaborates periodically. In particular, it should include the following:

- a. the analysis of the trend of the performance indicators, related to the area of interest, and the periodicity of acquisition of data with respect to each indicator;
- b. the analysis of surveys;
- c. the identification of difficulties or problems that are noticed during the monitoring phase, defining possible causes and effects;
- d. the additional measures to avoid possible negative effects.

In conclusion, monitoring and periodical assessment represent a tool to grant that the participatory and the planning processes implement a plan that satisfies the needs and the expectations of the communities and their stakeholders.

#### **6.4. INTEGRATION BETWEEN THE PLANNING AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES**

The previous sections analyse the structure of a participatory process in relation to the process of elaboration, adoption and approval of a regional plan, defining the timing and the contents of each phase. However, as explained previously (see paragraph 6.1, pp. 90-92), in the procedural protocol, one of the most important key issues concerns the endogenous nature of participatory practices with respect to the planning process. Indeed, the inclusive moments should be parallel and continuously integrated and correlated to the planning process. From this conceptual viewpoint, this paragraph aims at defining and identifying the modalities of integration and correlation between these two processes.

Moreover, the complete integration of the participatory dimensions within the planning process entails a significant change from the traditional conception, according to which the inclusive moments are implemented after the definition of a plan proposal. As a result, the level of effectiveness of the participatory practices and of the planning process, is strongly connected to the phase in which participatory processes should be implemented. Indeed, they should begin when the preliminary phases of planning processes start.

In particular, figure 31 represents the sequence of phases of a regional planning process, where each step is systematically integrated with the participatory process, independently from the methodological choices. First of all, each plan is composed of the following four main steps:

1. orientation;
2. elaboration and writing;
3. consultation, adoption and approval;
4. implementation.

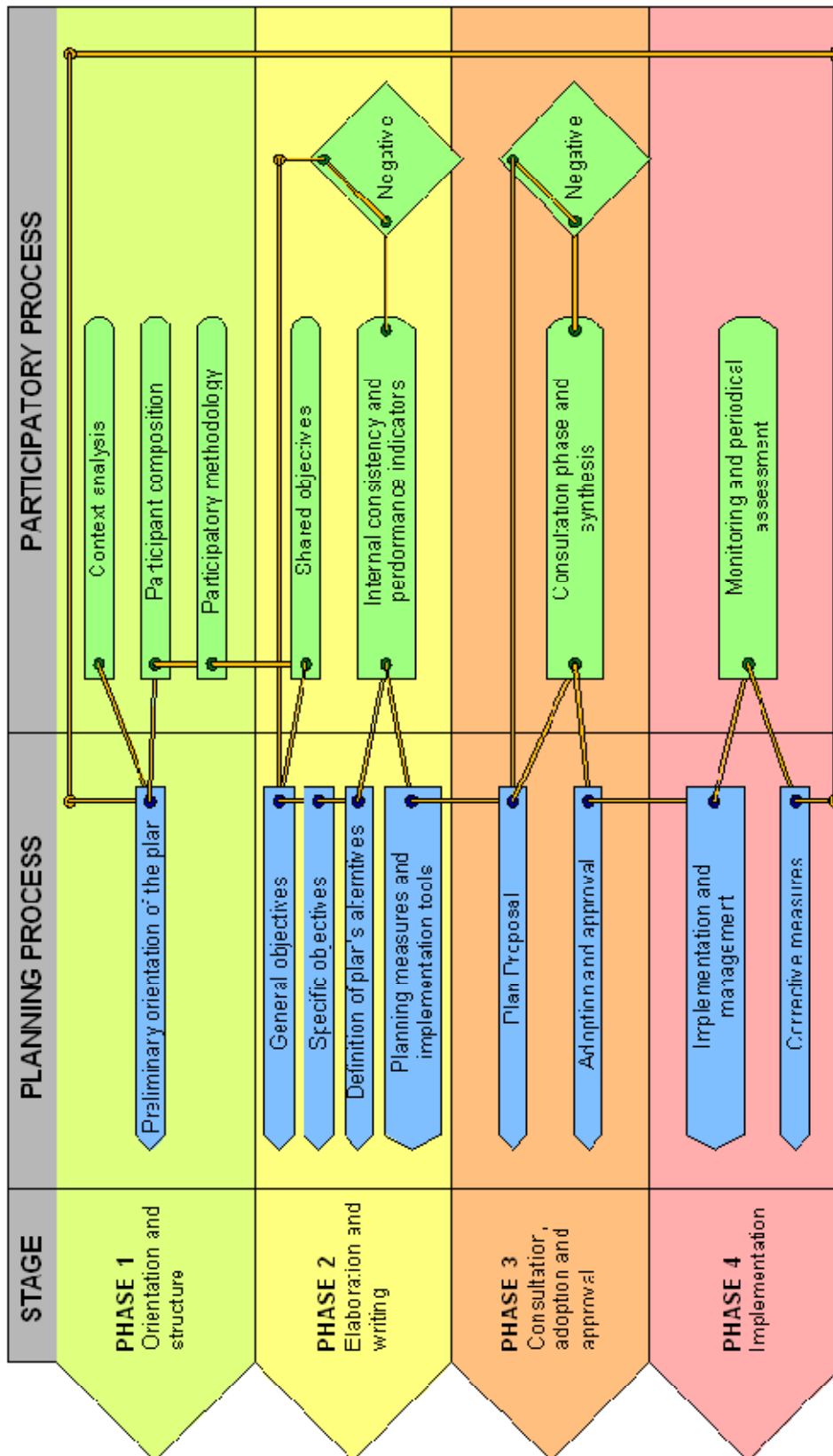


Figure 31 The integrated system composed of the participatory and planning processes

Moreover, in the preparatory phase of the planning process, a preliminary orientation of the plan is identified. On the other hand, the participatory processes implement a

context analysis that represents the basis for the participant identification and for the choice of the most appropriate participatory methodology. In addition, the context analysis of participatory processes should be conducted in advance with respect to the first phase of the planning process in order to use the synthesis report and the social impact assessment (see paragraph 6.3.1, pp. 96-99) as support tools for the preliminary orientation of the future plan. The “elaboration and writing” phase concerns the definition of objectives that are shared by all the stakeholders. As a result, the planning process elaborates the general and specific goals, and the plan’s alternatives that have to be examined through the evaluation of the internal consistency. However, if the previous step assesses the inconsistency among the objectives defined within the participatory process and the goals and the plan alternatives identified within the planning process, corrective measures defined through new objectives will be necessary. On the other hand, if the assessment of the internal consistency is positive, planning measures and implementation tools are identified within the planning processes. In the third phase, a plan proposal is elaborated. As a result, a consultation phase is conducted within the participatory process. Moreover, a synthetical report on the results of the consultative moment is elaborated. Therefore, if the consultation phase highlights the necessity of further corrective measures, the proposal plan will be modified. In the opposite case, the plan is adopted and approved. Finally, the fourth step concerns the implementation and management of the future plan. On the other hand, a phase of monitoring and periodical assessment is conducted within the planning process, and corrective measures can be taken.

In conclusion, from this perspective, it could be appropriate to emphasise three important concepts. First of all, the continuity of the participatory process characterise the entire system. Secondly, the participatory process represents an important moment of the planning processes. Thirdly, the integrated system of the participatory and planning processes shows a circularity deriving from the possibility to revise some phases.

## **6.5. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This chapter concerns the definition of a new procedural protocol that should address participatory processes in support of elaboration, adoption and approval of a plan at the regional scale. Each paragraph analyses specific elements and characteristics.

In addition, the research put some important questions in evidence such as the interdependency between the participatory and the planning processes, the definition of specific responsibilities, the circularity of the processes, and the flexibility of the participatory processes. First of all, one of the cornerstones of the research is represented by the interdependent nature of the system composed of the participatory and planning processes. Indeed, the use of the term “system” is not accidental. The participatory and planning processes work together along a timing line, and the effectiveness of each individual process is dependent on how well the entire system works. Moreover, despite the interdependency, in terms of the endogenous nature of the participatory processes, each process has an independent decision power that represents a kind of continuous reciprocal assessment. As a consequence, the circularity of the participatory process arises. Indeed, it is possible to take corrective measures in the most important phases of the planning and participatory processes. Therefore, the system does not have a rigid structure but it could be adjusted when and where it is necessary. Thirdly, the question of the definition of responsibilities is fundamental because the system is also composed of people who should have specific tasks in relation to their competences and skills. From this point of view, and in relation to the impacts of the political decisions on participatory and planning processes (see chapter 5, pp. 50-87), the authorities that should implement participatory processes are external with respect to the public administration that elaborate the plan.

Moreover, although one of the principal aims of the research is to provide a clear and sound framework for further participatory processes, the procedural protocol tries to maintain a certain degree of flexibility that is connected to the specific economic, social and political contexts in which the participatory processes are implemented. For example, the research does not intend to provide qualitative judgements on the most appropriate methods or techniques (see paragraph 6.3.3, pp. 102-104). Indeed, it highlights the necessity to choose a specific theoretical framework in relation to the nature of planning processes, and the social, economic and political contexts without suggesting which method should be used.

In conclusion, the research does not aim at defining a strict and unique way to solve the problems identified by the literature review (see chapter 2, pp. 6-21) and by the analysis of data (see chapter 5, pp. 50-87). Indeed, it intends to provide an alternative solution the theoretical and practical aspects at stake.



## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

The conclusion chapter aims at providing the final considerations and recommendations coming from the research work. The final chapter is composed of four paragraphs. The first summarizes the main concepts of the thesis in order to clarify and to hammer home the key issues that the research analyses. The second paragraph examines the implications of the results of the research in relation to the research questions, defined in the introduction (see chapter 1, pp. 1-5). The third section concerns the inferences related to theories on participation and the participatory processes. Moreover, areas of further research in relation to the results of the thesis are suggested. Finally, the last paragraph regards the concluding remarks of the research.

### **7.1. SUMMARY OF THE KEY CONCEPTS**

The research of the dissertation concerns the analysis of the participatory approaches in support of the decision-making processes. In particular, the case study of the Sardinian RLP is covered to show and discuss the difficulties to translate theoretical concepts about participation into practice. Indeed, different key issues are highlighted in the literature review (see chapter 2, pp. 6-21) and in the chapter related to the data analysis (see chapter 5, pp. 50-87).

First of all, in the literature review chapter, the dissertation examines the evolution of the concept of participation and it reinterprets the current positions in relation to the theoretical and practical considerations, underlining the pros and cons of these two perspectives. Moreover, the research is based on an undeniable consideration, according to which, the participatory processes in government decision-making have failed their implementation phase. From this perspective, it is clear that ambivalence within the concept of participation exists. Indeed, governments at any level emphasize the concept of participation as a democratic right in order to include different perspectives that should represent all the interests at stake. On the other hand, participation is sometimes used as an instrument in order to achieve certain goals that could be with or without profits. In a nutshell, politicians and governmental officials emphasize the concept of participation without a profound comprehension of its real meaning in order to legitimate and to reinforce the existing power relations.

In addition, this dichotomy is evident in the Sardinian RLP that represents an emblematic case due to different reasons. First of all, as explained in the data analysis chapter (see chapter 5, pp. 50-87) the participatory processes used during the elaboration phase of the RLP represented only an informational moment in order to make the stakeholders aware of the contents of an already elaborated plan. In the revision phase, the new participatory process was more open-minded, taking account of the inclusion of the stakeholders' perspectives. However, also in this case, the communication was one-way, because the regional government, which is the authority that implements the participatory and planning processes, did not promote a discussion on its viewpoints in relation to the planning decisions. From these conceptual considerations, the analysis of the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases highlighted that although participation is a democratic right, inclusive moments aimed at legitimating the supremacy of the regional government over the planning decisions. As a consequence, planning is subordinated to political constraints and, at the same time, it is shaped by the political system.

As explained previously, the analysis of data and of the current literature underlines some critical points of participatory practices due to the lack of a clear awareness of the importance of participation that makes the implementation of effective inclusive moments impossible without a methodological reference framework. As a result, the research proposes a procedural protocol in the penultimate chapter (see chapter 6, pp. 88-116). It aims at defining a conceptual and methodological framework concerning the implementation of participatory processes in support of the planning processes at the regional scale. One of the most important aspects is related to the integration between the two processes that should be parallel and complementary without losing their decisional autonomy and independence.

In conclusion, the research is linked to the idea of "learning from failing" that represents the unique choice. Indeed, being aware of the limits of the current participatory practices in Italy and in Sardinia, the thesis intends to elaborate an alternative solution with respect to the practical and theoretical issues in order to solve the problems identified in the literature review and in the data analysis chapters.

## **7.2. SET OF CONCLUSIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In the introduction (see chapter 1, pp. 1-5), different research questions are identified. This paragraph aims at analysing the implications that the results of the dissertation have for the research questions, providing a set of conclusions with respect to each of them. In particular, they are:

1. How is it possible to apply the theoretical concepts of the participatory processes into practice?
2. What are the main aspects that can compromise the effectiveness of the participatory processes, and for this reason they need a specific attention?
3. How could the participatory moments and the planning processes be integrated in an effective system, minimizing the gap between theoretical and pragmatic considerations?
4. Is participation only a right or a duty as well?

In relation to the first question, the research and the literature review highlight an objective difficulty to translate theoretical concepts about participation into practice. Indeed, a conceptual and methodological gap between the theory and the practice exists. This is represented by the dualistic nature of the concept of participation in terms of democratic right and its being an instrument. Moreover, the concept of participation involves ethical and social considerations that make its meaning and implementation difficult to be understood by the non-expert without a solid conceptual framework. Therefore, this should represent the connection with the real planning processes. In addition, governments at any level need practical examples and models because the theoretical issues about the importance of implementing participatory processes are not sufficient in practical terms. This is due to the lack of awareness about the benefits that the implementation of participatory practices could have for the entire society also in terms of costs. From these perspectives, the Sardinian case study reveals the ineffectiveness of planning decisions when they are not shared by the majority of the stakeholders. Indeed, the only apparent inclusion of the local municipalities entailed that none of them approved its Masterplan in compliance with the RLP, increasing the costs of the planning processes. Therefore, the divergences between theory and practice could be partially addressed through the elaboration of a methodological framework. It should aim at relating the planning and participatory processes within an integrated

system, where, despite the complementation, the two decision spheres are independent. Moreover, the system needs a certain degree of flexibility owing to the specific economic, social and political contexts in which the participatory processes are implemented. Indeed, the Sardinian case study underlines the strong connections between the reference contexts and participatory practices. For example, the participants' behaviours are influenced by social and political variables.

In relation to the second question, the results of the research identify two main aspects: i. the political influences on the participatory practices; and, ii. the structure of the inclusive processes. First of all, the case study emphasises a well-established connection between the participatory processes and the political decisions. Indeed, the important role of the regional government compromised the effectiveness of the participatory processes almost completely in the elaboration phase and in apparently-partial way in the revision phase. In addition, in the elaboration phase, the regional government implemented participatory processes in order to legitimate its ruling role on planning decisions at the local and regional levels. Moreover, some interviewees argue that also in the revision phase, the goal of the regional government was to represent itself as a forward-looking administration, with respect to the previous regional government, which was expressed by the opposite political alignment. From this perspective, the first issue that should be taken into greater account is the role of political positions within the participatory and planning processes.

In addition, in relation to the structure of the participatory processes, the analysis of the Sardinian case study identifies different stages of participatory processes that need specific attention. In particular, they are: the aims, the stage in which the inclusive moments should begin, the participants' individuation and the techniques and methods to be used. The first issue represents a significant aspect because it influences the way and the modalities to conceive the same processes. Moreover, in the elaboration of the Sardinian RLP the aim of the participatory process was to inform the local municipalities with respect to already-taken decisions in order to legitimate the ruling role of the regional government over the planning issues. On the other hand, in the revision phase the regional government focused on the acquisition of opinions from the side of the local municipalities in order to represent itself as a forward-looking administration. However, the other three stages are fundamental because the management problems could compromise the results

of the participatory processes. Indeed, the participatory processes started after that a detailed and comprehensive RLP proposal had already been elaborated, preventing the possibility to formulate shared objectives and strategies. On the other hand, the participatory process should be conceived parallel to the planning process of the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of the RLP. In this way, it could be possible to guarantee a real participation and also a continuous monitoring of the planning processes. Secondly, in the elaboration and revision phases the inclusive processes excluded some important stakeholders such as the private sector. In particular, in the revision phase, the participatory process concerned only public institutions. Indeed, the regional government sought to obtain a greater consensus among communities without a sound analysis of their social composition. In other words, the regional government used some techniques and methods labelled as participatory. From this perspective, it could be useful to conduct a social analysis of communities in order to identify all the stakeholders who have an interest in the elaboration of the RLP. Moreover, this analysis could also be useful to study the variables that characterise the society such as average age or level of education in order to identify the best solutions in terms of methods and techniques. On the other hand, identifying the most significant stakeholders represents a key issue. Indeed, in the Sardinian case study, all possible stakeholders should be represented by the total population. However, it is certainly improper to implement participatory processes involving about 1.5 million people. Therefore, the management aspects should be taken into a greater account in order not to compromise the results of the participatory and planning processes. Thirdly, the participatory techniques and methods were not appropriate. This problem was due to a lack of awareness about the importance of implementing participatory processes that make the implementation of effective methods and techniques impossible.

In relation to the third research question, the analysis of the Sardinian case study highlights how difficult is to implement real participatory processes in an efficient way. Moreover, as explained previously, in relation to the second research question, different practical problems should be taken into account. From this perspective, the third research question represents a further level of analysis. Indeed, going beyond the analysis of the main problems, the research intends to minimize the gap between theoretical and practical issues. This consideration arises from the fact, proved through the analysis of the Sardinian RLP, that theoretical and practical

concepts are deeply connected to participation. So, not only is their coexistence undeniable, but the effectiveness of the integrated system “participatory and planning processes” is strongly connected to their equilibrium. From this conceptual framework, different issues should be examined and interpreted. First of all, the implementation of inclusive processes entails two types of reactions. On the one hand, who is excluded accuses who manages the processes for being excluded. On the other hand, who implements the participatory processes accuses participants for lack of effective participation. As a consequence, the causes of the ineffectiveness of the participatory processes supporting the decision-making processes depend on the perspective of phenomena observations or on the lack of a link among the two viewpoints. Indeed, without a methodological framework in which the inclusive moments should be included within the planning processes, the state of uncertainty does not allow implementing effective participatory processes. As a result, the first point concerns the definition of a methodological framework. However, that is not sufficient. Indeed, the methodological framework should reflect some important issues, such as integration, decision independency, flexibility and circularity. First of all, the integration between the participatory and planning processes could be realised, only if the two processes go hand in hand. In that way, the inclusion of stakeholders is granted along the process. On the other hand, as the analysis of the Sardinian case study emphasised, the political decisions can influence the processes. As a result, a certain degree of independency is necessary. Indeed, the participatory processes should be elaborated and implemented by an authority that should be different from the administration that implements the planning processes. Moreover, the two processes should be cooperative and interactive continuously, guaranteeing the transparency of the integrated system. Secondly, the concepts of flexibility and circularity are fundamental. The former concerns the possibility to adapt the processes to different external variables’ behaviour. Indeed, the effectiveness of the participatory and planning processes is linked to the reference contexts that are characterised by specific economic, political and social aspects. The second concept is connected to the idea that the integrated system is not a sequence of phases and steps. As a result, fortunately within the integrated system different non-linear relations exist. The word “fortunately” is not used accidentally. Indeed, the circularity entails a continuous assessment of the two processes, allowing correcting possible mistakes.

In conclusion, in relation to the fourth research question, it goes beyond the previous considerations, representing a thought-provoking issue. Its intention is to draw the attention to an undervalued point. Indeed, in the literature, one of the main problems is represented by the failure of participatory processes to involve all the potential stakeholders. As a result, participation is defined as a democratic right and not as a duty. On the other hand, participatory processes are sometimes characterised by the lack of the participants' interest who do not contribute effectively to the achievement of shared objectives and strategies. Indeed, only if stakeholders perceive their involvement as practically convenient in terms of individual utility will they actively participate in the processes. On the other hand, the term "duty" suggests the intention to achieve a collective interest that goes beyond the individual benefits.

### **7.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORIES AND FURTHER RESEARCH AREAS**

The analysis of the Sardinian case study and the elaboration of the procedural protocol underlines different aspects with some important implications for theories related to this specific area of interest. Moreover, the results of this research could represent the input for future research works that could not be eventually strongly connected to the participatory processes. According to this framework, this paragraph aims at analysing these two elements in order to underline the possible implications that the research work could have.

First of all, one of the main objectives of this research is to analyse the problems of the ineffectiveness of the participatory processes in support of the decision-making processes in a different way. Indeed, although the literature recognises a dichotomy within the concept of participation, it examines and interprets the participatory processes either as democratic or as practical. So, by recognizing the intrinsically dualistic nature of participation, the thesis intends to combine and integrate these two dimensions, which are both necessary. From this perspective, the research elaborates a procedural protocol where an integrated system between the participatory and planning processes is described and defined in an empirical way.

Moreover, the elaboration of a methodological framework that could be applied to the planning processes at the regional scale represents an innovative aspect. Indeed, the procedural protocol emphasises different concepts that are connected to

different issues. For example, the integration of the participatory practices and the planning processes represents a key aspect of the SEA procedures, where the assessment processes become an integral and endogenous part of the decision-making processes. In addition, the procedural protocol intends to prevent possible negative influences on the participatory processes due to the fact that the processes are implemented by the same authority. On the other hand, the assignment of clear responsibilities within the methodological framework implies two important consequences. First of all, the two authorities, one implementing the participatory processes and the other implementing the planning processes, represent a guarantee form with respect to the transparency of the processes. Secondly, despite the decision independency, the two authorities guarantee a reciprocal assessment of the effectiveness of the two processes.

In addition, as explained in the literature review (see chapter 1, pp. 6-21), the concept of participation has been subjected to a continuous evolution from the 1950's to nowadays, where it has assumed different interpretations. As a consequence, the research tries to change the perspective of observation, shifting from participation as a right to inclusion as a duty as well. This provoking issue intends to emphasise the strong social nature that characterises the concept of participation.

In relation to the implications for other areas, the results of the thesis suggest some possible future research works. First of all, the data analysis (see chapter 5, pp. 50-87) could represent a basis for studies in the field of political science. Indeed, the analysis of the Sardinian case study highlights the influences of the planning processes on the political system and vice versa. For example, the regional government that approved the RLP in 2006 lost the regional elections in 2009, partially due to the problems that the ineffectiveness of the RLP perceived by the local communities. Therefore, it could be useful to understand how these two systems are connected.

Secondly, the role of participants' behaviour within the planning or political processes could represent a significant implication for future research works in the field of social and political sciences. Indeed, the analysis of the Sardinian case study emphasises the importance of the stakeholders within the inclusive processes. For instance, their behaviours can reinforce or discourage the existing power relations. As a result, the question concerns how participants and the political and planning



processes are linked. In other words, what the social implications of the participants' behaviours over the planning or political processes are.

In conclusion, the research provides different implications for theories concerning the specific theme of participation and in relation to further studies in other research areas.

#### **7.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The Sardinian case study represents an important example in order to analyse the participatory approaches supporting the decision-making processes. Indeed, on the one hand, in the elaboration phase the participatory process was implemented to legitimate the regional government's role. From this perspective, this phase can be likened to the penultimate stage of the evolutionary process of the concept of participation that is the critique and lack of interest in participation (see paragraph 2.1 pp. 7-10). On the other hand, the revision phase was characterized by an improvement with respect to some aspects of the participatory processes. As a result, this phase can be likened to the last stage of the evolutionary process of the participation concept that is the revision of participatory practices (see paragraph 2.1 pp. 7-10).

Moreover, the social research provides answers to the research questions (see paragraph 7.2, pp. 119-123). However, as it occurs in each research work, problems may arise, such as the lack of involvement of potential participants and the limited time (see paragraph 3.4 pp. 30-33). From this perspective, the processes' effectiveness could improve. For instance, it could be interesting to implement the same research after the new RLP will be adopted in order to verify if the results of the participatory processes have an impact on the planning decisions. In addition, the procedural protocol could be applied to real cases in order to understand advantages or disadvantages, problems and benefits.

In conclusion, the research intends to provide an alternative perspective of observation, emphasising an important lesson that is "learning from failing".

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## **APPENDIX**

### **Enclosure I - MODEL OF QUESTIONNAIRES**

**TITLE OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL: participatory approaches in support of decision-making processes: the case study of Sardinian Landscape Plan.**

- I. *Contents and aims:* I am undertaking a postgraduate dissertation analysing the participatory approaches and decision-making processes in the case study of the Sardinian Regional Landscape Plan.
- II. *Structure of questionnaire:* the questionnaire involve members of provincial and local government, of environmental organizations and associations, as well as professionals, representatives of building firms, and citizens in order to include different viewpoints of the same issue in the research. The questionnaire consists of three sections. In the first, questions aim to obtain general information about participatory approaches used in the two phases of elaboration and revision. The second section concerns the specific approaches used during the elaboration phase, meanwhile the third section concerns those which are used in the revision phase.
- III. *Information about the use of information provided:* the involvement in this research is anonymous and voluntary. Indeed, it will not be possible to identify individual participants in any way. Moreover, data will be used only for academic purposes.

I agree with these terms

SECTION 1 – General information

1.1 Which categories are you a member of? (Please tick one or more categories)

Officials of provincial government	
Officials of local government	
Technicians of building enterprises	
Practitioners	
Members of environmentalist organization or association	
Technicians of other public institutions	

1.2 To what extent have the participatory approaches, used during the elaboration and revision processes of the Regional Landscape Plan, been useful? (Please tick the appropriate response)

Score	Opinion	Elaboration phase	Revision phase
5	Absolutely useful		
4	Useful		
3	Undecided		
2	Useless		
1	Absolutely useless		

1.3 To what extent has it been appropriate to begin participatory approaches after a strong proposal of the Regional Landscape Plan had already been elaborated? (Please tick the appropriate response and justify your answer)

Score	Opinion	
5	Absolutely appropriate	
4	Appropriate	
3	Undecided	
2	Inappropriate	
1	Absolutely inappropriate	

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- 1.4 To what extent has it been appropriate to involve only public institutions in the elaboration and revision processes of the Regional Landscape Plan? (Please tick the appropriate response)

Score	Opinion		
5	Absolutely appropriate		Go to question 1.7
4	Appropriate		Go to question 1.7
3	Undecided		Go to question 1.5
2	Inappropriate		Go to question 1.5
1	Absolutely inappropriate		Go to question 1.5

- 1.5 Who should be involved in the participatory approaches in support of elaboration and revision of the Regional Landscape Plan? (Please tick the appropriate response)

Individuals, public and private organizations and public institutions that have an interest in the planning process		Go to question 1.6
Public institutions and public and private organizations		Go to question 1.7
Other		Go to question 1.7

If you tick the response “other”, please specify who the other actors are

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- 1.6 In which of the following two circumstances is it appropriate to involve individuals, public and private organizations and public institutions that have an interest in the planning process? (Please tick the appropriate response)

When their involvement requires more resources in terms of money and time compared with the same situation without involvement	
When their involvement does not require more resources in terms of money and time compared with the same situation without involvement	

1.7 To what extent have the following aspects influenced, in negative terms, the success of participatory approaches that have been used during the elaboration and revision phase of the Regional Landscape Plan? (Please tick the appropriate response and justify your answer)

	<i>Strong negative impact (score 1)</i>	<i>Negative impact (score 2)</i>	<i>Undecided (score 3)</i>	<i>Not strong negative impact (score 4)</i>	<i>Not negative impact (score 5)</i>
Costs of process in terms of money and time					
Participants' behaviours					
Stage of planning process in which the participatory approaches begin					
Individuation of participants					
Methods and techniques to involve stakeholders					
Other aspects which are not specified above					

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1.8 Are there other aspects not mentioned in question number 1.7?

Yes (please specify the other aspects);

No (in this case go to section 2)

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## SECTION 2

2.1 To what extent were the participatory approaches and tools (used during the elaboration phase of the Regional Landscape Plan) appropriate in order to build a shared scenario as a basis on which to identify objectives and strategies of the plan itself? (Please tick the appropriate response and justify your answer)

	<i>Absolutely appropriate</i> (score 5)	<i>Appropriate</i> (score 4)	<i>Undecided</i> (score 3)	<i>Not appropriate</i> (score 2)	<i>Absolutely not appropriate</i> (score 1)
Participatory phases established by law (i.e., the possibility to examine the proposal of Regional Landscape Plan and to express own opinions and observations within 30 days)					
Conferences among municipalities, provinces and organizations and association relating to industry, commerce and craft before the adoption of plan					
An informative institutional website until the Regional Landscape Plan was taken up					
The website "Sardegna Territorio" after the Regional Landscape Plan was published					
Mass media, such as regional television programmes and newspapers					



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2.2 To what extent have the above defined participatory approaches and tools that have been used during the phase of elaboration of the Regional Landscape Plan achieved the following benefits? (Please tick the appropriate response and justify your answer)

	<i>Absolutely achieved</i> (score 5)	<i>Achieved</i> (score 4)	<i>Undecided</i> (score 3)	<i>Not achieved</i> (score 2)	<i>Absolutely not achieved</i> (score 1)
Inclusion of different perspectives in order to define problems which affect the society					
Effectiveness of decision or policy					
Transparency of process					
Promotion of social learning					
Better understanding of a community's needs and priorities					
Greater consensus among citizens and other stakeholders					
Higher quality information					

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2.3 Are there other benefits not mentioned in question number 2.2?

- Yes (please specify the other aspects);
- No

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2.4 Please indicate your level of agreement about the main problems of participatory approaches in the elaboration phase of the Regional Landscape Plan by ticking the appropriate response.

	<i>Strongly agree</i> <i>(score 1)</i>	<i>Agree</i> <i>(score 2)</i>	<i>Undecided</i> <i>(score 3)</i>	<i>Disagree</i> <i>(score 4)</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i> <i>(score 5)</i>
There was not any real participation because those approaches represented only an informative phase					
Single municipalities did not participate actively					
Citizens did not participate actively					
Province did not participate actively					
Environmental and trade organizations did not participate actively					
The approaches were directed only to build consensus					
The regional government did not provide enough information about participatory opportunities					
The regional government did not reply to the observations that were put forward					

2.5 Are there other problems not mentioned in question number 2.5?

Yes (please specify the other aspects);

No

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2.6 Why did participants not participate actively although they had been given the possibility to do so? (Please tick the appropriate response)

	<i>Strongly agree</i> (score 1)	<i>Agree</i> (score 2)	<i>Undecided</i> (score 3)	<i>Disagree</i> (score 4)	<i>Strongly disagree</i> (score 5)
They do not have a real interest					
They do not perceive their role as necessary					
Participants' behaviour is influenced by social variables such as race, income and education					
Technical complexity inhibits citizens' participation					
Citizens do not trust in bureaucracy in terms of transparency					

2.7 Are there other reasons not mentioned in question number 2.6?

Yes (please specify the other aspects);

No

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**SECTION 3**

3.1 To what extent were the following participatory approaches and tools (used during the revision phase of the Regional Landscape Plan) appropriate in order to build a shared scenario as a basis on which to identify objectives and strategies of plan itself? (Please tick the appropriate response and justify your answer)

	<i>Absolutely appropriate</i> (score 5)	<i>Appropriate</i> (score 4)	<i>Undecided</i> (score 3)	<i>Not appropriate</i> (score 2)	<i>Absolutely not appropriate</i> (score 1)
Operative and informal meetings called "laboratorio del paesaggio"					
Sardegna Geoblog					
The website "Sardegna Territorio"					
Mass media, such as regional television programmes and newspapers					

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3.2 Please indicate your level of agreement about the main problems of participatory approaches in the elaboration phase of the Regional Landscape Plan by ticking the appropriate response.

	<i>Strongly agree</i> (score 1)	<i>Agree</i> (score 2)	<i>Undecided</i> (score 3)	<i>Disagree</i> (score 4)	<i>Strongly disagree</i> (score 5)
There was not any real participation because those approaches represented only an informative phase					
Single municipalities did not participate actively					
Citizens did not participate actively					
Province did not participate actively					
Environmental and trade organizations did not participate actively					
The approaches were directed only to build consensus					
The regional government did not provide enough information about participatory opportunities					
The regional government did not reply to the observations that were put forward					

3.3 Are there other problems not mentioned in question number 3.2?

- Yes (please specify the other aspects);
- No

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3.4 Why did participants not participate actively although they had been given the possibility to do so? (Please tick the appropriate response)

	<i>Strongly agree</i> <i>(score 1)</i>	<i>Agree</i> <i>(score 2)</i>	<i>Undecided</i> <i>(score 3)</i>	<i>Disagree</i> <i>(score 4)</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i> <i>(score 5)</i>
They do not have a real interest					
They do not perceive their role as necessary					
Participants' behaviour is influenced by social variables such as race, income and education					
Technical complexity inhibits citizens' participation					
Citizens do not trust in bureaucracy in terms of transparency					

3.5 Are there other reasons not mentioned in question number 3.4?

Yes (please specify the other aspects);

No

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3.6 To what extent has the Regional Government understood and solved the problems concerning participatory approaches encountered during the elaboration phase? (Please tick the appropriate response and justify your answer)

<i>Score</i>	<i>Opinion</i>	
5	Absolutely solved	
4	Solved	
3	Undecided	
2	Unsolved	
1	Absolutely unsolved	

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## Enclosure II - MODEL OF INTERVIEWS

**TITLE OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL: participatory approaches in support of decision-making processes: the case study of Sardinian Landscape Plan.**

- I. *Contents and aims:* I am undertaking a postgraduate dissertation analysing the participatory approaches and decision-making processes in the case study of the Sardinian Regional Landscape Plan.
- II. *Structure of interviews:* the semi-structured interviews involve only members of regional government and academic in order to get in depth information from two different perspectives: the authority which organizes the participatory process and the experts in planning and participatory processes.
- III. *Information about the use of information provided:* the involvement in this research is anonymous and voluntary. Indeed, it will not be possible to identify individual participants in any way. Moreover, data will be used only for academic purposes. The interviews are conducted through the use of a sound recorder.

I agree with these terms



1. To what extent have the participatory approaches carried out in the planning processes of elaboration and revision of Regional Landscape Plan been useful and efficient in terms of objectives established and results achieved?
2. To what extent are the participatory approaches established by Italian law (such as the possibility to express own opinion after a plan proposal has been elaborated yet), sufficient and appropriate in order to guarantee a real participation of all interested actors in both the elaboration and revision phase of Regional Landscape Plan?
3. What are the real benefits which could be achieved thanks to the participatory approaches used in the elaboration and revision phase of Regional Landscape Plan?
4. To what extent are the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases of Regional Landscape Plan achieved the benefits identified by literature such as inclusion of different perspectives in order to define problems which affect the society; effectiveness of decision or policy; transparency of process; promotion of social learning; better understanding of a community's needs and priorities; greater consensus among citizens and other stakeholders; higher quality information?
5. What have been the main problems of participatory approaches which have been adopted during the elaboration and revision phase of Regional Landscape Plan in terms of results achieved?
6. What have been the main factors which had influenced the outcomes of participatory approaches during the elaboration and revision phase of Regional Landscape Plan?
7. To what extent has the participatory approach, conducted after a strong proposal of Regional Landscape Plan exists yet, been effective?
8. To what extent have the resources used in terms of money and time been appropriate and sufficient in order to guarantee a real participation in the elaboration and revision phase of Regional Landscape Plan?

9. To what extent has the individuation or identification of participants (only involvement of public institutions) guaranteed that all interests into play were included in the elaboration and revision phase of Regional Landscape Plan?
10. What modalities should be used in order to identify participants in the participatory approaches used during the elaboration and revision phase of Regional Landscape Plan?
11. To what extent have the participants' behaviours influenced (both positively and negatively) the outcomes of participatory and planning processes in the elaboration and revision phase of Regional Landscape Plan and the contents of Plan in the revision phase?
12. What have been the main factors which have influenced the participants' behaviours by both the side of stakeholders and regional government?
13. To what extent have the methods, techniques and tools used during the elaboration phase of Regional Landscape Plan been appropriate and efficient in order to guarantee a real participatory process and in terms of results achieved?
14. What have been the main problems or criticisms in terms of methods, techniques and tools used during the elaboration phase of Regional Landscape Plan?
15. To what extent have the methods, techniques and tools used during the revision phase of Regional Landscape Plan been appropriate and efficient in order to guarantee a real participatory process and in terms of results achieved?
16. What have been the main problems or criticisms in terms of methods, techniques and tools used during the revision phase of Regional Landscape Plan?
17. To what extent have the participatory approaches used during the revision phase of Regional Landscape Plan compensated for the problems relating to the first phase (elaboration of Regional Landscape Plan)?
18. What suggestions could you make in order to improve the efficiency of the participatory approaches used during the revision phase of Regional Landscape Plan?

## Enclosure III- THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

**TABLE III.1: Typology of the participatory processes**

Interviewee	Elaboration phase	Revision phase
1	The participatory process was implemented in order to present the Regional Landscape Plan. The aim was not to establish a dialogue and a communication among participants	The participatory process was theoretically useful in order to increase the awareness among participants. However, the lack of a cultural awareness about the importance of participation compromised the effectiveness of the results.
2	The participatory process represented an informative phase in order to inform the local municipalities about a kind of planning revolution in Sardinia.	The participatory process was more conscious. Indeed, proactive contributions by the side of the local municipalities and other stakeholder were considered with more attention. However, the final plan has not been implemented yet, therefore there is not a confirmation if these inputs were really taken into account.
3	The participatory process represented an informative phase in order to inform the local municipalities about planning decisions already taken by the regional government. This situation provoked an interruption of implemental phase due to a controversial scenario between the regional government and the local municipalities.	The participatory process took the dialogue with local municipalities into greater consideration. However, it is not clear the consequences and the results that this participation will have on the content of the new plan because the revised version of the RLP has not finished yet.
4	The participatory process represented only a group shared moment and not a real participatory process	The participatory process defined a scenario of shared objectives. However, it is not clear the consequences and the results that this participation will have on the content of new plan because the revised version of the RLP has not finished yet.
5	The participatory process represented only an informative phase of an end product. From this perspective, a process in which the dialogue about	The participatory process was implemented in conceptually wrong terms because participation means a balanced comparison and dialogue among

	objectives and contents was not possible.	different wills, visions, strategies and objectives. However, in the revision phase, the regional government implemented the process in which the aim was to know what vision and strategies the local municipalities have without an explanation about its strategies and objectives.
6	The process was not really participatory because the objectives and the strategies was already defined.	The participatory process was formal and traditional because it was represented by classic and unidirectional conferences.
7	The process was not really participatory because the objectives and the strategies was already defined.	The participatory process defined scenarios of shared objectives. However, it is not clear the consequences and the results that this participation will have on the content of new plan because the revised version of the RLP has not finished yet.
8	The process was not really participatory because the objectives and the strategies was already defined. Therefore, it represented only an informative phase	The participatory process defined scenarios of shared objectives. However, it is not clear the consequences and the results that this participation will have on the content of new plan because the revised version of the RLP has not finished yet.

**Table 15 Thematic analysis of interviews in relation to the typology of the participatory processes in the elaboration and revision phases of the RLP**

**TABLE III.2: Benefits of the participatory processes**

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Promotion of social learning</b>	<b>Better understanding of community's needs</b>	<b>Higher quality information</b>
1	More awareness of the importance of landscape by the side of the local municipalities.	/	Obtaining more quality information in relation to the mistakes and errors in the physical maps.
2	More awareness and maturity of their role in relation to the planning processes by the side of the local municipalities.	More capacity of the local municipalities to represent and to understand the communities' needs	/
	More attention of the local municipalities to the plan's contents.		
	More awareness of the importance of the participatory processes by the side of the local municipalities.		
3	/	/	/
4	More awareness and maturity of their role in relation to the planning processes by the side of the local municipalities.	/	Obtaining more quality information in relation to the mistakes and errors in the physical maps.
	More awareness of the importance of landscape by the side of the local municipalities.		
5	More awareness of the importance of landscape by the side of the local municipalities.	/	Obtaining more quality information in relation to the mistakes and errors in the physical maps.
	More awareness and maturity of their role in relation to the planning processes by the side of the local municipalities.		
6	More awareness of the importance of	/	Obtaining more quality information in relation

	landscape by the side of the local municipalities and citizens.		to the mistakes and errors in the physical maps.
7	/	/	/
8	/	/	/

Table 16 Thematic analysis of interviews in relation to the benefits of the participatory processes of the RLP

**TABLE III.3, III.4 and III.5: Problems of the participatory processes**

*Political and administrative issues*

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Elaboration phase</b>	<b>Revision phase</b>
1	There was a lack of wellness to implement real participatory processes. Indeed the aim of the process was not directed to identify shared objectives. Moreover, the RLP was a strong imposition by the part of the regional government that intended to prove its power over the local scale decisions. In addition, power relationships were imbalanced, because, on the one side, there was a strong regional government and, on the other side, there were weak local municipalities. Indeed only few strong municipalities had a political power to negotiate the results but not the objectives.	Participants and politicians do not have a cultural awareness about the effectiveness of participatory practices in support of the decision-making processes. Moreover, professionals and politicians do not have the skills, in order to apply participatory methodologies in an efficient way.
	Some professionals did not have sufficient technical competences. Moreover, participants did not have skills in order to understand the RLP's contents due to its technical complexity	
	Politicians did not have a cultural awareness about the effectiveness of participatory practices in support of the decision-making processes.	
2	Regional government had a dirigiste role and this influenced the participants' behaviour that did not contribute to improve the RLP's contents and results. From this perspective, some local	In Sardinia and in Italy there is not an entrenched culture about participation.

	<p>municipalities did not participate even if they had the real possibility to do that for two main reasons. First of all, participants perceived their role as inefficiency and useless. Secondly, the local municipality were not conscious about their role in relation to the planning discipline.</p>	
	<p>The participatory process was structured in a conceptually wrong manner, because the aim was to establish the supremacy of the regional government over the planning decisions at the regional and local level. Indeed, the participatory process was not conducted to build a multidirectional dialogue between the regional government and the local municipalities in which the individuation of communities' needs and the definition of shared strategies and objectives could represent two important priorities. In addition, on the one hand, the regional government structured the participatory process in relation to the idea that the local municipalities did not have skills, competences, capacities and culture, in order to take part in the planning process in an efficient way. On the other hand, the regional government showed an incapacity to pay attention to the local municipalities' observations and suggestions</p>	
	<p>In Sardinia and in Italy there is not an entrenched culture about participation.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>The regional government had a dirigiste role. Indeed, on the one hand, the local municipalities did not have the possibility to interact and dialog with the regional government that intended only to inform the local municipalities in relation to already given decisions. In addition, the political, administrative, technical and</p>	<p>The new participatory process sought to compensate for the problems of the elaboration phase. However, the regional government did not clarify its planning purposes. Therefore, the suggestions of participants were lacking in a unitary vision. In addition, stakeholders did not participate actively due to a</p>

	human supports to the local municipalities was belated. On the other hand, the regional government did not have skills to conceive an effective participatory process.	probable distrust towards the regional government.
4	The regional government had a dirigiste role. Indeed, the participatory process did not manage to identify social problems of the local communities.	The participation was minimum because participants expected clarifying and resolution moments that did not occur. On the other hand, the regional government expected that the local municipalities could explain problems and solutions. However, the local municipalities were confused about the plan's contents. In addition, stakeholders did not participate actively due to a probable distrust towards the regional government
5	Power relationships were imbalanced, because, on the one side, there was a strong regional government and, on the other side, there were weak local municipalities. Indeed, the regional government had a dirigiste role and this influenced the participants' behaviour who perceived their role as inefficiency and useless. On the other hand, the RLP was a technically complex external process, therefore the local municipalities did not perceive this territory as their own.	Participatory process aimed for a wider consensus among the local municipalities without the establishment of a real and constructive dialogue between the regional and local governments.
6	Power relationships were imbalanced, because, on the one side, there was a strong regional government and, on the other side, there were weak local municipalities. Indeed, the regional government had a dirigiste role and this influenced the participants' behaviour who perceived their role as inefficiency and useless. On the other hand, the regional government did not have skills to conceive an effective participatory process.	Participatory process aimed for a wider consensus among the local municipalities without the establishment of a real and constructive dialogue between the regional and local governments. Moreover, stakeholders did not participate actively due to a probable distrust towards the regional government.



7	/	Stakeholders did not participate actively due to a probable distrust towards the regional government. Moreover, the local municipalities did not accept their subordinate role in relation to the regional government. However, the territorial planning is a regional competence.
8	In Sardinia and in Italy there is not an entrenched culture about participation. Moreover, stakeholders did not participated actively, because the local municipalities did not have the capacities and skills, in order to take part in the planning process in an efficient way	/

**Table 17 Thematic analysis of interviews in relation to the political and administrative issues of the participatory processes in the elaboration and revision phases of the RLP**

*Management and organizational issues*

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Elaboration phase</b>	<b>Revision phase</b>
1	Local municipalities and other stakeholders, such as academicians were not involved in an efficient way. Moreover, not all the stakeholders were involved in the participatory process, such as the economic and productive sector	Participants and politicians do not have a cultural awareness about the effectiveness of participatory practices in support of the decision-making processes.
	The regional government spent excessive financial resources in relation to the achieved results.	Professionals and politicians did not have the skills, in order to apply participatory methodologies in a efficient way.
2	The regional government did not conduct any social analysis about communities, in order to identify the interests into play. From this perspective, not all the stakeholders were involved in the participatory process, such as the economic, productive and social sector. Moreover, there were no guarantee that the officials of the local municipalities could represent the communities' interests and needs.	The regional government spent excessive time with respect to three consequent typologies of conferences. From this perspective, it is not clear if the regional government has a real intention to implement the revised version of the RLP in relation to results of the participatory process.
	The regional government did not spend sufficient financial resources to train up officials of the local municipalities.	The regional government did not spend sufficient financial resources to train up officials of the local municipalities and on territorial informative systems such as Sardegna Geoblog
	The regional government did not spend sufficient time to allow the real involvement of the local municipalities.	The regional government did not conduct any social analysis about communities in order to identify the interests into play. Indeed, not all the stakeholders were involved in the participatory process, such as the economic, productive and social sector. Moreover, There was no guarantee that officials of the local municipalities could represent the communities' interests and needs in a proper way.
3	The identification of participants was absolutely inappropriate in order to	A process of analysis of the social dimension at the local

	<p>guarantee real participation.</p>	<p>scale was not conducted. From this perspective, the identification of participants were inappropriate to guarantee a real participation. Indeed, the missed participation of provincial administrations, professional and citizen associations involved negative effects on the participatory process. Moreover, the identification of participants was conducted by the regional administration, meanwhile the involvement of provincial and local administrations could guarantee a better identification of stakeholders at the local level.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>The regional government did not conduct any social analysis about communities in order to identify the interests into play. However, the involvement of provincial and local administrations in the participants' identification phase could guarantee a better identification of stakeholders at the local level. Indeed, not all the stakeholders were involved in the participatory process, such as the economic, productive and social sector.</p> <p>Moreover, informative and awareness campaigns were not sufficient in terms of time because the elaboration of RLP was a new process in the Sardinian planning scenario. On the other hand, stakeholders did not participate actively due to two important reasons. First of all, the time to analyze and examine the plan's contents was really limited.</p> <p>Secondly, the elaboration of RLP was a new planning process in the Sardinian region and the local municipalities expected a wider collaboration by the side of the regional government.</p>	<p>The contributions of participants were not explicit in the summarizing documents, because these observations needed a reinterpretation, which provoked some content mistakes of real ideas and visions of participants. Moreover, the regional government did not publicize in a proper way, the revision process of RLP.</p>

5	<p>The participatory process was conducted when a strong plan proposal was already elaborated. On the contrary, a real participatory process should be conducted parallel to the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of the planning process through the establishment of new public bodies that concern participatory practices. The participatory process was traditional and it did not take different stakeholder into account, such as the economic, productive and social sectors. Moreover, within the regional government, there were not any experts on participatory practices, such as facilitators who could report to participants to contents, objectives and strategies of the RLP. In addition, there was no guarantee that officials of the local municipalities could represent the communities' interests and needs. Indeed, the regional government did not conduct any social analysis about communities in order to identify the interests into play.</p>	<p>The regional government did not conduct any social analysis about communities in order to identify the interests into play. Indeed, not all the stakeholders were involved in the participatory process, such as the economic, productive and social sectors.</p>
6	/	<p>Not all the stakeholders were involved in the participatory process, such as the economic, productive and social sectors.</p>
7	<p>The RLP was elaborated in a limited time that did not allow a real participation. Moreover, there was a lack of a deep analysis of the region because it is composed by material and immaterial values. In addition, the regional government did not conduct informative and awareness campaigns about the plan's principles and reasons of some planning decisions. From this perspective, not all the stakeholders were involved in the participatory process, such as the economic and productive sectors. There was no guarantee that officials of the local municipalities could represent the communities' interests and needs.</p>	<p>Not all the stakeholders were involved in the participatory process, such as the economic and productive sectors. There was no guarantee that officials of the local municipalities could represent the communities' interests and needs.</p>

8	<p>The main problem was that a real participatory process was not conducted because the time was limited. In addition, not all the stakeholders were involved in the participatory process, such as the economic and productive sectors. There was no guarantee that officials of the local municipalities could represent the communities' interests and needs.</p>	<p>Not all the stakeholders were involved in the participatory process, such as the economic and productive sectors. There was no guarantee that officials of the local municipalities could represent the communities' interests and needs. Moreover, stakeholders did not participate actively due to a lack of awareness campaign.</p>
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**Table 18 Thematic analysis of interviews in relation to the management and organizational issues of the participatory processes in the elaboration and revision phases of the RLP**

*Technical issues concerning methods and techniques*

Interviewee	Elaboration phase	Revision phase
1	<p>The participatory phases, which are established by law, do not represent a real participatory process in terms of shared objectives and strategies. They are linked to the recognition of the property right.</p>	<p>The website Sardinia Territory [Sardinia Territory] is an innovative tool. However, some functionalities have poor utility. Indeed, the financial resources, which were spent to develop it, were ten times bigger than other European cases. In conclusion, Sardegna Territorio [Sardinia Territory] represented an informative phase and not a real participatory tool.</p>
	<p>The website Sardinia Territory [Sardinia Territory] is an innovative tool. However, some functionalities have poor utility. Indeed, the financial resources, which were spent to develop it, were ten times bigger than other European cases. In conclusion, Sardegna Territorio [Sardinia Territory] represented an informative phase and not a real participatory tool.</p>	<p>The technological platform of Sardegna Geoblog [Sardinia Geoblog] is efficient even if it copied the free functionalities of Google map. However, there were some management problems, such as how it is possible to integrate geographic information without a prior guideline about the data elaboration (e.g. a church can be represented by a point or a polygon). Moreover, there was not a strong connection to the real planning processes.</p>
	<p>Co-planning conferences represented an informative phase and not real participatory methods.</p>	
2	<p>The participatory phases, which are established by law, do not represent a real participatory process but only an unidirectional</p>	<p>The website Sardegna Territory [Sardinia Territory] was an appropriate tool in order to guarantee unidirectional</p>

	formal phase.	information. However, this tool did not allow having feedbacks from participants.
	Co-planning conferences did not get efficient results because they represented a formal participatory approach in terms of informative phase. Indeed there were officials of the regional government who spoke in a dogmatic way to local municipalities that did not contribute in terms of the plan's contents. Moreover, conferences were organized from February to April 2006. From this perspective, the local municipalities did not have sufficient time to be really proactive. In addition, no facilitators were involved in the process	In the RLP workshops, a group of facilitators were involved in order to increase the participants' awareness about their role. This approach was not really advanced; however it represented a step forward in relation to the elaboration phase.
	The website Sardegna Territorio [Sardinia Territory] was an appropriate tool in order to guarantee unidirectional information. However, this tool did not allow having feedbacks from participants.	
3	The participatory phases, which are established by law, were not sufficient in order to guarantee a real participation in support of the decision-making processes.	Sardegna Territorio [Sardinia Territory] is a good tool for informative purpose. However, it did not guarantee a real participation.
	The co-planning conferences were absolutely inappropriate because a wider involvement at the local level was missed. Moreover, the management of information was inappropriate.	
	Sardegna Territorio [Sardinia Territory] is a good tool for informative purposes. However, it did not guarantee a real participation	
4	The participatory phases, which are established by law, were not sufficient in order to guarantee a real participation in support of the decision-making processes. Indeed, the elaboration of the RLP was a new process for Sardinia.	Sardegna Geoblog [Sardinian Geoblog] was a failure for two reasons. First of all, there was a probable distrust towards the regional government. Secondly, officials of the local municipalities did not have enough time to interact through Geoblog.

	<p>Sardegna Territorio [Sardinia Territory] represented a good tool in order to inform communities about the plan's contents. However, the information were technically complex. From this perspective, the real understanding of the plan's contents was noteasy.</p>	<p>In the RLP workshops, a group of facilitators were involved in order to make the participation easier in technical terms.</p> <p>Sardegna Territorio [Sardinia Territory] represented a good tool in order to inform communities about the plan's contents. However, the information were technically complex. From this perspective, the real understanding of plan's contents was not easy.</p>
5	<p>The participatory phases, which are established by law, were not sufficient in order to guarantee a real participation in support of the decision-making processes. Indeed, it is only a line of law duty. Moreover, the RLP was technically complex. Therefore, citizens did not have skills and competences to understand its contents. In addition, in the revised version of the RLP it was not explained what issues and considerations were upstream of this plan.</p> <p>Co-planning conferences were characterized by bureaucratic aspects rather than real participatory purposes.</p> <p>Sardegna Territorio [Sardinia Territory] represented a good tool in order to inform communities about the plan's contents. In other words, it was a useful participatory tool. However, there was a management problem.</p>	<p>Sardegna Territorio [Sardinia Territory] represented a good tool in order to inform communities about the plan's contents. In other words, it was a useful participatory tool. However, there was a management problem.</p>
6	<p>The participatory phases, which are established by law, did not represent a real participatory process in terms of shared objectives and strategies. However, they allowed correcting some mistakes, in particular in relation to the physical maps.</p> <p>Co-planning conferences did not represent real participatory methods because they were formal and unidirectional. Real</p>	<p>Sardegna Territorio [Sardinia Territory] is a good tool for informative purposes. However, it did not guarantee a real participation</p> <p>The RLP workshops did not represented real participatory methods because they were formal and unidirectional.</p>

	participatory methods and techniques were missing.	This approach was not really advanced. However it represented a step forward in relation to the elaboration phase
	Sardegna Territorio [Sardinia Territory] is a good tool for informative purposes. However, it did not guarantee a real participation	
7	The participatory phases, which are established by law, did not represent a real participatory process for two reasons. First of all, the RLP was a very complex planning tool and citizens did not have skills and capacities to understand its contents. Secondly, the time to express observations was really limited.	The regional government did not conducted informative and awareness campaigns about the use of computer tool. Moreover, it was difficult to understand the plan's contents by the Internet.
	Co-planning conferences did not represent a real participatory method because they were formal and unidirectional.	The RLP workshops were absolutely appropriate.
	The regional government did not conducted informative and awareness campaigns about the use of computer tool. Moreover, it was difficult to understand the plan's contents by the Internet.	Sardegna Territorio [Sardinia Territory] is a useful tool, there are always more useful information.
8	The participatory phases, which are established by law, did not represent a real participatory process in terms of shared objectives and strategies.	Sardegna Geoblog [Sardinia Geoblog] was absolutely appropriate.
		Sardegna Territorio [Sardinia Territory] was absolutely appropriate.
	Co-planning conferences were absolutely inappropriate.	The RLP workshops were absolutely appropriate

**Table 19 Thematic analysis of interviews in relation to the technical issues concerning methods and techniques of the participatory processes in the elaboration and revision phases of the RLP**



## Enclosure IV – STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES

### SECTION 1

#### Question 1.1

Category	Number (cad)	Percentage (%)	Colour identification
<i>Provincial government</i>	1	5.3	
<i>Local government</i>	7	36.75	
<i>Building firm</i>	1	5.3	
<i>Professional</i>	7	36.75	
<i>Environmental organization or association</i>	2	10.6	
<i>Other institutional authority</i>	1	5.3	
<i>Total</i>	19	100	

Table 20 Percentage of participants in relation to specific categories

#### Question 1.2

Opinion	Percentage (%)	Composition of respondents							
<i>Absolutely useful</i>	0								
<i>Useful</i>	21.05								
<i>Undecided</i>	5.26								
<i>Useless</i>	36.84								
<i>Absolutely useless</i>	15.79								
<i>No answer</i>	21.05								

Table 21 Level of agreement in relation to the utility of the participatory processes used during the elaboration phase

Opinion	Percentage (%)	Composition of respondents							
<i>Absolutely useful</i>	5.26								
<i>Useful</i>	15.79%								
<i>Undecided</i>	42.11								
<i>Useless</i>	21.05								
<i>Absolutely useless</i>	10.53								
<i>No answer</i>	5.26								

Table 22 Level of agreement in relation to the utility of the participatory processes used during the revision phase

#### Question 1.3

Opinion	Percentage (%)	Composition of respondents							
<i>Absolutely appropriate</i>	10.53								
<i>Appropriate</i>	15.79								
<i>Undecided</i>	5.26								
<i>Inappropriate</i>	47.37								
<i>Absolutely inappropriate</i>	21.05								
<i>No answer</i>	0								

Table 23 Level of agreement in relation to the pertinence to begin the participatory approaches after a strong proposal of the RLP had already been elaborated

Question 1.4

Opinion	Percentage (%)	Composition of respondents									
<i>Absolutely appropriate</i>	5.26	■									
<i>Appropriate</i>	5.26	■									
<i>Undecided</i>	10.53	■	■								
<i>Inappropriate</i>	57.89	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<i>Absolutely inappropriate</i>	10.53	■	■								
<i>No answer</i>	10.53	■	■								

Table 24 Level of agreement in relation to the involvement of only public institutions in the elaboration and revision phases of the RLP

Question 1.5

Opinion	Percentage (%)	Composition of respondents									
<i>Individuals, public and private organizations and public institutions that have an interest in the planning process</i>	68.42	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<i>Public institutions and public and private organizations</i>	5.26	■									
<i>Other</i>	5.26	■									

Table 25 Level of agreement in relation to specific categories of participants that should be involved in the elaboration and revision phases of the RLP

Question 1.6

Opinion	Percentage (%)	Composition of respondents									
<i>When their involvement requires more resources in terms of money and time compared with the same situation without involvement</i>	52.63	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<i>When their involvement does not require more resources in terms of money and time compared with the same situation without involvement</i>	15.79	■	■	■							

Table 26 Level of agreement in relation to specific circumstances in which individuals, public and private organizations and public institutions should be involved

Question 1.7

	<b>Strong negative impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Not strong negative impact</b>	<b>Not negative impact</b>	<b>No answer</b>
<i>Costs of process in terms of money and time</i>	26.32 %	21.05 %	21.05 %	5.26 %	5.26 %	21.05 %
<i>Participants' behaviours</i>	36.84 %	21.05 %	5.26 %	10.53 %	0 %	26.32 %
<i>Stage of planning process in which the participatory approaches begin</i>	31.58 %	31.58 %	5.26 %	10.53 %	5.26 %	15.79 %
<i>Individuation of participants</i>	15.79 %	36.84 %	10.53 %	5.26 %	5.26 %	26.32 %
<i>Methods and techniques to involve stakeholders</i>	21.05 %	52.63 %	10.53 %	0 %	10.53 %	5.26 %

**Table 27 Level of agreement in relation to the listed aspects which have influenced in negative terms the effectiveness of the participatory processes used during the elaboration and revision phases of RLP**



	0 %	15.79 %	31.58 %	26.32 %	15.79 %	10.53 %
<i>Mass media, such as regional television programmes and newspapers</i>						

**Table 29** Level of agreement in relation to the pertinence of the participatory approaches used during the elaboration phase

*Question 2.2*

	<b>Absolutely achieved</b>	<b>Achieved</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Not achieved</b>	<b>Absolutely not achieved</b>	<b>No answer</b>
<i>Inclusion of different perspectives in order to define problems which affect the society</i>	0 %	10.53 %	26.32 %	36.84 %	21.05 %	5.26 %
<i>Effectiveness of decision or policy</i>	5.26 %	10.53 %	10.53 %	36.84 %	26.32 %	10.53 %
<i>Transparenc y of process</i>	0 %	10.53 %	10.53 %	52.63 %	21.05 %	5.26 %
<i>Promotion of social learning</i>	0 %	5.26 %	15.79 %	52.63 %	15.79 %	10.53 %

	0 %	5.26 %	5.26 %	63.16 %	15.79 %	10.53 %
<i>Better understanding of a community's needs and priorities</i>						
	0 %	5.26 %	10.53 %	52.63 %	26.32 %	5.26 %
<i>Greater consensus among citizens and other stakeholders</i>						
	0 %	10.53 %	21.05 %	36.84 %	21.05 %	10.53 %
<i>Higher quality information</i>						

Table 30 Level of agreement in relation to benefits which were achieved by the participatory process used in the elaboration phase

Question 2.3

OPINION	PERCENTAGE (%)	COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS											
Yes	0												
No	73.68												
No answer	26.32												

Table 40 Percentage of participants who have mentioned other benefits

Question 2.4

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<i>There was not any real participation because those approaches represented only an informative phase</i>	31.58 %	52.63 %	5.26 %	10.53 %	0 %
<i>Single municipalities did not participate actively</i>	26.32 %	52.63 %	5.26 %	15.79 %	0 %
<i>Citizens did not participate actively</i>	42.11 %	47.37 %	5.26 %	5.26 %	0 %
<i>Province did not participate actively</i>	26.32 %	36.84 %	21.05 %	15.79 %	0 %
<i>Environmental and trade organizations did not participate actively</i>	21.05 %	42.11 %	31.58 %	5.26 %	0 %





Question 2.6

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
<i>They do not have a real interest</i>	0 %	0 %	15.79 %	47.37 %	26.32 %	10.53 %
<i>They do not perceive their role as necessary</i>	15.79 %	31.58 %	5.26 %	15.79 %	21.05 %	10.53 %
<i>Participants' behaviour is influenced by social variables such as race, income and education</i>	5.26 %	21.05 %	15.79 %	26.32 %	21.05 %	10.53 %
<i>Technical complexity inhibits citizens' participation</i>	10.53 %	47.37 %	0 %	15.79 %	15.79 %	10.53 %
<i>Citizens do not trust in bureaucracy in terms of transparency</i>	5.26 %	42.11 %	21.05 %	5.26 %	15.79 %	5.26 %

Table 43 Level of agreement in relation to the reasons for inactive inclusion of participants in the elaboration phase

Question 2.7

OPINION	PERCENTAGE (%)	COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS													
Yes	10.53 %	■	■												
No	68.42 %	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
No answer	26.32 %	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Table 44 Percentage of participants who have mentioned other reasons

SECTION 3

Question 3.1

	Absolutely appropriate	Appropriate	Undecided	Not appropriate	Absolutely not appropriate	No answer
<i>Operative and informal meetings called "landscape workshops"</i>	15.79 %	47.37 %	10.53 %	10.53 %	10.53 %	5.26 %
<i>Sardegna Geoblog</i>	10.53 %	31.58 %	36.84 %	10.53 %	10.53 %	0 %
<i>The website "Sardegna Territorio"</i>	5.26 %	47.37 %	21.05 %	15.79 %	10.53 %	0 %
<i>Mass media, such as regional television programmes and</i>	5.26 %	31.58 %	42.11 %	10.53 %	10.53 %	0 %

newspapers						

Table 45 Level of agreement in relation to the pertinence of the participatory approaches used during the revision phase

Question 3.2

	Absolutely achieved	Achieved	Undecided	Not achieved	Absolutely not achieved	No answer
<i>Inclusion of different perspectives in order to define problems that affect society</i>	0 %	21.05 %	31.58 %	15.79 %	21.05 %	10.53 %
<i>Effectiveness of decision or policy</i>	0 %	5.26 %	47.37 %	21.05 %	15.79 %	10.53 %
<i>Transparency of process</i>	5.26 %	10.53 %	42.11 %	10.53 %	21.05 %	10.53 %
<i>Promotion of social learning</i>	0 %	21.05 %	52.63 %	10.53 %	10.53 %	5.26 %

<i>Better understanding of a community's needs and priorities</i>	5.26 %	31.58 %	26.32 %	21.05 %	10.53 %	5.26 %
<i>Greater consensus among citizens and other stakeholders</i>	5.26 %	10.53 %	31.58 %	21.05 %	21.05 %	10.53 %
<i>Higher quality information</i>	0 %	15.79 %	42.11 %	5.26 %	26.32 %	10.53 %

Table 46 Level of agreement in relation to benefits which were achieved by the participatory process used in the revision phase

Question 3.3

OPINION	PERCENTAGE (%)	COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS												
Yes	0 %													
No	63.16 %													
No answer	36.84 %													

Table 47 Percentage of participants who have mentioned other benefits

Question 3.4

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
<i>There was not any real participation because those approaches represented only an informative phase</i>	21.05 %	26.32 %	15.79 %	26.32 %	5.26 %	5.26 %
<i>Single municipalities did not participate actively</i>	15.79 %	36.84 %	5.26 %	36.84 %	0 %	5.26 %
<i>Citizens did not participate actively</i>	42.11 %	36.84 %	5.26 %	5.26 %	0 %	10.53 %
<i>Province did not participate actively</i>	10.53 %	31.58 %	26.32 %	21.05 %	0 %	10.53 %
<i>Environmental and trade organizations did not participate actively</i>	26.32 %	31.58 %	10.53 %	26.32 %	0 %	5.26 %
<i>The approaches were directed only to build consensus</i>	21.05 %	42.11 %	10.53 %	21.05 %	0 %	10.53 %

<i>The regional government did not provide enough information about participatory opportunities</i>	21.05 %	21.05 %	26.32 %	21.05 %	0 %	10.53 %

Table 48 Level of agreement in relation to the problems of the participatory process used in the revision phase

Question 3.5

OPINION	PERCENTAGE (%)	COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS											
Yes	5.26 %												
No	63.16 %												
No answer	31.58 %												

Table 49 Percentage of participants who have mentioned other problems

Question 3.6

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
<i>They do not have a real interest</i>	0 %	5.26 %	21.05 %	52.63 %	10.53 %	10.53 %
<i>They do not perceive their role as necessary</i>	0 %	47.37 %	15.79 %	15.79 %	15.79 %	5.26 %
<i>Participants' behaviour is influenced by social variables such as race, income and education</i>	5.26 %	26.32 %	10.53 %	31.58 %	10.53 %	15.79 %

<i>Technical complexity inhibits citizens' participation</i>	10.53 %	26.32 %	0 %	42.11 %	10.53 %	10.53 %
<i>Citizens do not trust in bureaucracy in terms of transparency</i>	31.58 %	26.32 %	10.53 %	15.79 %	5.26 %	10.53 %

Table 50 Level of agreement in relation to the reasons for inactive inclusion of participants in the revision phase

Question 3.7

OPINION	PERCENTAGE (%)	COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS											
Yes	0 %												
No	68.42 %												
No answer	31.58 %												

Table 51 Percentage of participants who have mentioned other reasons

Question 3.8

OPINION	PERCENTAGE (%)	COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS											
<i>Absolutely solved</i>	0 %												
<i>Solved</i>	5.26 %												
<i>Undecided</i>	42.11 %												
<i>Unsolved</i>	42.11 %												
<i>Absolutely unsolved</i>	10.53 %												
<i>No answer</i>	0 %												

Table 52 Level of agreement in relation to the solution of the problems concerning the participatory approaches