The initial challenge is that modern so-called “democracies” (that is, democratic societies) are in fact examples of thin democracy. Certainly, degrees of democraticness vary, but it the modern world-system it is mostly restricted to representative form – literally elections every couple of years. Thus, the declining rates of actual electoral participation signal the crisis of this political institution. Evidently, the representative format of rule alone grants elites the necessary legitimation, or at least an illusion of it. On the contrary, it is in the interests of the people to gain full social and political power.

According to notions of public sociology, any social research has a potential to influence social life, therefore the normative foundations of a reflexive research should be clearly stated. This approach is essentially based on the idea that people should influence the decision-making process concerning their interests and directly participate in implementation of the relevant policies to the fullest degree. It might seem that only a small portion of public really wants to take part, that there are always public opinion and activities leaders, that people surrender their participatory rights to some delegates. However, as participation rates vary across societies and tend to rocket under favorable circumstances, it is evident that they depend on structural and cultural conditions and thus can be deliberately changed. In fact, as it was verified in another research (Khutkyy 2014), individual activism does lead to personal achievement and subjective well-being. And individual activism, in turn, is defined by proactive orientation. Consequently, once people change their attitudes and start participating, overall they will have more chances to succeed and become satisfied with their lives.

The aspiration is that the desired empowerment will lead to obtaining real institutionalized mechanisms of popular participation in all stages of political process: democratic agenda setting, expertise, accessible deliberation, egalitarian decision-making, efficient lobbying of proposals, fair elections of persons in charge, participatory implementation, monitoring of the respective policies, and efficient control of actions of authorities. The aim is to decentralize authority and return more social power to people. The idea is to elaborate a model of direct participatory democracy guarantying empowered governance of the people.

There are several key points, which define the specificity of the inquiry. First, the focus is on governance. At least parts of public should be involved at all stages of the whole policy process – from agenda setting through decision-making and on to policy implementation. There is a challenge to combine all components of participatory democracy and embody them to the maximum in one social system. Moreover, the ambition is to establish it both on local and societal levels. Therefore, my research question is the following: what would be a comprehensive real utopia model of desirable, viable, and achievable participatory democracy?

As an encompassing theoretical perspective I apply the real utopias approach of E.O. Wright, exploring desirable (reflecting our values and having a strong normative imperative), viable (able to generate a sustainable results consonant with original ideas), and achievable (presumable to be implemented by intended actions of social actors who embark on the project) alternative social designs (2011). The principal concept I apply refers to the desired form of governance examined – participatory democracy, which I define as direct participation of people in governance. According to E.O. Wright, there are 3 forms of democratic rule: representative, associational, and direct democracy (2011, p. 154). Evidently, the direct democracy is in the focus in this study.

Basically, the methods of my research are comprised of theorizing, case studies, and qualitative expert interviews. There is plenty of literature on direct, participatory, deliberative, and empowered democracy. However, since emphasis here is not on terms, but on real-life mechanisms, most readings studied are empirical inquiries of specific forms of participatory democracy. The core of the study is the qualitative research in the form of a series of 15 semi-structured phone and online expert interviews and 2 written expert answers to the list of questions. The guide was structured around scholars’ background, and the desirability, achievability, and viability aspects of the cases studied. Some questions were reformulated and added based on prior interview experience.

The sampling is the following. Initially, 5 domains were defined: community organizing, participatory projects, participatory budgeting, randomocracy, and electronic democracy – and analysis is organized around them. For each of these domains there was an objective of 3 expert interviews. Online video and audio interviews were preferable, phone interviews were the second option, and e-mailed answered – the last option, if respondents insisted. As far as 2 experts gave written answers, further interviews were done to complete the sample objectives. The experts were selected based on the criteria of work experience in the projects studied, publications or valuable opinion on the topic. Recommendations by the interviewed were considered to contact further experts. The fieldwork lasted from October 18 to December 20, 2013 until the sample was finalized.

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2. BACKGROUND

NORMATIVE VIEWS

Since democracy is by no means a neutral issue of social research, it is important to know personal beliefs of the experts – thus is it more clear what is their attitude to the phenomena studied. Undoubtedly, the experts support democracy overall. “I’m a very strong democrat... I think you have to allow people make decisions” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). More specifically, they favor transparency, engagement, decision-making, and empowerment. “I believe in openness, engagement... I am a firm believer in civil power” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). “My belief that we can come up with better choices and stronger society by creating opportunities for the people impacted by decisions to have an opportunity to impact the decisions being made.” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013)

However, some experts criticize democracy and stress that it is imperfect. “I believe very strongly in democracy, but I don’t believe it is perfect as a system” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). This is because of two reasons: sometimes the majority can make a decision, not in favor of minority, and because mere formal procedures do not guarantee meaningful participation and influence. “I’m a fanatic supporter of democracy, but I believe that procedural democracy in itself is wholly inadequate” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013).

Many favor participatory form of democracy. “I think that participatory democracy is one of attractive ways of deepening democracy” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). Still, some point at the value of not only direct, but representative democracy. Mostly because of transaction costs: it is inefficient to spend lots of time deciding on everything. “There is room for representational government. We can’t all be involved in all the decisions required to keep the society functioning.” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). There are proponents of democratic and republican democratic views, as well as progressivists.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

It is interesting to observe the spectrum of theoretical frameworks the scholars apply to the study of participatory democratic project. Not all of respondents provided their explanations, but still the available answers give an impression of their foundations. Some represent broader disciplines. For instance, J. Manuel Feliz-Teixeira utilizes formal logic to democratic processes. “My approach is to bring some logic to democracy, to the exercise of democracy” (J.M. Feliz-Teixeira, personal communication, December 6, 2013). Thad Hall conducts collective action analysis. “I think about it in terms of collective action – how do I as a single citizen mobilize my fellow citizen in order to participate” (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013). Then, Brian Christens employs community psychology. “Most of my research comes from community psychology, like empowerment approach, that tries to understand processes through which people attain resources and power in democratic societies, for the most part” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013).

The other specify distinctive interpretations of democratic theory. For example, Frank Bryan, who examined new town meetings, applies deliberative democracy on the local scale. “Small face-to-face democracy in towns is better than voting in large systems” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). Elisabeth Clemens relies on deliberative democracy too, she calls it “the discursive deliberation industry” (Personal communication, November 5, 2013). To go in detail, Susanna Haas Lyons explains the importance of dialogue, listening, and understanding with the aim to form an informed and concerted public opinion of a community (Personal communication, December 13, 2013).

The scholars also name specific authors’ conceptions. “You can draw similarities between John Fishkin’s deliberative poll and random assembling... Citizens’ jury is a similar model.” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). I like Cristiano’s fundamental values of popular sovereignty, equity, and deliberation... I use John Gastil’s model of communication and deliberation... I’m also using the plain language legal framework.” (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). “As such, I used Habermas’s public sphere theory to evaluate it” (L. Dahlberg, personal communication, December 10, 2013).

Moreover, what Vincent Villano promotes, might be called radical democracy. He emphasizes that people should have a meaningful decision-making power and all their needs should be met, and certainly, this implies a fundamental change in the distribution of wealth and power. Therefore, the changes might be transformative, but substantively they are revolutionary in a broad sense – as eradicative changes. “So for me in my framework, when I think of democracy, it should support equity and universality... I would argue that under the current conditions what you are calling a social democratic transformation is actually part of a long-term revolutionary process.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). A prominent engaged perspective is the
action research, which implies that the knowledge gained is aimed at some input for a community. As Brian Christens describes it: “in most case we are involved as researches and there is change in the process” (Personal communication, December 16, 2013). It is close to public sociology approach, which represents values-based reflexive science, targeted at wider public.

CONCEPTS

Of special interest are the concepts researchers use to denote the processes headed or studied.

Community organizing Brian Christens defines as “a process, where people engage in certain behaviors, which are empowering process” (Personal communication, December 16, 2013). It occurs on psychological, group, and community levels. Another key concept is the of deliberation, which Susanna Haas Lyons identifies as “the rational exchange of opinions... people try to influence one another... then, in terms of decision-making structure, the consensus and majority votes for making choices together” (Personal communication, December 17, 2013).

On a more general level, there is the conception of deliberative democracy. It means a system of self-government that concerns itself as much with the quality of its internal deliberation as it does with the distribution of formal power (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 255). There, people explore a problem, deliberate, and come to a grounded solution. Participatory democracy was defined as “regular meaningful opportunities for the public to provide input for the choices being made by their representatives.” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013)

Other terms include small-scale democracies (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013), procedural and direct democracy. There is a whole set of concepts to denote electronic democracy. The named terms are: e-democracy (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013), wiki-democracy, electronic direct democracy, demo-cracy (the last one signifying some intruders in the loop of democracy) (J.M. Feliz-Teixeira, personal communication, December 6, 2013).

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

For a proper consideration of the knowledge obtained, it is essential to take into account the sources of information of the experts themselves, establishing their relation to the cases studied and the methods applied.

In the domain of community organizing, it is mostly academic research, theorizing and empirical study, both qualitative (including observations) and quantitative (including surveys), mostly fieldwork, but one expert was directly contributing to community organizing projects, so it was a public activity. “Sometimes I go and directly observe. I do a lot of surveys, gather a lot of data, use lots of secondary data, gathered by organizations themselves or media. These are multiple sources.” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013). Fieldwork and theory, quantitative (A. Peterson, personal communication, December 12, 2013). “I conduct mixed-methods research, so I do quantitative as well as qualitative, case studies work, as well as theoretical work... I have been involved as a research partner in a lot of community organizing efforts and campaigns.” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013).

The inquiries of participatory projects are also mostly done by academics with one expert being involved as a policy implementer. They also use multiple methods, qualitative and quantitative, including, but not limited to interviews and document analysis. What is remarkable is the international comparative approach. “I spent my life studying small-scale democracy... I use empirical quantitative data to test hypotheses.” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). “Over the years I’ve done considerable research on patterns of democratization in different countries and that is based on qualitative analysis of evidence from those countries... And that’s based primarily on interviews with providers and documentary evidence about programs and also interviews with recipients of the systems” (T. Carothers, personal communication, December 6, 2013). “The data collection itself was based on intensive fieldwork and the survey... So I worked on the three very different cases in the Global South and I’ve written a lot on this, which is specifically comparative.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013)

The study of participatory budgeting is also based on academic research and personal participation. The research is comprised of theorizing and fieldwork. The scope of knowledge at the disposal of experts allows making international comparisons of cases. “The literature I know best is what called the discursive deliberation industry. So I have been able to read from a number of scholars, who have been working on this very critical thing in this model” (E. Clemens, personal communication, November 5, 2013). “My research was initially researching Participatory Budgeting as a best practice and then it was gathering data of the NYC process itself and using that data for advocacy of the process... However, most of my experience is with the process in New York City as a project manager, as a researcher, and as an advocate” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013).
Randomocracy was studied **academically** and **practically**, as one expert was project coordinator. The research methodology was **qualitative** and **quantitative**. The **empirical** studies are complemented by **methodological** developments and **evaluation** research. “The case of British Columbia was my first role using dialogue deliberation within a government decision-making moment, and that is all I have been doing for the last years” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). “I do quantitative and qualitative research from the communication standpoint... I’m also interested how people deal with legal language. So, I’ve developed a coding scheme.” (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). I do a little bit of everything. I try to understand how to evaluate different deliberative events (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013).

The research on **electronic democracy** is also multidimensional. The experts are mostly **academic** scholars, but one has experience in politics, was one e-democracy **project manager** and currently heads a respective organization. The methodology includes **theorizing** and **empirical** research, specifically participant observations, case studies, and surveys. “I’ve been involved in traditional politics” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). “I’ve studied Internet voting (it was theorizing; we don’t have much data about that). I’ve also studies the use of Internet for collecting information and how people can make better democratic choices (it was theoretical and more quantitative in nature). We studied cases and had survey data.” (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013).

**CASES**

One of the most intriguing questions is the following: how widely are these cases of participatory democracy widespread?

**Community organizing** in its classical form is present in a **dozen states of the US**. The respondents name “Kansas City, Denver, New Orleans, Brooklyn, New York, Rochester, New York, and California, Minneapolis, Minnesota, New Jersey.” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013). It is also present in “the industrial areas of... Indiana State... Kansas, Kansas City, Missouri were two and Rochester, New York, Brooklyn, New York, and Northern Colorado in the towns... In Philadelphia and Los Angeles... California, in Oakland, and San Francisco... in Wisconsin... Minnesota, Michigan and Ohio.” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013).

A wide range of **participatory projects** is experimented in **many countries**. “Well, there is a whole movement around the world. Probably over 100 countries with efforts to have more citizen engagement.” (T. Carothers, personal communication, December 6, 2013). Specific cases are found in towns and cities in the core, the semiperiphery, and the periphery. “One of the challenges is to get a sense of variation... As far as I know in the contemporary United States, to the extent that either in the discourse of deliberation or deliberatory polling, or participatory budgeting being employed they have been gathered around specific local issues...” (E. Clemens, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

**Participatory budgeting** originated in **South America**. “Hundreds of municipal participatory budgets were developed in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and elsewhere in the region” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 2). But it is also widely practiced in **Europe**. “There are dozens of experiences in countries like Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Germany, England, and Albania”. (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 2). And now it is being implemented in the **US**. “Yes, as a way of gathering opinions, harnessing creativity, some local constituency of the local Chicago ward doing participatory budgeting or lower Manhattan envisioning in New York City” (E. Clemens, personal communication, November 5, 2013). There are partial cases in Seattle and Manitoba and they are starting a new project in Vallejo in California.

**Randomocracy** as an empowering expertise, deliberation and referendum is a fairly new form. So far, there is the **British Columbia (Canada) Citizens’ Assembly** case in 2004 (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 265). Another one is the Oregon Citizens’ Initiative Review in 2012 (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). The first one was in Canada and the second one in the US – both are **statewide** projects in **Northern America**.

Somewhat surprisingly, **electronic democracy** is already an internationally developing process. One of the most studied cases are **Minneapolis** and St. Paul citywide forums is the **Minnesota, US** starting from 1998-1999 till today (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). Various experiments of electronic democracy are evident in **Europe**. “There are many places in news, where technology is experimented to give people direct decision. For example, in Estonia anyone can go for google voting in Estonia” (J.M. Feliz-Teixeira, personal communication, December 6, 2013). Internet voting is introduced in Estonia, Switzerland and Norway; online collecting information – in Estonia, Switzerland, and the US; some pilot projects are starting in the UK. (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013)
3. DESIRABILITY

VALUES

As far as our approach is real utopias one, it is essential to figure out the values, which guided the creation of participatory initiatives. The classical values founding the projects are transparency and accountability. They are usually shared by politicians, connected with the projects, who stick to the centrist views. “And of course, the council members are elected officials... and their values are usually, but not always much more middle of the road than the community... more concerned with transparency and accountability.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). It is also stressed that the official should serve people. “They find they that clientilism is against the basic values of democracy. In democracy you should deliver things to citizens, not to clients.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013).

The people themselves and the project leaders would promote a more progressive and radical approach, and speak not only about transparency and accountability, but demanding equality (equal contribution from everybody) and even more – equity (from each according to possibilities and to each according to needs). “Some people have more progressive, more radical understanding since they work with directly with the population on the ground... In the first year, I believe the core principles driving the work of the City-Wide Steering Committee were, transparency, equality, and empowerment... I think we switched them in the second or third cycle so we had equity... And in equity everybody gives what they can and everyone gets what they need.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). The key point is public participation in governance – true grassroots involvement with ensured fair representation. “There was a sense of participation as a normative benefit that citizens should influence the decisions that impact their lives” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). “I believe in openness, engagement, try to bring more people to the process... I believe in informed voting.” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013)

More specifically, it is about deliberation, which means offering ideas, listening, discussing and coming to a public opinion. “Its values are based around deploying the internet to strengthen deliberative style democracy, rather than direct democracy (as asked in your questions).” (L. Dahlberg, personal communication, December 10, 2013). “The value emerged – a neutral hosted dialogue. Hearing voices of others is very important.” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). Even more important, the public should have a right for an informed decision-making. Choice “can’t be made from the people, who benefit from the outcome, it has to be made by the public... citizens know best, what values should be reflected in the decisions being made...” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013).

Finally, all the abovementioned values should contribute to the empowerment of the people. “People should be part of the solution of the problem... They have to develop power in the relationship. People should get more power concerning their relationship.” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). “To have influence. I am a firm believer in civil power.” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013)

Searching for a possible ideology, shaping the participatory initiatives, I obtained diverse results. Some experts claim that there is no ideology behind the projects, it is neutral and based on pragmatism. “A lot of organizing groups are heavily pragmatic... No explicit ideology... They try to focus on lived experience of the members of the organization.” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013). Another supporting view is that it rationalism and logic. “This is the opposite of ideology. This is the end of ideology... Wiki-democracy is not ideological... Human intelligence and scientific logic” (J.M. Feliz-Teixeira, personal communication, December 6, 2013). This is critiqued by Vincent Villano, who argues that reducing participatory budgeting to a best practice methodology is serving different political purposes and is not changing the system. “It’s become neutral; it is like a methodology of implementing a participatory budgeting process in a system that is not really interesting in actually giving power over to people. And it produces mixed results because the process does not change the core problems of the budgeting process.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). And indeed, individual stakeholders represent a wide ideological spectrum: from radical left to progressives, libertarians, and on to republicans and conservatives. In community organizing, projects can be paralleled by religious beliefs. “Some of the groups I’ve studied use congregation-based model, they have a faith dimension and they probably make more explicit connection with those religious or faith beliefs.” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013). Still, in some cases the underlying ideology is basically general democratic or even more strongly – participatory democratic. Probably, participatory initiatives are the most pronounced and have a greater transformative potential in the long run, when they are driven by critical approach, aimed at substantive transforming the political system. “And then people from a left politic are looking for a transition away from the system that is completely undemocratic, and puts profit over people, can also use participatory budgeting to build participatory democracy.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013).
INITIAL PROBLEMS

There is a long list of problems, which created presuppositions and demand for participatory democratic transformations. Basically, they reflect 4 groups of problems.

The substantive social problems include inaccessible finance, housing, healthcare, and security. “The actual problems... might be affordable housing, crime, access to healthcare, or might be exploitative lending by financial institutions.” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013). A deeper problem lies in economic and political inequalities. “Historically, there has been a lot of inequalities in the United States, in terms of material resources and in a related way, in terms of power.” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013)

The structural issues of political system include complexity of democratic process in big cities and excessive centralization. “When there are 5000 of people, the direct democracy is about to fail” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). “The first – overly centralized authority” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). One specific challenge is the lack of public space for civic action. “There is a failure to create a major citywide public space... Democratic outreach is completely lacking.” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013).

A striking group of issues concerns the distorted governance. In the most neutral formulation, it is bad governance. Moreover, the experts debunk clientilism and corruption. “Clientilism is rampant and there is an increasing critique in different quotas of civil society against capitalism. Basically, clientilism is undermining proper functioning of government, in particular, provision of public goods.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). The state legislature is found corrupt and influenced by the large business (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). No wonder, that is leads to popular distrust in politicians and parties. “People don’t trust in parties. Parties are less and less representative in our society...” (J.M. Feliz-Teixeira, personal communication, December 6, 2013)

Finally, the most detailed criticism relates to the dissatisfactory democratic process. From the very beginning, citizens encounter a manipulated agenda setting. As described by Steven Clift: many classical e-projects have government in the center to decide what it will share and what questions will be asked by the public and it’s not very democratic (Personal communication, December 20, 2013). Further, there are signs of ignoring or not implementing popular demands, paired with non-accountability. “The people both participate and don’t participate in political process... in some cases people don’t participate, because they think the regime doesn’t listen to them” (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013). “Verbally agreeing to community requests and then not following through is simply a way for those with power to counteract the efforts of less powerful groups” (Speer & Christens, 2012, p. 420). The very possibility of democratic influence is in some cases limiting to representation. “The role of democracy has devolved to the place that people vote every 4 years” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). Nevertheless, even is political systems with more options one encounters a lack of civic participation. Few people discuss politics online. Open data is the simplest, what is hard is participation and collaboration. “Open data is one-hand clapping without participation” (Clift, 2013). And it is not surprising, taking into account the systematic formal democratic procedures and suppression of civic engagement. When people do can have an influence, there is a biased informing in play. As described by Catherine Knobloch, often public votes on complex laws and it is more an average citizen can handle; and even when advocates explain, they do it in a biased manner, “they do what they have to do to win” (Personal communication, December 17, 2013). This problem is coupled with the widespread insufficient deliberation. “Such systems ask an underinformed and often unreflective public to choose among often-flawed alternatives in a campaign and media environment that foregrounds the sensational over the substantive or, in the case of low-profile ballot measures, provides little or no information” (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 254). Most often, there is the case of exclusion from decision-making. “The people who are under the policy are not making the policy. So you live in public housing, but... you have no meaningful decision-making power over the public housing policy that you live and experience.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). Even if there are some ways, through which public is involved, there is still lack of mechanisms of participation in governance. “In the modern world, direct democracy now connotes a very limited set of practices — the referenda, initiatives, and other ballot measures whereby citizens vote directly on levies, legislation, and constitutional amendments” (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 254). All this leads to disempowerment of people. “So the essential problem is that citizens in these democracies, as well as in other democracies, feel completely disempowered... And they know they have virtually no direct input into policy-making or implementation or in any kind of accountability.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013).
GOALS

The studied cases were oriented towards clear objectives. They can be classified into 4 clusters too. The most evident set of goals concerns providing **better quality of life**, like ensuring fair financial processes, working conditions, providing affordable housing, creating educational opportunities, health service. “The members of CCO were dedicated to... (ii) a working program for the repair of homes, (iii) a way to hold absentee landlords accountable, (iv) protection from predatory mortgage lenders, and (v) a focus on building communities—not just homes” (Speer & Christens, 2012, p. 416).

A completely different complex of objectives relates to **community development**. First of all – to **strengthen human resources** and increase capacity of local residents. This includes providing access to information. Then, to raise funding resources targeted at residents’ needs. It is essential to **strengthen community relations**, raise consciousness and **civic engagement**. “Relational components of grassroots community organizing processes can be summarized as follows: (a) broaden participants’ networks of relationships, (b) develop new understandings of the social world, and (c) strengthen commitments to civic involvement” (Christens, 2010, p. 890). Overall, the aim is to **develop community** as an efficient social system. “I think one goal that cuts across them is that they see to be building power so they can have sufficient organization power so that they can reach their goals” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013).

Somewhat unusual seems less attention to **better governance** as provided by an external organization. These goals include **improving governance** in general and bringing more transparency and accountability in particular. “Well, I mean, the international community has moved over the last 20 years to a focus on trying to help countries improve their governance to become governed more effectively and more fairly” (T. Carothers, personal communication, December 6, 2013). “Public spaces should be open to public – that’s the goal, and that’s unique” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013).

The most developed set of objectives is targeted towards substantial **transformation of democracy** as a process led by people. The most general ones are increasing participation and **direct democracy**. For instance, it can be formulated as: to harness the power of online tools to support participation in public life, strengthen communities and build democracy. (Clift, 2013). “Whereas representative systems retain citizen control over the elected, direct democracy cuts out these intermediaries by having citizens write the laws themselves, rather than filling in ballots to choose their lawmaker” (Gastil & Richards, 2013). More specifically, it means create real possibilities for citizens to **influence agenda-setting and decision-making**. “The overarching issue was that people were cut out of the decision-making process and needed power to have their voices heard, and to be engaged in negotiations with those who have power” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). Then, it is important to increase deliberation. J. Gastil and Robert Richards are sure that the state can consolidate a set of institutions and social norms and practices that make it more deliberative and more democratic (2013, p. 254). Finally, project organizers aim to make people create recommendations and influence decision-making. “So what we try to assist... we want people who are marginalized and excluded to be in the center of decision-making power” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). An overarching list includes purposes: to develop individual capacities for participation and leadership, increase social capital in a community, raise public awareness, give advice to decision-makers, share decision-making with public authorities, make public decisions, jointly deliver services with public authorities (“Methods,” 2013). On a more global level, the ambition is the fundamental **transformation of democratic system**.

MODELS

Each form of participatory democracy has its own institutional design – a model of reference.

In community organizing, it is anticipated that in the process of personal and collective communication members of community will better understand themselves, their needs, goals, **strengthen personal relationships**, build up trust, mobilize leaders, and **develop an effective community organization** for improving quality of life. An important point is to empower community members to reach these goals. “So community organizing has been a tool for... those people to gain power and influence to gain access to the resources they can improve the quality of life” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). Empowerment is stressed as a developmental process (Christens, 2010, p. 890).

Various participatory projects employ a number of mechanisms to ensure popular participation in community or state governance, including public **agenda-setting, deliberation, decision-making**, and implementation. One of the models is the classical Greek one. There were small village meetings and the Athens took their form, because many of Athens citizens came from there. (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). There is an interesting observation that participatory initiatives develop independently in different parts
of the word, which indicates that it is a universal movement. “For me, what’s fascinating about the 3 cases I know – South Africa, Brazil, and India – they all developed an explicit serious commitment to participatory budgeting, but they did it independently... These are quite indigenous experiments and I do think it points to a quite potentially universal understanding of what the real genuine practice of democracy should look like.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013).

Participatory budgeting is first of all designed as a grassroots endeavor, including community self-organization and decision-making. “Community Voices Heard was the grassroots organization that anchors the entire process via our expertise doing community organizing, outreach and mobilization work” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). “The Empowered Participatory Governance proposal is an ideal-typical institutional design proposal for deliberative decision-making and pragmatic problem-solving among participants over a specific common good” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 4-5). Basically, local residents discuss their collective needs and decide which projects to fund. The ambition is to distribute not only discretionary funds on infrastructural projects, but also regular funds. It can work on different levels: town districts, whole settlements, or even states. One example is the Porto Alegre model – a yearlong cycle of discussions and decisions, mandatory to be performed by the authorities. One approach is focused on identifying demands and setting priorities for funding. Participatory Budgeting, in its original versions as part of a transformative left project, was but one part of a broader set of institutional reforms: 1) open meetings where citizens decided on priorities; and 2) institutional reforms to subordinate the local bureaucracy to citizen demands (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 3). In a model of deeper empowerment implying fundamental changes, community members define their needs and obtain sufficient resources. “The type of participatory democracy I would like to see would have a budget process whereby which people begin the budget process by asking what the needs of the people are... All needs should be met in a truly democratic system – one that is based on equity, where everyone gives what they can and everyone gets what they need.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013).

The basic idea of randomocracy is that a representative sample of general public conducts agenda-setting, expertise, deliberation, and writes a recommendation for a referendum, which is decide by general vote. It works that way: randomly selected citizens deliberate on an initiative and then they provide the recommendation (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). So far agenda is set by officials, but in the more advanced model it rests with the popular representatives. Special attention is devoted to providing a fair presentation of various parts of public and the deliberation itself, ensuring that all arguments are heard and considered. “The model was set up for people to have voice in a variety of ways, so we had plenary sessions” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). The extension of the model implies broad discussions of recommendations by all citizens so that they vote informed.

Basically, electronic democracy is grounded on the idea that modern communication technologies enable more opportunities for expression and facilitate wide discussion among the public. “One of the ideas is that the Internet will democratize, because it lowers transaction costs” (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013). It has several components: agenda-setting, discussion, mutual help, direct decision-making. Online tools make public discussion more accessible, easy, and quick. We should create a genuine discussion... having dialogue among ourselves, we act as citizens and public (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). Identification issues can be solved by electronic cards with signatures. A new institution will emerge: ATM machines are connected to banks and other structures, so it is a good protected inclusive way of communication; it is a very simple, reliable, and cheap system (J.M. Feliz-Teixeira, personal communication, December 6, 2013). Voting can be conducted more often than classic referenda – on a case-to-case basis. We don’t need to make elections, it is a waste of money; the elections are day by day as decisions (J.M. Feliz-Teixeira, personal communication, December 6, 2013). It can be implemented as e-democracy (online discussion) or wiki-democracy (online voting). The difference between participatory democracy and electronic democracy is small: in electronic democracy, proposals are made online; wiki-democracy is different – the decisions are made directly by the people (J.M. Feliz-Teixeira, personal communication, December 6, 2013).

4. ACHIEVABILITY

FAVORABLE CONDITIONS

An important question concerns the conducive conditions for participatory initiatives. Why they emerge in one places and not in others? And why some become successful, while others don’t? The answers are presented in positive format – that is, which conditions do favor participatory initiatives.
Obviously, community organizing works where there is a local community – mostly of a town or a city district or united around an association. In the first type of cases, they are more realistic to be organized in bigger towns due to funding opportunities. “Most of the organizing groups I’ve worked with are not in smaller towns” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013). In the second type of cases, pre-existing social networks of solidarity lay a basis for a more structured development. As B. Christens, points out, “we need existing institutions, now they are based in congregations: labor unions, community centers or neighborhood associations”.

The conducive conditions for various participatory projects fall within 3 categories: broad social conditions, external agents, and internal agents. In terms of social conditions, one type of participatory form – town meeting – takes place in small towns. On one hand, it is due to the solidarity, pertinent to a small community, where people need to be sociable and take into account each other’s interests to live normal life. “The town meetings work better in small towns … The civility works in small towns because of the thickness of social interaction” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). On the other hand, traditions of such meetings, inscribed in statutes and practices, make them self-perpetuating. “These are long-standing traditions, which came from agreement on town meeting… It worked in practice for 2 centuries, more than that... Of course they came from Europe, where their ancestors have been governed by town meetings from as long as 17th century.” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). Speaking about local agents, the presence of local leaders and organizations is essential. “That system is effective where you have local partners or sort of actors who want to do things, what to make changes” (T. Carothers, personal communication, December 6, 2013). In general, it is the developed civil society, which makes difference. “And then you need a well-organized civil society.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). Concerning, agents, external to communities, participatory-oriented party with influence on government can promote such projects. “First, you need a leftist-center political party that is committed to participatory democracy and is willing to push through the institutional reforms that make it a sustainable project” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). One of the top-down processes, also conducive for the initiatives, is politically driven decentralization, which is efficient as a parallel set of reforms. “So all these participatory experiments are also part of the process of decentralization” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). Similarly, even if local grassroots activism is weak, facilitating civil society creates conditions for establishing participatory projects. “In cities where civil society is weak, if you create spaces where citizens can engage, that incentivizes the strengthening of civil society.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013)

Participatory budgeting demonstrates similar systemic patterns of conducive conditions: general situation, internal and external conditions. Overall, the communities establishing participatory budgeting seem to already have high levels of civic activism. Moreover, on average, they have proactive views, that is, and inclination towards the idea of participation. As E. Clemens reasons, participatory democracy tends “to be adopted in communities where the constituencies are inclined to participate. There is an ideological commitment to the ideal of participatory democracy.” (Personal communication, November 5, 2013). The very examples of the existing cases were an argument for new projects. Also, it is good, when there is a possibility to involve experts who have experience in implementing participatory budgeting initiatives. “This is the organizational relationship (between CVH and PBP) was what made it possible to advocate for the process to happen and the other favorable condition was that it already happened in Chicago” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). Engaging local authorities as partners is vital for the project success too.

The pre-conditions for randomness reveal even more intricate picture. Some of the underlying causes were demographic processes connected with industrialization: the migration of young educated white-collar people from small towns with explicit genuine democracy to cities. As R. Richards puts it: all these educated, white, organized and open-minded future-looking newcomers to the city were observing and could not tolerate the corrupted governance (Personal communication, November 25, 2013). Further, massive social movements brought democratic projects on the agenda. R. Richards connects grassroots movement in favor of participatory democracy to student movement, progressivist movement, anti-war movement (Personal communication, November 25, 2013). Also, popular engagement in general, including voting for local policies, was favorable too. “In countries like Brazil and India, such empowerment pairs with mass mobilization to create a large constituency that takes part in elections partly in appreciation for its expanded influence over local policy” (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 270-271). There is a significant role of commitment to democratic values among population in general. According to C. Knobloch, Oregon was the first state to run the initiative in elections, and locals understood themselves as pioneers in democracy (Personal communication, December 17, 2013). Project leaders themselves can be charismatic persons, promoting the initiatives in certain places. On the other side, politicians with
initiatives implying popular engagement also increase the chance of randomocracy experiments. As R. Richards narrates: some laws required grassroots local participatory structures, so that was the drive for participatory democracy in the US (Personal communication, November 25, 2013). Individual political leaders can promote randomocracy projects. “There was a leader, who wanted to champion the project – the Premier of British Columbia at that time Gordon Gibson” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013) Specific objectives of partisan politics can situationally coincide with randomocracy model. “In the Canadian case of the Citizens’ Assembly, a party used the deliberative process as an effective campaign pledge that it was willing to deliver once voted into office” (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 270-271). Surly, possibilities of funding play their role.

The conditions, conducive for electronic democracy, can be summarized into 2 groups: general political conditions and specific circumstances in electronic sphere. Regarding general conditions, electronic democracy is more probable and pronounced where there are respective democratic norms, possibility for learning new models, competition between political agents, and civic participation. In a wide study the authors discovered that learning, political norms, competition, and citizen pressures are strongly linked to nations where e-government policy is highly advanced, whereas a country’s e-democracy development is connected to complex internal factors, such as political norms and citizen pressures (Lee, Chang, & Berry, 2011, p. 444). On the other side, problems in governance stimulate the search for new forms of political dialogue and influence. According to J.M. Feliz-Teixeira, the favoring causes include: the crisis, abuses of power, break of confidence between the representatives and citizens, distrust in politicians for several decades. (Personal communication, December 6, 2013). Specific national political configuration also plays its role: multiparty systems in EU allow creating society-wide initiatives, while in the two-party US system, electronic democracy is realistic on local level. Electronic democracy in the US is more important at the local level. (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013).

There is a number of specific conditions, connected with electronic technologies. First of all, the very availability of (online) information brings ideas to the agenda. “Democracy can be achieved... if the group is aware of all the things to do – information is very well shared and there is education for the group” (J.M. Feliz-Teixeira, personal communication, December 6, 2013). Similarly, a mere Internet access makes it easier for people to engage in politics. As S. Clift, narrates: Internet makes civic participation more equitable; there are online actions (petitions, e-mails etc.) of these people to influence policies (2013). Internet neutrality, trust, and identity create good preconditions for development of horizontal communication and promotion of initiatives. T. Hall explains that for voting online, it is needed to get people online, where they trust and have a kind of identity about that (Personal communication, December 1, 2013). Internet literacy of general public and politicians is favorable too. In the example by S. Clift, in St. Paul there are lots on officials who are capable of using online media. (Personal communication, December 20, 2013). The general online activities agenda and grassroots practices create a stimulating environment. “Online neighborhood is on fire; it is happening all the way... It’s a mixture of Craigslist, FreeCycle, and Neighbors Online – mostly buying and selling and free stuff” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). Spontaneous use of online media for self-organization purposes by people. S. Clift tells, that people are using online resource, they create blogs for a long period of time, create political space, Facebook groups, they want to do democracy online (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013).

LEADERS

One of the vital issues of achievability is the role of leaders – individuals and organizations, who initiate and promote the projects. In many cases, initiatives are local. “The request comes from local places and the power rests with the local initiative as well, so they affiliate with the network” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). In some cases, they are headed by traditional leaders in Weberian sense, elected according to special procedures and whose legitimacy is supported by customs. “The selected people are elected at these meetings. The Governing Board governs throughout the year.” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). In other cases, new projects are created by visionaries from NGOs and academia. They rely on teams of motivated activists too. For instance, J. Gastil emphasizes the importance of “having a core of people committed to implementing the project.” (Personal communication, December 4, 2013). Part of the projects are grassroots, self-emerging from civil society. These include public organizations and social movements. For example, T. Hall recalls case, which started by a large NGO and then the government picked it up. (Personal communication, December 1, 2013). The other part is driven by external actors in power, being essentially hierarchical. “It was promoted by actors as varied as the World Bank and the Chavez government in Venezuela” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 3). Such actors are individual politicians, parties, governments, or influential INGOs. Specifying further, some experts claim the politicians were oppositional, and the parties – leftist. “Certain people have the reputation of being independent.” (E. Clemens, personal communication, November 5, 2013). “In the early 90s up
The traditional approach is trying to combine top-down approach and bottom-down approach together” (T. Carothers, personal communication, December 6, 2013).

Another useful question is the motivation of the leaders – why do they initiate the projects? The answers can become hints to advancing participatory democracy. The answers can be grouped into 3 categories: individual and party politics, system dynamics, and deliberate social engineering. Concerning specific political reasoning, these include giving away responsibility, attracting legitimacy, and building up a political career.

“Progressive politicians see participatory budgeting it as decentralizing and localizing responsibility” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 3). “What better way to demonstrate, you are a different kind of politician?” (E. Clemens, personal communication, November 5, 2013). Speaking about systemic causes of change, they might be striving for good governance, eliminating corruption, or the need to promote community development. G. Baiocchi and E. Ganuza argue that participatory budgeting is summoned when there is a deficit in good governance; and as it is so universal, neutral, and easy that it suits Left, Right and Center parties (Forthcoming). The rhetoric is formulated as fostering “community cohesion,” “innovation,” “social entrepreneurship” and “restoring trust” in government” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 3). One distinctive option is where there is an insolvable situation in political realm – the parties could not resolve it by themselves, so the people were an independent third party. “The system was broken – so these were the conditions that brought the initiative up” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). Finally, the conscious strife to change democratic landscape can be stimulated by a set or reasons. They might be mere pragmatic considerations. As R. Richards puts it, sometimes politicians just think it’s a good idea (Personal communication, November 25, 2013). A more pronounced cause is the intrinsic values and beliefs of project organizers. “Having a core of people committed to implementing the project.” (J. Gastil, personal communication, December 4, 2013). As S.H. Lyons described the motivation of the leading politician: “He very firmly believes in citizen capacity to wrestle and provide useful input into policy choices. I think, he was willing to live a political life himself, believed in democracy, and wanted to make a difference.” (Personal communication, December 17, 2013).

ESTABLISHMENT

A vital issue is the real process of establishment a participatory project. Expert interviews provide answers how it is achieved in different cases. In the simplest form, the process is already working due to tradition. In the cases described it came to the US from Europe, where it originated in XVII century. “These are long-standing traditions, which came from agreement on town meeting... It worked in practice for 2 centuries, more than that... Of course they came from Europe, where their ancestors have been governed by town meetings from as long as XVII century.” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). As a new project, it can be introduced on the wave of top-down governance reforms. “There were complex institutional arrangements to prepare the administrative machinery to accept these inputs, which we call the bureaucratic participatory reforms” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 8). Or, as in many cases, it emerges as grassroots self-organization and further cooperation of communities with professional NGO. “What is the typical model for congregation-based network is that local congregations will start discussing the issues... and form a committee and will contact this network who conduct organizing” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). In relation to the current governance structure, it can be deepening the existing democratic institutions. “The clearest lesson of past processes is to use existing electoral imperatives to one’s advantage” (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 271). Otherwise, it is a targeted local development and strive for empowerment and participation. “They all developed in a very similar discourse of empowerment, citizenship, decentralization, direct participation etc. They all developed through largely local struggles, local developments... These are quite indigenous experiments.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). Regarding the organizational issues, it is obvious that first of all a leader and a team promote the initiative. As C. Knobloch narrates: Ned Crosby and John Gastil got together in late 1990s and came up with the idea of the initiative review and people from Healthy Democracy of Oregon liked the idea (Personal communication, December 17, 2013). So, in terms of internal organization, the key points are leadership, involvement, and clear agenda. “One specific pattern in successful organization is the one those combines good leadership with strong membership development and clear agenda and so forth” (T. Carothers, personal communication, December 6, 2013). In procedural dimension, organizations can start with research and expertise. S. Clift tells that they studied demographics to identify target groups, engage volunteers, and find out what is important for people (2013). Then, it is much about networking, negotiations of civil society and authorities. C. Knobloch concludes that a lot of it was networking; they developed a Board of Directors, communicated with the Secretary of State (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). A strong
point increasing the probability of viable development is formulation and signature of a written agreement and code of rules. R. Richards provides an example: they designed the Constitution to limit the legislature branches’ control of the process (Personal communication, November 25, 2013). And of course, project implementation implies a lot of local work for participants’ engagement. “Connect those who work with inclusion and those with engagement. We spent 6 months building trust... We go door-to-door, we make community events” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). Sometimes running a project is a process of trial and error. R. Richards narrates an instance about randomocracy: they tried to implement it in the state of Washington, but it didn’t succeed there; then they contacted practitioners in Oregon and they agreed (Personal communication, November 25, 2013). In some cases, connected experts win research grants for the project.

PARTICIPANTS

There is some variation in social profiles of participants of various forms of participatory initiatives. In community organizing, there is some greater representation of white males and the educated; sometimes specific religious communities are the organizing core. Nevertheless, different social classes are involved. “In congregation-based initiative most of the people belong to a basic institution, they have religious organization in which they are active in... There are able to go beyond class and ideology.” (B. Christensen, personal communication, December 16, 2013). In other cases, one can observe some dynamic: initially more men, the educated, and higher classes participate more; later – more women and lower classes (it depended on purposeful policy). “In India in the beginning it was mostly the usual suspects: the more educated, upper-caste, and men. And by the second year there are a lot more women and lot more low-caste groups participating.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013)

On the contrary, participatory budgeting attracts people with low income and low education, the elder, retired, unemployed, also white working class. “A lot of working class white, so a very complicated mix” (E. Clemens, personal communication, November 5, 2013). One positive effect is that participatory budgeting promotes and attracts higher representation of politically marginalized groups (less well-off, the elder, and ethnic minorities). “There is a much higher level of participation among all marginalized groups in the participatory budgeting process than in local elections” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013).

According to objectives of randomocracy initiatives, neither politicians, nor civil society activists nor politicians should represent the population, but ordinary citizens – and it works out. According to S.H. Lyons, almost 100% of participants have not thought about electoral systems before, and they have no prior experience with the issue deliberated (Personal communication, December 17, 2013). Basically, it is a demographically representative sample of general population, with regard to age, gender, residence, and income level. It is diverse in terms of in educational levels, knowledge and skills. As C. Knobloch explains the procedure: they randomly select 10,000 voters, 1007 agree, and then they make a subsample based on age, ethnicity, place of residence, and income (Personal communication, December 17, 2013). The random sample provided real diversity in terms of education, life experience, recent immigrants and native Canadians, different abilities, like physical abilities, different levels of formal education, and formal experience with the process (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). Of course, there might be some inclination among those who agree – maybe they are more eager to participate.

In electronic democracy project, it is the younger who are engaged more. “In Minneapolis we have younger – I see the shift a little bit” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). Also, it is predictable that men and the educated are more engaged too. “We know that white, well-educated men participate much higher” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). What is promising is that electronic means of communication help involve ethnic minorities, who are less participating in conventional politics. T. Hall emphasizes this point: in the US, if you look at the smartphone usage, it is more among minorities – you have one connection point (Personal communication, December 1, 2013). Obviously, electronically skilled citizens participate more too: “digital squeakers and e-citizens with skills and access (Clift, 2013). Still, people who are
somewhat more **politically active** will use electronic democratic institutions too. The truth is that at the same time in the US people using Internet for political purposes, tend to be people who are involved in other political modes as well. (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013)

An interesting question is why do they all participate? What is their **motivation**? Knowing that, one can enhance it engagement. For some people the **financial compensation** equal to average salary works as an incentive. One of the incentives for people to participate is that they are paid the average Oregon salary (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). Another simple answer is that people are eager to solve **practical local issues**. Or to take decision-making authority because of **mistrust in politicians**. Not to be abused by politicians, it is very logical (J.M. Feliz-Texeira, personal communication, December 6, 2013). What is motivating people to take part is the **possibility to participate in decision-making** concerning their conditions of life. “The more overall general answer is that there is money on the table and people have decision-making power to spend it” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). Definitely, local residents have **common issues**, shared by social networks. “People get involved because they share the concern of their neighbors, who are involved” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). Still, some just like participating in **community activities**. “The community life – that’s the glue. People are attracted to that... People want that.” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). Or a broader **civic participation**, in a sense unique can be a motivation “They were not only doing their civic duty, but also making history, and it is a strong motivator for people” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). What is more important, people not merely giving recommendations, but building a genuine **decision-making**. They were not only giving recommendations, but it went directly to referendum (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013)

**PARTNERS**

The projects usually have some external support and it is important to know which **partners** usually facilitate them. First of all, these are various **civil society activists** and **NGOs**, mostly specialized in a particular policy. “And eventually the local community will have enough resources to hire staff for the city or region and it’s not very centralized. The network will provide people, who essentially consult, and train, and guide the network, but they don’t start new projects.” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013) For financing, they can involve **banks**. “Sometimes they are working with local government, sometimes with school districts, sometimes they are working with banks, sometimes they are working with other non-profit organization” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013). Obviously, as it is about governance, individual **politicians** are involved too. “It was introduced by elite-oriented progressive politicians” (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). Regarding parties, these are mostly genuine **leftist parties** (not by name, but by ideology and practice), but left-centrists, and sometimes other can participate too. “A lot of communitarian leftists are in favor of town meetings, and some are libertarian democrats, you know, Democratic Party people, and they are helping town meetings” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). In many cases, especially if it concerns budgets or referenda, **authorities** (city council members, mayors, governors, government in general) are stakeholders too. “They have built relationships with people who hold elected offices or people who have positions in government or corporations... And a politician can be rather a target of their action, than a partner.” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). **Academia** representatives can engage as experts or researchers. “There were experts... guest lecturers, who provided expert opinions, there were community activists or different political parties to give their perspective” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). It is interesting, that the cooperation can be either **ally-oriented** or **issue-oriented**. “The most organizations I worked with start with a particular issue, and then they build relationships and partnerships with other organizations about things which make sense” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013).

There is an important question: why do these partners cooperate? What is their **motivation**? They can be grouped into 2 clusters: **egoistic** and **altruistic** considerations. First of all, politicians need **legitimacy**. They experience pressure from experts and the public to become more open, transparent, and inclusive. Allowing citizens to take part in decision-making concerning community projects and expenses they might raise it substantially. In an evaluation research in Ukraine it was found that joint community projects where people were partners with authorities increased trust towards local authorities and satisfaction with their work (Khutkyy, 2011). Second, authorities cannot handle the challenges of social problems like unemployment, economic underdevelopment, marginalization, and crime by themselves. So they try to **translate this responsibility** to citizens, bringing the discourse of “social entrepreneurship”, “social cohesion”, and the like. “Having public officials who are interested in handing problems over to the public; doing so can help them avoid difficult issues and get credit for offering empowerment opportunities” (J. Gastil, personal communication, December 4, 2013).
One more reason is that individual politicians seek **political benefits** in forms of popular support for their initiatives. “Participatory budgeting is a popular process, so one of the things from the cynical perspective is that if you do the participatory budgeting it will increase your chances of being re-elected” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). Or it can be a specific use for certain **political objectives**. An idea of R. Richards is that the general result of the Citizens’ review, they are disapproving the initiatives they are reviewing; so the legislatures think that the process would kill the initiatives, they will favor any process that will weaken the legislature process (Personal communication, November 25, 2013). Regarding altruistic motivation, there are three reasons. Officials might be interested to hear a reasoned deliberated **public opinion**. The legislatures wanted they had such information when voting on laws. They wanted such rigorous evaluation. They are happy that the process is made easier. (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). In general, project partners wish to promote **local development** and **better governance**. “So it’s the motivation of donors in doing this and international community is to help countries achieve better governance... There is larger system of community but has different minds within it on development – focusing on how to get engaged to promote economic development and there are others more focused directly on political issues” (T. Carothers, personal communication, December 6, 2013). Finally, the partners can be truly sharing the **participatory democratic values**. “But I think there are some more progressive council members... see participatory budgeting as one way to engage people in democracy.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013).

**MECHANISMS**

The real procedures of running the studied participatory initiatives are the essential for understanding and spreading them. In this respect, each form of participatory democracy definitely has its own peculiarities.

**Community organizing** is basically focused on two objectives: establishing **genuine relationships** and improving **quality of life** in a community. The priorities vary, for some it is sufficient to feel comfortable inside a community, and still others aim to change their conditions of life. “As people establish relationships between each other and they have authentic conversation – they are talking what’s really meaningful in their lives. If you have enough these conversations, there are common patterns and themes that build a lot and then people decide to work on the issues that bring the life to the surface. It is a dialectic – it goes back and force between building relationships and policies.” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013). The last ones include small local projects in **employment, healthcare, education** etc. “It is a flexible model... these tend to be small change on local level” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). It is worth mentioning that the point of application of community’s efforts vary: it might be **internal development** or changing external conditions by **influencing authorities**. Some groups pressure authorities, and the others do it themselves (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013). The process itself starts when a community realizes the need for a structured discussion and change. Then they invite experts from a community organizing NGO, which provide **training**. The fundamental basis of community organizing are **personal conversations** aimed at establishing understanding and realization of aspirations. The principal technique for building public relationships is a semi-structured conversation between two participants called a one-to-one (Christens, 2010, p. 889). In these conversations, the three principal components are: **previous experience, present situation, and vision of the future** in decisive spheres of life: family work, education, faith etc. For the organizer or volunteer leader, a central goal of this one-to-one conversation is listening to the other person’s story (Christens, 2010, p. 889). To achieve their policies, communities conduct **negotiations and cooperation** with external partners. Organizers want to change environment: they are building relationships and introduce project. (A. Peterson, personal communication, December 12, 2013). Then they **implement the project** itself. The structure of management and project implementation is characterized the existence of several **levels of leadership**. “They would rotate and give a lot of roles in responsibilities in organization... The organizers and the elected leaders are doing their work and there is a next layer of leaders” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013).

**Participatory projects** include a varied set of initiatives aimed at **development of communities and civil society organizations**. Format of their activities is established either by **internal rules** or by **standards** of external INGOs. “The town meeting operates on the rather explicit rules and regulation. We call them Robert rules of order” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013).

**Participatory budgeting** procedures vary from place to place, but there are certain common patterns. First and foremost, it is a grassroots process in the sense that local communities **meet and decide** upon projects they would like to be funded and conducted. “All processes begin with assemblies, or open meetings, throughout the town or city, ending when a series of selected projects is forwarded for inclusion in the yearly budget” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 6). Of course, they have to take into account **the financial boundaries** imposed by local authorities. Still, they can and do attract **additional financing** from individuals and organizations. When the
detailed projects are set, they are communicated to local authorities, which then take responsibility of funding and implementing them. Still, in some cases community members participate in implementation personally too.

Randomocracy basically implies face-to-face deliberation and decision-making by general public, and the random sample ensures proportionate representation of various social categories. It is done in 3 phases: learning, public hearing and deliberation ones. “They would meet in three phases: a Learning Phase, a Public Hearing Phase and a Deliberation Phase. If they decided to recommend a change, their recommendation automatically went to a legally binding provincial referendum.” (Lang, 2007, p. 5). Despite the accent on popular participation, external politicians set up the agenda, civil society experts shape the format, provide training, and politicians do suggest draft recommendations. S.H. Lyons confesses that parties and officials wrote the draft of recommendations of terms (Personal communication, December 17, 2013). For the most part, the participants themselves engage in general plenary, small groups, and online discussions. “In small groups everybody would have the chance to talk and everybody would talk. And we have online discussions... It gives people a chance to get deep in details.” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). The substantial dimension of their activities is to deliberate and formulate recommendations for policies. As C. Knobloch explains, the participants deliberate and engage in small group discussions and at the end of the week they independently write recommendation (Personal communication, December 17, 2013). In addition to internal deliberation among the sample of citizens, broader public is involved too. There is wide media coverage of the process and intermediate recommendation. S.H. Lyons tells that the project managers recorded the sessions and broadcasted them on television; ordinary people were allowed to come and listen to the sessions in person; the materials were available online; the draft recommendation was delivered to every door in British Columbia (Personal communication, December 17, 2013). There was even an opportunity to include recommendations from general public. There were opportunities to provide input from the public: individuals, organizations, parties... The public was encouraged to participate... There was a significant public debate. (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). Finally, the recommendation as an assembly formulates it goes for a referendum. Politicians cannot directly influence neither recommendation text nor the voting on referendum.

Electronic democracy initiatives take a variety of forms and use multiple media. On the level of community, there is one set of processes. At first, it is important to connect the stakeholders. S. Clift emphasizes the multiplicity of stakeholders involved: residents, local workers, local authorities, the police, the mayor, libraries (2013). Then, there is the time for the principal activity – discussion to set up the agenda and agree on future actions. S. Clift narrates that they would e-mail neighborhood residents, to discuss local community issues, set up objectives, share information, events, and ideas, take action, and promote solutions (Clift, 2013). Specific electronic forms include mailing lists, online forums, and internet social media discussion groups. “We have this Minnesota politics discussion forum... We had a forum and we asked questions... They were biased... We have in-city forums that cover 10,000 resident areas” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). T. Hall claims that Facebook and Twitter are low-cost channels, by which people can organize (Personal communication, December 1, 2013). “This has all been accomplished by the use of a structured e-mail list, the formalization of rules and guidelines, the careful management of the forum, the development of self-ownership and self-moderation” (L. Dahlberg, personal communication, December 10, 2013). Naturally, in a community with a possibility of face-to-face interaction, online and personal communication complement each other. It is notable that online tools can be used for different purposes, mostly practical self-organization. People use Internet much more in a spontaneous way for different purposes (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013). As S. Clift estimates, only around 15% of information exchange is political (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). In governance issues, Internet tools are used by authorities for informing, securing safety, and collecting public opinion. For instance, officials use E-Citizen Survey – figuring out how the city helped residents (Clift, 2013). More important for participatory democracy are online recommendations, requests and petitions. Groups can provide a platform to coordinate a possibility for people to express their opinions on a particular topic (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013). Officials in St. Paul have a web page, where they can provide input, in Europe it is called “online consultation”, in the US – “online public hearing” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). In Finland, citizens write e-petitions to parliament. (Clift, 2013). The most direct forms of citizen online participation are elections and voting for specific policies. They elect officials; in New York parliamentary elections, they use Internet for that (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013). In Estonia, everyone votes online; people were given special number, card and they voted online (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013).
STAGES

There is a largely overlooked question: at what stages of governance is direct democracy practiced in participatory projects? Of course, it varies considerably. Still, one can obtain qualitative results: on which stages there is at least one example of direct participation in each form, meaning it can be implemented there.

In community organizing, definitely, the agenda-setting, deliberation, and decision-making rest with the community. In some cases, they monitor and control the work of authorities or contractors, to whom they delegated some works. “Sometimes they focus of policies of decision-making bodies, so they might be focused on how the school district is making decisions or how the house authority is making decisions. Sometimes they would go and find inputs how the developers carry out decision.” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013). Alternatively, they can implement certain activities by themselves. “Some groups are actively involved in implementation. If they have services created for community work or some of the community development work.” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013)

Participatory projects, partially due to their variety, can perform all stages: from agenda-setting, expertise, and deliberation, to decision-making, elections, implementation, and monitoring. “It would take it from beginning to elections... I study from the deliberative act, from the participatory act...” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). “Fundamentally, they elect the town officers and decide upon the budget – how much amount of money will be spent” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). “Now it is easier to get on monitoring and implementation stages” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). Only public control is left problematic.

In participatory budgeting, they do agenda-setting, deliberation, and decision-making. They lack election of officials and do not set up the budget. Still, monitoring and control can be added up in the future. “I think monitoring is the place where there is the greatest opportunity” (E. Clemens, personal communication, November 5, 2013).

Randomocracy differs from the other forms, as it seems it has less stages of participation. Citizens are involved in expertise, deliberation, and suggestions. “Selection, learning stage, public hearing stage, deliberation stage, and a recommendation stage” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). The decision-making rests with the citizens, so in a strict sense, it is a separate, though connected process. If they get a certain number of signatures and the Secretary of State approves it, then the initiative is placed on the ballot; as long as the initiative is consistent with the constitution, the citizens have the last word. (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). Despite seeming less number of stages, randomocracy works on a larger scale – of a particular state, and this is its strength.

Electronic democracy is used for agenda-setting, deliberation, suggestions, decision-making, and elections. “We definitely see strength in agenda-setting; it happens all the time... discussions are starting online and officials are responding” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). Voting case it is an implementation tool for election; and the other is more much an agenda-setting and making people informed (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013). Thus, this form is almost universal one and is applicable at any scale of governance. However, it should be complemented with other forms to conduct implementation, monitoring and control.

5. VIABILITY

PARTICIPATION

Sustainability of emancipatory projects is indicated by a number of parameters. And the primary one is participation, as it is people who drive the process. Supposedly, each type of participatory projects has a different participation level, so they are analyzed separately.

Community organizing participation in absolute numbers depends on the settlement size. Small town would have one organization and a big city – half of a dozen; there might be up to 25 congregations practicing community organizing. A town community organization has a clear network structure of 3 radiating levels of involvement. At the core there are leaders (tens of people); then there are activists, who participate considerably (hundreds of people); and finally, regular participants (thousands to tens of thousands). You have a core group of participating, around 15 people, who are actively engaged... When it comes to an action a 1000 community members will come out (A. Peterson, personal communication, December 12, 2013). In a bigger city, there will be hundreds to thousands of leaders, thousands of activists and up to 10,000 regular participants. “A successful organizing initiative would have several thousand people who are really effective volunteer leaders, who are very active. And there will be other layer of people who are fairly active, but are not in that leadership group. And after that, you would have several thousand people who are not very involved.” (B. Christens, personal
A good idea is to count families, as each family might have at least one representative, but they are engaged as a social unit. In such case, one might count up to 10,000 families and, respectively, tens of thousands of total participants. “Sometimes they say: we represent 10,000 families, but that typically not all of these families coming to every meeting” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). In terms of estimations of totals, in absolute numbers there are 5,000-15,000 participants in community organizations. And the percentage of whole population in big cities is about 5%, probably, higher in smaller towns. “That’s a pretty small percentage of the whole community that gets involved. So, in any particular city the number of people that actually participates in organizing may be 5,000, might be 10,000, might be 15,000 people, but some of these cities are huge.” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013)

It is worth mentioning, that in participatory projects the basic structure of people involved demonstrates a similar pattern: there are leaders, activists, and regular participants. “I think it is a kind of continuum: you have some people, who are very active, and some people who are a little bit active, and some people who are not very active.” (T. Carothers, personal communication, December 6, 2013). Similarly, there is partial representation from a family. “A lot of participation is delegated. This basically means that 1 out of 2 families someone participates. And there’s no need for the whole family participate.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). Thereby, there is an idea, that practically there is no need for everyone to participate. “I think it is a mistake that all citizens should participate... More citizens should participate. And more groups which were historically marginalized should participate more.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). However, thus we return to representative democracy model. In terms of participation levels, there are hundreds to thousands is towns up to millions in states. And the percentage is 12-15% at town level while 10% at state level. In terms of optimal size, I found empirically in Vermont in ranges from 500 to 2,500; but if we have 1,200 members, a small part of them comes to the assembly; on average 12-15% in towns of several hundreds.” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). “The overall levels are not that high. So, Kerala is probably the highest... at the height of the campaign it was about 10%... First of all, 10% is 3.1 million people. Second, these 10% were engaged in the process that were not engaged before” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013)

Participatory budgeting reveals the similar pattern of participation: around 10% of local residents participate and it is as much as millions of people on state level. “Typically, PB processes drew large numbers of participants, with in some recorded cases, as much as 10% of the total population of a town coming to meeting at some point” (Baiochi & Ganiuza, forthcoming, p. 6). “I think 3 million of people came to the Brazilian capital for meetings” (G. Baiocchi, personal communication, October 18, 2013). An important accomplishment is the engagement of usually marginalized groups. “A lot of excluded and marginalized groups participated at higher levels of PB than we did in local elections” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013).

Randomocracy is a specific form of participation: neither absolute numbers, nor percentage are important there, but a genuine representation of the population. According to the procedure, the participants constitute a representative sample of all voters of the particular state. And when the assembly started its work, almost 100% of the selected demonstrated committed participation. Once the meetings started, almost 100% participated; this is the self-reinforcing nature of the group. (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). One point of criticism can be that it is actually the most motivated among the representative subsample, who take part. As S.H. Lyons mentions, these might be people, who resonate with their civic duty thing, or they lived in distant areas and they loved the idea to have a free trip to Vancouver (Personal communication, December 17, 2013). Nevertheless, they are still representative and motivation is good for work.

Electronic democracy projects involve thousands of people in towns and hypothetically millions in states. “We signed up for 4,000 members the last year” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). In terms of percentage, it is 20-30% of households in neighborhoods and 1-2% from all city. There are 30% of households in our most popular neighborhoods; there are between 20 to 30% roughly; at the city level, my guess is that 1 to 2% will show up (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). Again, there is an opinion that not everybody has to participate for a representative public opinion. I don’t think everybody needs to participate; what you need – people to participate and have opportunities to participate, but not everybody should participate (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013).

**DEMOCRATICNESS**

Another dimension of indicating whether the projects produce the results desired is democraticness. It includes, as equality of participation, quality of deliberation, and the justice of procedures and results.

Overall, the community organizing seems to be quite democratic. The community members are taking part, opinions are considered, and the power is distributed rather evenly, though there are representatives
elected by the community members. “The larger group makes the decisions” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). Of course, as in many organizations, people with more pronounced interests, efforts, or authority – the leaders – have more influence. “The decisions happen at General Assembly, there are numerous committees and councils and task forces... It tends to be nominated or elected, but more often it is people who have the most involvement” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013).

Participatory projects demonstrate high democraticness too. They are inclusive, have efficient deliberation procedures, and are transparent to public. There is the deliberation in public, reporting in the media; it is hard to exercise outside influence. (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). For instance, they have a special procedure for women involvement in places with traditional male domination in governance. In Kerala, they have pre-meetings where women discuss and send a woman from that group (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). However, in small towns there are particular individuals and families that enjoy greater authority and influence over other members of community. “Important families in town have a lot of weight... There are several families in town that have a civic consciousness – and it’s a normative perspective. They have always been involved in town affairs and they still are... The critics of town meetings say they are controlled by elite... It is not dominated by key families and by interest groups.” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013).

Participatory budgeting definitely demonstrates the working principles of democracy. There is a vast participation, direct delivery of decisions made to authorities, and overall justice. “First, it was a debate in which all had to participate. PB was the only connector between citizenry and local state and everybody, rich or poor, organized or unorganized had to debate their proposals within the new structured public sphere. Second, deliberations were structured by principles of social justice.” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p 9). The projects abide to clear rules; they are procedurally transparent due to open and recorded meetings. “A yearly, easily accessible and understood “Book of Projects” that listed when projects were decided, how they were funded, and the timeline of their completion” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 8).

Randomocracy initiatives are designed to ensure representation and prevent influence from interest groups. As R. Richard states: there are mechanisms introduced into the system preventing it from being manipulated; it is hard for one interest group to control the process; there are many checks and balances in the system (Personal communication, November 25, 2013). Advanced expertise and broad deliberation leading to genuine independent decision-making. But if the Assembly staff controlled process, I argue that the Assembly members did act independently in developing the principles that guided their decision-making (Lang, 2007, p. 16). I think, it is highly deliberative. The process is set up for people to interact in a number of ways, so it helps to distribute speaking opportunities (in large group, in small groups, and online). (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). There is considerably transparency of the whole process. All the meetings are conducted in public, so anybody can observe from outside and see it is not corrupted (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). Therefore, in general this model has proved to be quite democratic. It’s pretty democratic and we have measurements of that: people generally feel included; people generally feel that they have a speaking turn; they feel that they are treated with respect; they feel that their voices are heard (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). Despite the universal tendency of social groups to have an unequal distribution of power, various discussion formats and a policy of facilitating everybody’s participation and opinion-making. “It was a tendency to lean to typical power distribution on the discussions. Those who found it most comfortable to speak were men and the educated, sometimes both, sometimes one or the other. The chair was very attuned ensuring diversity. He kept speakers list and gave word to those who have less voice.” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013).

Electronic democracy creates new opportunities for greater inclusion of general public. There is the possibility that Internet will create the possibility that people participate in democracy more directly and it will benefit every vote. (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013). “We are totally grassroots” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). In general, the electronic democracy projects can be characterized as democratic. Nevertheless, there is the possibility that the inequality of offline traditional politics will be transmitted to online governance too. As T. Hall describes it: if I’m already in politics, I get money for campaign offline, I can go online; if I e-mail my member of Congress, I probably call him too, I participate in both, and it gives me strategic benefit for a well-educated wealthy person versus a poor person who is only Internet connected (Personal communication, December 1, 2013).

RESOURCES
For a sustainable functioning, any project, in addition to participants involved, requires resources. Therefore, it is useful to take into account the sources of their acquisition. The usual sources of funding include
membership fees, church donations, and civil society grants. “They seek funding in a variety of ways. One of the ways... a church will pay part of the budget for organizing initiative... Others have membership fees, so the members will pay a small amount to be involved. Some get grants... from foundations and individuals... They tend to have very small budgets compared to other non-governmental organizations” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). Many projects attract private and funds donations. Initially it was donated by Ned Crosby and that was helpful — they still get private donations; they get huge grants from foundations; also National Science Foundation and other universities (C. Knoblock, personal communication, December 17, 2013). There is a place for local authorities funding too. In fact, some local or online projects can be low-cost, due to volunteer involvement and technical possibilities. As S. Clift puts it: “keep your costs low. Use volunteers. Use things that people want rather than you think they should do” (Personal communication, December 20, 2013). Some participatory projects (like participatory budgeting, randomocracy, and massive online voting) are of such importance and scope that they attract government funding. S.H. Lyons tells that one project was funded by the government and it cost 5 million Canadian dollars (Personal communication, December 17, 2013). As an aspiration, the participatory budgeting is seen as a social project, which requires municipal or government funding (possibly in a form of a special tax) for the full satisfaction of citizens’ needs. “In Vallejo, California, the city passed a law saying that a percentage of a particular sales tax will be used for a participatory budgeting process. This is a citywide process, endorsed by the city itself and so, the city has allocated considerable funds to actually implement the process.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013).

CHALLENGES AND COUNTERACTION

The participatory initiatives are in fact outstanding – they do not fit the existing political-economic system. Therefore, they are vulnerable to external pressures. In addition, as they are experimental, they face internal challenges too. This is why it is essential to anticipate and oppose the challenges they face. And it turned out many challenges still don’t have ready solutions. Nevertheless, some have, and the rest can be addressed once they are explicitly stated.

Community organizing has a number of challenges, some of them are internal and some external. First of all, the participation of target groups is not always achieved as planned. Generally, it is hard to reach target groups (A. Peterson, personal communication, December 12, 2013). Partially this is because informing and invitation are done during inconvenient time, so the organizers should be more oriented towards the needs of the residents and come in the evening during working days, for example. When the project is started, there is the objective to sustain participation of people. “One challenge is just to sustain the participation of people” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013). People should feel their opinion counts and they do can influence decisions; the issues discussed should be better articulated as related to their interests. Community organizing performs both establishing relationships and accomplishing projects, so both functions should be done in good balance. The balancing of expressive and instrumental functions has been identified as one of the key challenges facing organizations across the nonprofit sector (Christens, 2010, p. 896-897). Furthermore, not all projects are supported by donors. Therefore, project organizers should better communicate with donors and explain the importance of the projects selected by communities. Funders should be responsive – give money for certain needs (A. Peterson, personal communication, December 12, 2013). Community projects can suffer from negative group social effects, such as groupthink or free-rider. Mob rule, demagoguery and free-rider problem are mentioned by experts (“Methods,” 2013). One of external problems is resistance by power elites, even in form of sabotage. Institutions often exercise their power not by challenging organizing groups but by waiting them out; verbally agreeing to community requests and then not following through is simply a way for those with power to counteract the efforts of less powerful groups (Speer & Christens). A bigger threat is manipulation with relationships by more authoritative persons within a community. Finally, the focus on relationships, which often involve an expressive dimension, within the context of a more instrumental, community-level process can raise the question of manipulation (Christens, 2010). When the process is guided, moderators intervene to stop those taking over communicative power to give voice to everyone. Some community organizers were disempowering certain members who do not work well with others (A. Peterson, personal communication, December 12, 2013). Moreover, community organization projects encounter structural and communication difficulties of direct participation at a larger scale. “The venues for decision-making have aggregated up at national level. It is harder to make change at local level, than at federal or global level.” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). There is even a threat of loss of full-fledged emancipatory model and turning it into a neutral instrument or methodology. Many organizations incorporate community organization principles but they don’t incorporate all of the strategies; for instance, they not always involve the oppressed group (A. Peterson, personal communication, December 12, 2013). There are some universal measures, which can have positive systemic
effects. They include professional organizational support and monitoring. Just a volunteer group is not enough; a paid staff is successful (A. Peterson, personal communication, December 12, 2013). Monitoring, flexibility on what is addressed, and long-term support (A. Peterson, personal communication, December 12, 2013).

Participatory projects already in action can experience a decline in participation. “I think it’s [impact] in decline, because the attendance is in decline. The time people spend it town meetings is sharply declining in the last 30 years.” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). A good solution is to raise and solve essential issues, then they do attract attention and effort. There is a universal problem of distortions in participation – more motivated and influential take part more often. “One issue is the participation fatigue…. Who is being delegated? And as enthusiasm for participation fades those who are left are those who are more interested are resources.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 4, 2013). In such cases, it is useful to monitor participation profiles. In procedural terms, large group discussions are problematic due to large group dynamics and practical impossibility to hear everyone properly. “If you are having 150 people in a 4-hour session, the utility begins to fall down” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). Definitely, some projects encounter the issue of limited budget. “The budget consists of two parts: capital budget and operational budget… Participatory budgeting has no effect on operational budget.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 4, 2013). A good solution is to introduce sectoral committees to manage operational budget. “In Brazil … there are sectorial committees… These committees are given responsibilities for sectors, for example, housing, and the committee is constituted and it represents civil society actors, and in Brazil it represents the union and the state and the Central committee has a constitutionally bounded role to review budget for that sector (P. Heller, personal communication, December 4, 2013). There is a threat of organized opposition by elites too. “The most immediate threats are the entrenched powers of vested interests that are always extremely proactive and trying to kill democratic processes… Entrenched elites can resist institutional reforms by small acts of resistance… Many don’t like transparency, because it makes business more difficult…” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 4, 2013). One possible answer is to create vast popular support for the project. In this context, there also possible structural and communication problems of scale – mechanisms and accomplishments at local level may not work on state level. “I think one of the biggest challenges is how to go from lots of good local initiatives to making sure it produces national-level change” (T. Carothers, personal communication, December 6, 2013). A state or nation might never become a full-fledged deliberative democracy. (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 259). One more external challenge happens when state and federal government take over the town meetings spheres of responsibility. “But it’s a fact, that over the last 100 years, the kinds of decisions the town is making, has declined – the kinds and the number has declined… The agenda of the town meetings is governed by the state of Vermont… It is the loss of the authority of towns to make decisions.” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). In this respect, it is a long-term aim to struggle for decentralization. A somewhat unexpected universal solution to many of the challenges raised is to practice experimental democracy. “Boot-strapping democracy… By continuous experimenting and doing... The successful cases worked because there was no model, it was a project… The ingenuity of participants, of bureaucrats, the politicians who are committed to the processes…” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 4, 2013). Thus, the growing experience together with solidarity of participants are very important.

Participatory budgeting has a long list of challenges, both internal and external. One of internal issues is inequality – in participation, in influence, in management. The fundamental issues of inequality – if we leave it as it is, due to self-organization when people in power gain more power, there would be enormous inequalities in specialization, voting, participation and executive power (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming). What is left to do is to apply efforts to restore equality. Imposing greater equality and participation requires constant deliberate efforts and nurturing certain democratic culture (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming). One might even raise the question of unsustainabiliy of participatory budgeting process due to dependence on relations with authorities. “We have the participatory budgeting of New York, and very small amount of resources is not institutionalized, and this is my critique… but the national participation in Brazil is not binding – there is no decision-making” (G. Baiocchi, personal communication, October 18, 2013). A definite answer should be the institutionalization of the movement. Also, there is a space for external self-seeking influence by elites. “It is enormously important to try, but not underestimate the inertia of entrenched interests... Most politicians prepare to hold the political power themselves.” (E. Clemens, personal communication, November 5, 2013). In substantial dimension, there is a risk of loss of the essence of emancipatory goals of participatory budgeting. The irony is that politicians can merely proclaim the new arrangements creating obstacles to actual consideration of grassroots initiatives and priorities (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 15). Such politicians would talk about citizen involvement, instead of empowerment. To limit the boundaries of the movement, elites reproduce the discourse of limited resources.
“Implementing participatory budgeting process without changing how the system works... They teach you that economy is a system set up to deal with the fact (it is a fact for them) that there are not enough resources... The point is that the system is set up to place us against each other and not set up to meet everyone’s needs” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). To counteract this, conscious civil society actors should promote the introduction of **fair distribution of revenues and fair taxation** to satisfy people’s needs. “We want to change that from the very beginning the process is to meet everyone’s needs and raise the money to meet those needs afterwards. Everyone should pay what they have to pay. If all the wealthy people and all the corporations pay what they are supposed to pay, there is no reason we cannot meet everyone’s needs... Actually there are more than enough resources to go round.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013).

**Restrictions to capital funds** are limiting the spread of participatory budgeting too. “We are only dealing with capital funds; we are not dealing with expense funds... We are dealing with a very small percentage. If you look at the participatory budgeting report in the first year, I think, it represents like .06% of the entire capital budget of NYC” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). Opposing to that, project leaders should advocate to base participatory budgeting projects on peoples’ needs, not on current limitations. “Maybe we can base it on need” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). One source and a supporting process is the basic **ideological misinterpretations** about economics in education. “And the truth is being obscured in educational institutions throughout the country” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). Therefore, the ambition is to change teaching economics to introduce alternative, more society-oriented models of economy.

**Universal recommendations** regarding these challenges include following the efficient procedures and maintaining organizational support from social movements. In this respect, it is extremely important to establish and follow rational procedures, which will protect bottom-up demands from voluntarism or ignorance (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming). “It is important, in our view, then, for PB campaigns need to connect with other movements that are, in different ways, pressuring towards empowerment and democratic control of the state” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 15)

**Randomocracy**, as a relatively new form of participatory democracy, has many challenges. The question is even how to **introduce** it in the first place? An answer includes using the existing legal possibilities. “First of all, it is reasonable to utilize the existing laws and institutions. The basic conclusion of Gastil and Richards is “to use existing electoral imperatives to one’s advantage” (2013, p. 271). Also, in the process of establishment, there is certain **resistance** to introduction of randomocracy project from politicians. “They haven’t lived long enough for us to know yet, but I’d say they’ll face opposition from whatever partisan group believes it has wronged them. Or, in Oregon, we see the political left viewing it as a threat to their electoral power.” (J. Gastil, personal communication, December 4, 2013). To overcome that, projects require more **advocacy**. “Again, the only detailed case I know is Oregon; advocates of the Oregon CIR are trying to protect it from amendments that might undermine or remove it” (J. Gastil, personal communication, December 4, 2013). Obviously, **funding** is always an issue. Funding might be a challenge (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). Nevertheless, project organizers can practice **low-cost approach**, especially if it is a local initiative. “If there are local processes that will reduce costs” (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). Then, when a project is already in process, there might me some **logistical** difficulties. There were logistical difficulties of getting 160 people at one place at one time through a year. (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). They can be effectively solved by organizational efforts. We were extremely responsive to logistical requests so people felt comfortable – they get what they needed (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). In this format, there is a risk of **unequal participation** too. The people that speak more and speak less (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). They can be eliminated by professional moderation. You can manage it with good moderators and being task-oriented (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). Discussions can suffer from **groupthink**, but there are special techniques to prevent it, like noting all suggestions voiced. External forces may try to attempt to **influence decisions** through expertise or by direct lobbying. “One of the challenges – how much legal advice can we give to citizens, while they are deliberating?” (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). There were some individuals who would come to the Assembly during coffee breaks trying to influence the content (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). They can be confronted for the most part by giving participants wide possibilities for expertise and by conscious approach of participants themselves. The participants learnt to differentiate attempts of external influence, so they ignored it (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). Even if the assembly is running well, there is a challenge of low awareness and discussion among general public. We can continue to have low levels of awareness of the process (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). In Ontario, the media took a hostile approach to the Assembly, so the public was not so willing to trust the Assembly (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). In such cases, in addition to organizers’
policies, participants themselves can act. So the participants of the Assembly organized among themselves and promoted the information among general public (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). There is always a risk of elite influence on voting. Some don’t like bigger government or government intruding in voting decisions (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). It can be prevented by regular monitoring, evaluation, and control. Continuous evaluation helps preventing biases (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). In the worst case, the initiative has a risk of co-optation by elites. “An important objection to these proposals is that random assemblies could be co-opted by powerful interests. Such co-optation might occur, for example, through elites’ bankrolling these expensive deliberative processes or exercising a disproportionate influence over the choice of experts and other sources of information provided to assemblies.” (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 273). It’s possible that the system can be manipulated... Both in Switzerland and in the US the initiative process has been coopted by elites. (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). On the other hand, ignoring the interests of powerful groups can block the process. “This opposition brings some problems: parties might feel their interests are no met and can hinder establishment of the randomocracy institutions. The consequences for the case of British Columbia were quite telling: “the absence of politicians as stakeholders was likely to have undermined the political will to support the referendum phase of the process, and the implementation of any reforms”” (Lang, 2007, p. 14-15). Therefore, a reasonable deal with parties might be better. Proponents of randomocracy may find certain reasons to make it suitable for a party in the short term (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 271). This might be the mechanism to establish the new institution for a longer term. Despite the fact that projects are running now, in long-term perspective there is a problem of dependence on authorities that approve the project. The legislature always has the right to repeal the statute (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). Thereby, this is a strong motivation to institutionalize projects legally and organizationally. Participatory budgeting sometimes produces unpredicted results – people use referenda to block raise of taxes. Any time they want it, people pass an initiative that limits the ability to spend or tax to reach some equilibrium; this is why California in a constant state of fiscal crisis (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013).

In electronic democracy, there is a basic challenge to ensure representative participation of stakeholders. “Those who show up online are less representative, than those who show up offline. Ironically, the more things are going online, the greater the electronic divide is being pushed” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). “People talk politics more equitably offline than they do online. And they talk politics more equitably than take action” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). On the other hand, there is an increase of participation of marginalized groups. As S. Clift reports, there is an increase of participation of Latin Americans, African Americans, the elderly, young people as well (Personal communication, December 20, 2013). In this format, these is also a possibility of external influence. It is always a problem when an interest groups steps in; even in Estonia, a group can still get the idea and do what they do... politicians know how to manipulate the process. (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013). In the worst case, electronic democracy can be abused by government or private actors. There is a risk of abuse of e-government by government (Reitz). A corporation can try to create a grassroots organization to create and agenda and try to control the process, as opposing two people coming to a great idea and promoting it. In the US, money matters a lot. (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013)

INSTITUTIONS CREATED

These participatory projects create many new social phenomena: social practices, relations, norms, other institutions, social positions and organizations. This is important due to contribution to sustainability

Community organizing has two sets of social forms created: internal and external. Internal ones include one-to-one conversations, community meetings, norms of conduct on them, deeper personal and practical relations established. There are a number of organizing and managing bodies in the community created too. “Each congregation will have a local organizing committee. It will decide... and take action. But they will also ask other citizens to be involved... So, a lot of times the entire initiative will be governed by the Council – people who are active and run the initiative... They would have a Governing Board... The Task Force becomes the new entity inside the initiative.” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). The external sphere includes relations with a facilitation NGO, authorities, and other partners. A. Peterson tell about a paid NGO staff with periodic meetings, specific tasks, reports, strong internal structure and functioning (Personal communication, December 12, 2013).

Various participatory projects around the world it all starts with meetings and discussions among all stakeholder groups. “Within the EU there are many examples of those neo-corporativist structures, where you give the representation to stakeholder groups” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 4, 2013). To have
regular work and gain at least medium-term results, communities need a kind of organization. Its formality-informality degree depends on local settings. “Well, there should be organizations that match the socio-political setting. You don’t need organizations that are very expensive to maintain and can’t be financially sustained. So, you don’t want organizations that are too formal or that are too structured. On the other hand, you don’t want to go too much in the other direction towards informality and lack of organization. You need an organization to have a certain institutional coherence.” (T. Carothers, personal communication, December 6, 2013). Specialized committees are useful too. “You also want to promote greater participation of citizens in the control over operational budgets... In Brazil... there are sectorial committees... The range of opportunities here is almost endless: school committees, local policing, community policing in Chicago.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 4, 2013). On a larger (state) scale, annual meetings are useful. “The classic form that was practiced with participatory budgeting, and it’s an annual exercise and in attracts citizens to the budget-making process” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 4, 2013).

Participatory budgeting has a number of well-developed institutions. The projects start with participation as a practice. “If you mean by sustainability when people come back to participate, if you mean it that way... When you give people an opportunity to make a meaningful decision, they are going to jump on that.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). Thus, the meetings in local communities develop into neighborhood associations and assemblies. Neighborhood associations and assemblies are specific forms (Baiocchi & Gauzuza, forthcoming). Formal agreements with stakeholders, especially authorities, in some cases facilitate promotion of the project and boost fundraising, but they are not obligatory and depend on relations with stakeholders. “We experimented with doing this memorandum of understanding... and I’m not sure how successful we were with that” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). What is useful tool to help guide the process, is the codified set of techniques of implementing participatory budgeting – a kind of handbook. “The thing we had to guide the entire process called the Handbook, we call it the Rulebook.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). Of course, the patterns in the Handbook are recommendations, specific local conditions should be considered too. A stronger institutionalization can take the form of special laws. “Some cities institutionalize it as laws... In some countries, it became a national law. So in Peru, there is a national law on participatory budgeting.” (G. Baiocchi, personal communication, October 18, 2013). A great development is the creation of such social position as representative in a major’s office or even a budget planning office. “For the most history of the thing it is the specific department. A specific municipal department in charge. It is above the agencies and above departments as a kind of autonomy.” (G. Baiocchi, personal communication, October 18, 2013).

Randomocracy, due to its scope of application, has a detailed set of rules, inscribed in a Statute. “They have the Statute... Many elements of the process are consistent from year to year... The Statue remains in the books.” (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). It can even be institutionalized as a local law. The initial process was passed as a bill. (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). Of course, participants are involved in specific practices, develop relations and norms, first of all guided by the Statue. What is important and contributes to sustainability, is the establishment of a commission, representing all stakeholders, thus keeping the balance of power. They also established a Citizens’ Review Commission (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). The Statutes establishes the Commission; it has 11 members, one is the moderator from the previous review, same from the previous committee, one is chosen random, and some are from authorities (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013).

Electronic democracy is institutionalized in a number of ways, which depend on grassroots participation, regular practices of giving opinion and decision. Usually they take the form of online groups with discussions. S. Clift tells that in one case about 50 online groups started, but only local ones proved to be sustainable (2013). They can work as online sites for feedback to authorities too. S. Clift gives such examples: Peak Democracy Online Town Hall – US government agencies need feedback; AskBristol (UK), Econsult Advice (Australia), petition sites, Google Civic Info API (2013). At best, a special law can be passed. In Estonia, there is the law that people can put petitions forming the agenda (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013). In any case, online forms should reflect offline social processes of a community. “One key to sustaining it is to keep the project linked to the local Minnesota community and its issues” (L. Dahlberg, personal communication, December 10, 2013).

SPREAD OF INSTITUTIONS

An important aspect of the emancipatory projects studied is their horizontal and vertical spread – to other settlements and to higher administrative levels.

Community organizing originally emerged in the South of the US, and later spread to some other US states. Within states, communities eventually copy the models of neighboring ones. “In Wisconsin started in
Milwaukee... and another initiative... that’s the typical model for initiatives. Some, like Madison, become network.” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). Cooperation in community networks works well too.

Participatory projects have a great variety of forms, and they spread out within and between societies due to information exchange, efforts of experts, and work of INGOs, or governments. For instance, many European governments introduce policies to enhance civic participation for local development. Civil society organizations can work internationally too. For instance, World Social Forum created INGO and generated protests, including anti-G8 ones. (“Methods,” 2013). There is even a kind of necessity to spread out to keep the pace of development. “They have to have large network. There is a choice: either you have a network to gather lots of local organizations in some creative way, or you have one strong leader who pushes forward and brings local organizations with him, but he becomes a figure in the area.” (T. Carothers, personal communication, December 6, 2013).

Participatory budgeting originated in Porto Alegre, Brazil and then spread to almost whole state. Then it was reproduced in other Latin American countries. “Porto Allegre was the first and then it kind of organically moved from city to state level. And they carried a very robust state-level participatory budget. And then in Uruguay it travelled all the way to national participatory budget.” (G. Baiocchi, personal communication, October 18, 2013). There it had a strong leftist emancipative stance. For example, it has been said that participatory budgeting is a “virus” aimed to infiltrate the bourgeois state (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 2). It has been successfully implemented in Europe too. “Today, participatory budgeting is carried out in Europe in almost 200 towns or cities in a dozen different countries (and with a prospect of growth in the context of countries such as England, Portugal, Poland, Germany and Sweden). These are held in both small and large towns or cities: from Figaró in Spain or Borbona in Italy (with 1000 inhabitants) to Cologne in Germany, with its one million inhabitants.” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 12). Finally, it is introduced in the US: Chicago, Illinois, New York City, New York, and Vallejo, California. “Vallejo, California was the third one... Participatory budgeting shows that it is possible to have hundreds of thousands of people decide how tens of millions of dollars are spent. And that is a great thing.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). However, its coverage is not total. For instance, in Chicago, “it is only 10% of the wards, as I know” (E. Clemens, personal communication, November 5, 2013). It is probably one of the most numerous contemporary emancipatory participatory experiments. “By 2010, the sum total of PB experiences is at least 1500” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 11). However, one criticism is that sometimes the methodology, but not the whole emancipatory model is copied. “In the global translations of Participatory Budgeting, the communicative dimension has traveled, but not the empowerment one” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, forthcoming, p. 3).

Randomocracy for the first time was implemented in British Columbia, Canada. Then it spread to Ontario, Canada for some issues totally, for others partially. Ontario copied it entirely; there are mini-assemblies in Ontario, they call them “citizens’ panels” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). Then it spread out to some US states. “It is spreading... The State of California is considering implementing it, I believe, the State of Colorado is considering implementing it, and I think there is an attempt to implement it either in Arizona or in New Mexico.” (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). “The Oregon (U.S.A.) Citizens’ Initiative Review had a successful trial run in 2010 and has become established by state law as a regular part of that state’s initiative process” (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 265). It is also experimented in some European states. Citizens’ Assembly was used for constitutional reform in Iceland; the Netherlands did an electoral reform (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). In early 2006, the Netherlands launched a Burgerforum on electoral reform, closely modeled on the BC Citizens’ Assembly process (Lang, 2007, p. 3).

Electronic democracy, partially due to its information openness and ease in establishing online, has spread in the US and in Europe. “The project has inspired other projects, spreading beyond Minnesota with the help of Steve Clift” (L. Dahlberg, personal communication, December 10, 2013). Different localities and states experiment with different forms, so sometimes it is hard to establish, who borrowed what. However, the geographical scope of spread of electronic democracy implies that it requires some electronic infrastructure, high Internet penetration. There is a hope that, at minimum, it can be implemented where people have Internet access through mobile phones, and it is realistic even in peripheral countries.

SYNERGIES

In addition to direct influence, there was a hypothesis that the participatory projects can facilitate other forms of democratic grassroots organization and action. And it proved to come true.
Community organizing initiatives seem not be inclined to engage in the existing political processes, but rather develop own capabilities. “They tended just to process organizing initiatives and stay out of the system and certain possibilities of influence on the system, because they are not in it. Although there is a constant innovation inside initiatives.” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). The only one form, which was mentioned as possible stemming from community organizing, was cooperatives. As long as profound trust is built, they channel it not only into politics, but also into economic domain – like cooperatives. (Christens, 2010)

Participatory projects stimulate the creation of participatory projects in other domains. “Brazil went not only for participatory budgeting, but central council and house sector, for example, environmental movement. Throughout every sector in Brazil there are now participatory structures that are in place and actively used by civil society.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). A systemic benefit is the local grassroots policy planning. “They do the whole planning exercise: they do participatory gathering of information; it involves direct citizen engagement in designing projects. And these are very local, very grassroots projects... So in the Kerala story it is participation on all levels of governance: developing agricultural programs, irrigation schemes, citizen participation in local school system, running the clinics or at least holding healthcare personnel accountable. So it is really engagement on all sorts of levels.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). Not surprisingly, Vermont with its long tradition of new town meetings, is establishing participatory budgeting.

Participatory budgeting indeed fostered the grassroots involvement and it turned out to be useful for quick self-organization of emergency cooperation in response to natural disasters and then to protest movements. "In the case of the United States, we have the participatory budgeting of New York... It is connected to other forms of activism, for example, the connection with Sandy – the storm... First there was the storm, then the reconstruction efforts, and then people came with Occupy Sandy – Participatory Sandy.” (G. Baiocchi, personal communication, October 18, 2013). It is notable that participation budgeting facilitates participation in planning other spheres. “In the Brazil cases often what you have is the budgeting... and then it tends to incite participation in similar areas. So, for example, you have health councils or social service council.” (G. Baiocchi, personal communication, October 18, 2013)

Compared to other forms, randomocracy has not produced other organized forms of democratic participation. “Not well, yet” (J. Gastil, personal communication, December 4, 2013). However, there is an aspiration that it will facilitate participatory budgeting project in the future. Participatory budgeting is the biggest example we’ve seen; CIR is hoping to do some of these things, and sooner or not, it will happen (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). In any case, there are initiatives on individual level. “Particular individuals took it their own way. One started and association using principles of active democracy concerning issues he cares about. But they are very individually championed.” (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013).

Electronic democracy is a very dynamic form. Therefore, it is most distinguished in horizontal proliferation – generation of new projects in adjacent spheres, mostly mutually beneficial for people, and not connected to politics. S. Clift names: crime preventions, couch surfing, crow funding, sharing goods forms (Personal communication, December 20, 2013). They are mostly help for individual cases of residents: free sharing things, Streetlife (UK), MA Residence (France), BuurtBuzz (Netherlands), NextDoor (US), FreeCycle, Freegle, Craigslist, NeighborGoods, car sharing, couch surfing, Open311, Yealpl, FixMyStreet, StackExch (Clift, 2013). In governance, electronic democracy technology facilitates other forms of civic participation. The way they vote online in Estonia, they use the same mechanism for other activities; they use the same electronic cards. (T. Hall, personal communication, December 1, 2013). They most outstanding instance is the electronic participatory budgeting. S. Clift provides the examples: the format of an e-assisted participatory budgeting is practiced in Brazil, Estonia, and the US (2013).

**IMPACT**

To understand the importance of emancipatory initiatives, it is essential to take into account the assessment of their impact. It has two components: influence on citizens and communities, and influence on democracy as a whole.

Regarding influence on citizens and communities, there is a huge impact on participants themselves.

In community organizing, experts admit the development of critical consciousness and better understanding of the governance process in participants. Having a broad network of public relationships advances participants’ understandings of social systems, a phenomenon sometimes described as developing critical consciousness (Christens, 2010, p. 892). “They begin to understand a lot of democratic processes, they understand the procedures, the laws, and how the decisions are made and what happens in that way”
(P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013). Scholars observe the strengthening of community identity and solidarity among people. “They tend to perceive more sense of community or connection to their place and people in their city” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). The relationships built through the community organizing process develop reciprocity among participants and a commitment to sustained civic participation (Christens, 2010, p. 893). Moreover, there is an increase in cooperation with other communities. Successful community organizing initiatives lead to active people probably spend less time cooperating with other communities (A. Peterson, personal communication, December 12, 2013). The projects raise self-confidence and empower participants. Short-term outcomes are confidence, community building, and empowerment (A. Peterson, personal communication, December 12, 2013). Community members demonstrate greater commitment to civic participation and motivation for social change. Forming relationships and listening to other people’s narratives push participants toward a systemic understanding of social issues, and a systemic understanding provides the motivation for the groups to pursue systems change (Christens, 2010, p. 892). Finally, there is a practical outcome in the form of solution of certain community problems. Long-term outcomes are related to a reduction in community problems. (A. Peterson, personal communication, December 4, 2013).

**Participatory projects** create trust, cohesion, and initiative in communities. In an evaluation research in Ukraine it was found that joint community projects where people were partners with authorities increased trust towards local authorities and satisfaction with their work, as well as greater initiative, trust and cohesion in communities (Khuskyy, 2011). There is a remarkable development of democratic culture and community cohesion. “I think that face-to-face argument, deliberation, disagreement formalized over the years helps people get along. It has a positive impact on what might be called a democratic culture.” (F. Bryan, personal communication, December 3, 2013). One can state that they make citizens more conscious in terms of civic participation. “There are lots of evidence that it makes for better citizens” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 4, 2013).

**Participatory budgeting** first of all, enhances community-building. “So, I think, it has all sorts of positive impacts – it is a community-building process that needs all sorts of relationships, and education – it is really positive and addictive. Who doesn’t want to be in a more connected community and feel less alone than they already are?” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). Participants demonstrate stronger cooperation and higher involvement in civic life. “There is some research that shows that it changes people’s perceptions about government. People are more involved in other forms of civic life... People are more cooperative – lots of meetings... Actually participation in the forums” (G. Baiocchi, personal communication, October 18, 2013). The local residents enjoy the feeling of involvement and satisfaction. “These are very important in creating a sense of involvement that creates a greater sense of satisfaction – people get what they wanted and that creates a difference” (E. Clemens, personal communication, November 5, 2013). They also develop a better understanding of local governance. “People were understanding exactly what council members are responsible for and exactly what powers they have and the limit to those powers... I think it really increased the number of people with knowledge of how the system works. ...That definitely was one huge positive from implementing a participatory budgeting process.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). People have strong motivation for action and demonstrate high actual participation. “They would say: I am so passionate about the idea; I want to volunteer my time to convert that idea into an actual project... As Budget Delegates, they learn how the system works, and they work on highest level – the most labor-intensive role in the process.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). Finally, participants form better skills and obtain empowerment for civic society activities. “People who are already active became sharper from participating in PB... I feel that some of the positive outcomes are that community members became more conscious, aware, and educated.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013).

**Randomocracy** promotes better understanding of governance processes among participants and their families. If you imagine each Assembly member as a node, there are ripples around – the direct family members have a strong sense and understanding of the process and so forth (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). They develop stronger commitment to deliberation. It is the self-reinforcing effect. We know that citizens are fundamentally changed by the participation in the process of deliberation; they become more committed to deliberation as the result of their participation (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). In addition, they acquire valuable skills of civic participation. There is influence on voters and on panelists; participation in the Citizens’ Initiative Review has influenced their civic efficacy in term of willingness to participate in political life, in terms of their knowledge, in terms of their use of public media (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). As a result of enhanced deliberation, citizens are empowered. “Authentic citizen empowerment lay in two key features of the Assembly process” (Lang, 2007, p. 3-
4). Their behavior changes too. For example, it is admitted that participants have become more active in local affairs. “Many participants are transformed through the experience. People have become more involved in local communities and more involved in political process.” (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). And their activism is more efficient. The impact on Assembly members: many of them became more active citizens, some of them went back to schools to get more education, some of them get leadership positions in their communities; one of them ran for council; it had a transformative impact on participants in terms of political efficacy (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). The public began to trust more in the assemblies and their recommendations. The personal nature established a connection between the public and the Assembly members, so the public eventually came to trust the recommendation, even if they did not understand them, as they were quite complex; they were acting for the common good instead of particular interests, so the public eventually used the Assembly as a trusted information proxy (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). The voters gained better expertise; they changed their opinions and voting behavior. “Voters are learning new information from the panel and they are learning arguments, some of them change arguments” (C. Knobloch, personal communication, December 17, 2013). We know that Citizens’ Initiative Review statement changes their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and voting behavior. (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013).

Electronic democracy has promoted the development of special skills of participants. ”They moderate the discussion and that skill is very important” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). Experts admit the processes of more profound community building and civic engagement. Finally, communities celebrate the solution of many community issues. S. Clift enlists many of them: “crime prevention, disaster preparedness and community recovery, neighborly mutual benefit and support, health care and long-term care, energy efficiency, environmental sustainability, senior care and inter-generational connections, small business promotion, transportation, local food, diverse community cohesion, education and community service, recent immigrant and refugee integration and support, sustainable broadband adoption, rural community building, youth employment and experience” (2013). We can observe the influence on particular policies, like change of airplane routes to bring less noise to neighborhood. We see airplanes changing their pattern; there is much less noise; now the planes do a detour to not fly over a boulevard (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013).

In addition to the described micro-level change, there is a macro-level change too. Each format of participatory democracy contributes to substantive impact on democracy as a social system.

Community organizing literally promotes actual social change. Local community organizing can, in certain instances, play a leading role in driving local systems change (Speer & Christens, 2012, p. 425-426). Specifically, it is decentralization of governance and stronger grassroots activities. In the best cases, they form a structure that allows organizing efforts to truly be grassroots or bottom-up and to avoid the issues of centralization of control that plague most social movement organizations over time (Christens, 2010, p. 892). Experts admit a change in public dialogue. “Communities that are successful, they are altering the public dialogue... If organizing is effective, they will work on things they really care for.” (P.W. Speer, personal communication, December 5, 2013). There is an ongoing restructuring of local government. The action of the organizing group helped to provide the necessary pressure to create change in the structure of the local government (Speer & Christens, 2012, p. 417). Particularly, the governance has become more responsive to civil society. “And then there are a lot of examples of case studies that documented organizing initiatives – the governance has become more proactively responsive... and have implemented more, give more consultation that takes community impact more seriously” (B. Christens, personal communication, December 16, 2013). Citizens manage to change of agenda for authorities. There is a substantial amount of additional evidence from newspapers, organizational reports, and participatory data to demonstrate CCO’s central role in moving the mayor, the city manager, the city council, and other entities to address housing more seriously and to more fundamentally redress the mechanisms of government with regard to housing and housing policy (Speer & Christens, 2012, p. 421-422). As a result, there is a stronger influence of people on authorities. They feel they have can and do have bargaining power in negotiations with authorities; and they do come to authorities with suggestions, which they eventually accept (Christens, 2010).

Participatory projects bring better public deliberation and communication with authorities. Communication channel between elected officials and the community, training for new leaders, deliberations of good quality (“Methods,” 2013). There is a notable strengthening of civil society. “The whole participatory process has stimulated a lot more civil society activity. There are many more organized groups, and the citizens have a much stronger sense of being in power... And it also strengthens civil society in terms of both organizational capacity and its autonomy.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 3, 2013). Studies
indicate more redistribution of resources for the benefit of unprivileged groups. “It is hard to measure. The indirect evidence we have in Brazil; this evidence is very clear. The cities, that adopt participatory budgeting, tend to be more redistributive. They spend more money in the periphery, where the poor live, where the slums than in the center where the middle class live.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 4, 2013). The state provides more social services to its citizens. “And we know that the more participatory the city is, the more it tends to invest in social and health services... So, there is a direct relationship between more participation and greater investment in social developmental state... That’s a positive dynamic.” (P. Heller, personal communication, December 4, 2013).

On a larger system level, participatory budgeting builds stronger relationships between citizens and authorities, based on mutual understanding and cooperation. “The fact that the PB had promoted a reform of the relationship between administration and civil society in democratic terms is no small matter” (Baiocchi & Ganiuza, forthcoming, p. 15). Thus, participatory budgeting projects produce closer and more efficient cooperation with authorities. “It was really the participatory budgeting process that put them in situation where they were working hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder, with a number of community institutions that have been in that area for much longer. The people’s willingness to work together, like the budget delegates, those are the community members participating in participatory budgeting process at the highest level possible....” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). There is a notable growth of empowerment and decentralization of decision-making to citizens. “Participatory budgeting... is not only we just will listen ... “thank you very much”, we actually are going to shift some decision-making power to you.... People get to participate, to make decisions.” (V. Villano, personal communication, December 9, 2013). These initiative foster policies targeted towards underprivileged and marginalized groups. "Perhaps more dramatically, it allowed to administration to carry out a pro-poor policy under a legitimated political framework". (Baiocchi & Ganiuza, forthcoming, p. 10). In some cases, there is an impact on specific political situation, for instance, in Brazil participatory budgeting was linked to the promotion of a leftist party to parliamentary victory. “I don’t know that it has. In Brazil you can make a direct connection between participatory budgeting and the victory of the Workers’ Party... for sure.” (G. Baiocchi, personal communication, October 18, 2013).

Randomocracy has a number of positive impacts on democracy. It creates a fairer representation of citizens. The process of interaction among Assembly members shaped the quality of active representation that emerged from a descriptively representative group of citizens (Lang, 2007, p. 17). There is an ongoing concentration of attention on common interests, as opposed to individual and corporate interests. In conclusion, Randomocracy addresses the limitations of current policy processes by circumventing the influence of narrow interests, money, and organization, and by refocusing decision-making around the search for common ground (Lang, 2007, p. 24). The assemblies become a new legitimate body of governance, closer to people. People saw real individuals, and not unknown entities behind the curtain; so this is the role of these representatives to become ambassadors and have a great path of influence (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). The whole randomocracy case has become a model of efficient deliberative democracy. If you are interested in process, like we are, then you see an enormous impact on democracy; the Citizens’ Assembly of British Columbia was a golden standard; if you invest a lot of money, this what could happen (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). The experts observe a raise of awareness of this participatory format. “The biggest "broad" impact is to raise awareness of the potential uses of institutions like this. The deliberative poll certainly had that impact; it raised the global profile of deliberation.” (J. Gastil, personal communication, December 4, 2013). It motivates for further introduction of participatory democracy. Such experiments influence our willingness to try innovative approaches to deliberative engagement (S.H. Lyons, personal communication, December 17, 2013). Randomocracy institutions influence public opinion. John Gastil conducted experiments: the exposure to Citizens Review published changes public opinion – citizens read the Citizens Review statement with special care (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013). People gain empowerment to conduct expertise and decide on electoral system. The process also facilitated real empowerment of the participants by giving them time, space and the authority to make decisions about what electoral system they preferred (Lang, 2007). It can go as far as empowerment to stop additional taxation in California. And in Western states, you can see the effects of this; for example, in California people have so much power (R.C. Richards, personal communication, November 25, 2013).

Electronic democracy promotes greater citizen participation and establishes better relations with officials. “Official become friends... And an official can say – those are my voters” (S. Clift, personal communication, December 20, 2013). It can be best described as a creation of an efficient public deliberation space. “Minnesota E-Democracy has been able to overcome many of the shortcomings of other cyber-forums and
develop a space for online public discourse that in many ways approximates the public sphere conception. It has maximized its autonomy from state and corporate interests, stimulated reflexivity, fostered respectful listening and participant commitment to the ongoing dialogue, achieved open and honest exchange, and provided equal opportunity for all voices to be heard.” (L. Dahlberg, personal communication, December 10, 2013). But not only deliberation – due to working cases of online voting it brings a new institution of direct participatory democracy in the decision making dimension.

FORMS

As a result of application of all research methods used, I have elaborated a basic typology of participatory form. They are grounded on two dimensions: the most pronounced stages of governance and the scope of influence. Thus, the forms of democratic participatory governance include:

Community development on local level for anyone – community organizing: it can be defined as a coaching-like approach of facilitating local self-organization by a conversation between two participants.

Deliberation and advice on local level for anyone – deliberative democracy: it is self-government with the internal deliberation and with the distribution of formal power (Gastil & Richards, 2013). Particular types are: public hearings – an open gatherings of officials and citizens, with comments from the people (from XVIII century Britain to contemporary US) (“Methods,” 2013); European Local Democracy Week – an annual event in Europe of promoting the knowledge of local democracy (“Methods,” 2013); XXI century town meetings – online discussions of ordinary citizens to advise to authorities (New York) (“Methods,” 2013); crowdsourcing – professionals and amateurs solve a particular problem on the internet (municipal elections in Reykjavík, Iceland) (“Methods,” 2013); forum theatre – a conventional play about community’s lived experience – it culminates in unresolved crisis with participation of public (practiced in Peru and Brazil) (“Methods,” 2013); deliberative polling – public opinion research and public deliberation which makes the public opinion more informed and discussed (Manchester, England) (“Methods,” 2013); citizen advisory boards are a local government entity of volunteer citizens who discuss, analyze, formulate, and forward recommendations to the legislative body (Virginia, Washington, Florida) (“Methods,” 2013).

Deliberation and decision-making on local level for anyone – participatory budgeting: its definitions is – decision-making process through which citizens deliberate and negotiate over the distribution of public resources (Baioochi & Ganuza, forthcoming).

Deliberation, advice and decision-making on state level with random selection – randomocracy: it has been practiced as long as in the late V and IV centuries BCE in Athens – random selection was employed to fill many key governmental offices from among the citizenry (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 263). Specific types include: citizen assemblies – a randomly selected group of citizens for deliberation (British Columbia and Ontario, Canada) (Gastil & Richards, 2013); planning cells – micro parliament of people working together to develop a set of solutions to a problem (Germany, Spain, New Jersey) (“Methods,” 2013); citizens’ initiative review – community representatives deliberate about an already developed ballot initiative (Washington state and Oregon) (“Methods,” 2013); policy juries – randomly selected citizens learn, deliberate and decide about a policy (Minnesota and Pennsylvania) (Lang, 2007).

Decision-making on state level for anyone – referenda: today, a total of 24 US states allow direct democracy via citizen-initiated ballot measures. In 2012, there were a total of 174 measures on US state ballots (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 261).

At all stages including implementation on local level for anyone – co-implementation: this form is comprised of: open town councils – assembling citizens in case of emergencies and disasters (in Latin America from XVI century) (“Methods,” 2013); scenario workshop, where people exchange knowledge, experience, develop common visions, debate, provide criticism and produce a plan of community action for potential future developments (originated in Denmark and spreads in EU) (“Methods,” 2013); social forums – an event that addresses a wide number of topics for civil society organizations and individuals (started in Porto Alegre, Brazil, later in Atlanta, Michigan, Ontario) (“Methods,” 2013).

At all stages on state level for anyone – electronic democracy: it is the strongest form of direct democracy, in which people are involved in the legislative function. Under it, citizens would have the right to vote on legislation, author new legislation, and recall representatives (if any representatives are preserved) (Nollen, 2011). The most revolutionary model of governance would include the wiki-law (legislature), the wiki-government (executive), and the wiki-justice (judiciary) (Feliz-Texeira). Specific types include. Public Electronic Network – the system of electronic access to city council agendas and electronic conferences; there all voices are equal, anyone can speak at any time, and no one can be silenced (Santa Monica, Los Angeles) (Varley &
Hetherington); **Voter Media** – a system of online media where voters allocate finances for blogs (Vancouver, Canada) (“Methods,” 2013); **Pirate Parties** – officially, they support “civil rights, direct democracy and participation, reform of copyright and patent law, free sharing of knowledge (open content), information privacy, transparency, freedom of information and network neutrality” (“Pirate Party,” 2013); the latter are managed online on the basis of equal access.

6. CONCLUSION

There is a worldwide grassroots political movement striving for a substantial transformation of the current political system towards greater decentralization and popular participation. In addition to some traditional forms, there has been some contemporary experimenting. Thus, now we have a number of models, which have proved their achievability and sustainability in a wide range of countries – from periphery to the core. Community organizing, deliberative democracy, participatory budgeting, randomness, referenda, co-implementation, and electronic democracy, when combined, comprehend the entire sphere of participatory governance. They allow citizens to engage at all levels of governance – from community to the entire state – and at all stages – from agenda setting to implementation and control. They produce a number of positive effects for citizens in particular and democracy in general, thus being a strong argument for their establishment. I share the aspiration that the participatory democratic projects will spread out to neighboring communities and other countries thereby empowering citizens and transforming politics to a more equitable and fair system.

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