Master Thesis

ICTs and Citizen Participation
An Ethnography in the Municipality level

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Abstract
This master thesis describes an ethnographic research under the critical paradigm of thought in the use of ICTs to support citizen participation in the Municipality level. The purpose of the research was to acquire an understanding of the perspective of citizens on the topic and provide suggestions for the employment of ICTs in citizen participation on the specific context. The research setting is located in a neighborhood of a Municipality in Athens, the capital of Greece. Participants included randomly selected citizens, representatives from citizens groups which are active in the neighborhood and a representative of the Municipality. The data gathered in the research was qualitative and the methods were selected and conducted following the participatory design approach in correspondence with the ethnographic methodology and critical paradigm. The methods used were interviews, probes and participatory observation. The data gathered pointed at similar concerns expressed by the participants mainly towards issues such as ignorance and indifference. Participants also had the opportunity to make suggestions on the topic of ICTs and citizen participation, which in combination with the results of a thematic analysis of the qualitative data were used to make suggestions for future employment of ICTs in the Municipality. Through this direct engagement with participants the research also hopes to contribute to the developing Greek domestic literature on the topic, especially concerning the use of qualitative data.

Keywords:
Citizen participation, ICT, ethnographic methodology, qualitative research, critical paradigm, participatory design
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A person’s work is rarely solely their own effort. Seen and unseen influences are present in everyone’s work as they are of course in mine.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A question has been occupying my mind since the beginning of this Master Programme: “Are we making a better world with ICTs?” This is the title of an article by Geoff Walsham (2012) strongly suggesting the way towards which Informatics field should venture in, not only as a scientific field, but as an effect in society with a strong ethical orientation. As Walsham put it in his own words:

“Architects want to build better buildings, medics want to help people live longer and healthier lives, engineers want to build more effective technological systems to improve efficiency and artists want to stimulate our subtler senses with their work. IS scholars and practitioners should be concerned with how to use ICTs to help make a better world, where everybody has the opportunity and capability to use technologies to make better lives for themselves, their communities and the world in general”.
(Walsham, 2012, p.3)

1.1 What is This Research About:

Making a better world through information and communication technologies (ICTs) can mean many things depending on who is taking the initiative, in what context and for what reason. This research is about making use of ICTs to support citizen participation at a local level in a Municipality in Athens, the capital city of Greece.

Greece has been in a social and political turmoil since the appearance of the economic crisis in 2009 and a lot of movements concerning citizen participation have risen within this environment. These movements have been charged with different characteristics such as political activism, solidarity, volunteering, and humanism. The actions performed from these movements have been initiated by citizens and constitutes an effort of citizens to participate in the social and political events.

There have been several examples of these actions in Greece. One of the largest was the occupations and square sit-ins by the Indignant Citizens’ Movement. These occupations which lasted for months reached even the point of setting up makeshift pharmacies and libraries staged in the centre of the capital. Other examples of citizen participation in Greece include the Direct Democracy Now Movement, unofficial municipal assemblies, formation of solidarity groups and volunteering initiatives. ICTs have not been absent in these developments. Many actions have been organized through social media, and the internet has been a home to several web pages of solidarity groups trying to inform the public about their work.

These actions have been initiated by groups of people, most of the time large such as the Indignant Citizens Movements, and have mostly taken place in a heated political period with several elections taking place one after another and large rallies happening throughout the country. With the rise of a left-wing government in the past two years, a part of this large country-scale activity has settled down, even though the problems of the economic crisis are nowhere near finished.
Let us take a step back now and look at the main concepts that have already been mentioned and are going to be dealt with in this thesis.

**Why Citizen Participation?**

There is no easy way to define citizen participation as it has had different shapes depending on geographical locations and throughout times. A basic definition for citizen participation could be the following: “a process in which individuals take part in decision making in the institutions, programs and environments that affect them” (Heller et al. cited in Florin and Wandersman, 1990, p.43). Though there are questions raised from this simple definition such as whether there are prerequisites for this “individual” and what are the conditions of decision making in each case, there is a very important concept in its core, that of “taking part”. Whether it be for direct decision making or not, taking part and being involved in the citizen’s everyday lives is a core concept.

It is not solely in the interest of citizens to participate, as participation can even be used as a political strategy to gain “legislative and political support and legitimation” (Wengert, 1976, p.33). Taking an example from the Greek context which concerns us here, we can look at the Greek Bailout Referendum of June 2015 which asked for the participation of people in decision making to legitimate the stance of the government against austerity measures. This was followed by a re-election of the government party to establish its legitimation beyond question, even though in the end the stance of the government was quite opposite to the expectation of the people who participated in the referendum.

So why deal with citizen participation? Should citizens participate anyway? If we are to hold a strong ethical agenda in our IS ventures as Geoff Walsham urges us to, then the answer is yes, they should. The concept of participation and having a say in one’s individual and civic life is a value stance adopted in this research which will later be reflected in the selection of the research strategies.

**Why ICTs?**

ICTs have already proven their worth in the political field, by providing new ways for representatives to promote themselves, creating platforms where state legislations are made public, giving a space for citizens to communicate, debate and organize – peacefully or not. In the spirit of Walsham’s direction, Gunilla Bradley (2010, p.184) has the following to say: “all technology is for humans and should facilitate and improve our wellbeing and quality of life”. A healthy relationship between a citizen and the state is an important factor of wellbeing. Characteristics of ICT such as accessibility of information, speed, elimination of geographical distances, enhancement of communication, can provide new functions to citizen participation initiatives.

That is not to say that ICTs are a panacea for any shortcomings of citizen participation nor that employing ICTs is a swift and effortless process. Accurate knowledge of the context and the technologies to be used is needed, as is a commitment to engage in the problems that may occur since opportunities always come bearing new difficulties with them.
1.2 Motivation and Purpose

Motivation

Deciding on a research subject demands a reasoning which becomes the driving force of the research. Motivation in this research stems from three reasons: a lack of domestic academic literature in Greece on the subject of ICTs and citizen participation, a change in the nature of the citizen participation initiatives and a strong personal connection to the subject.

Citizen participation initiatives have been rich in presence and activity in the last years in Greece, however there is little domestic academic literature to deal with the subject. Even scarcer is the literature concerning the use of ICTs in citizen participation despite emerging trends from both formal and informal structures. Additionally, there is little field work and systematic contact with citizens in the few published works concerning citizen participation in Greece, which perhaps hints on a methodological obstacle preventing researchers to deal with the subject.

The large-scale citizen participation initiatives have also toned down to the local Municipality level since political instability has eased in the past two years and their nature has begun to change including now the personal relationship between community members and whatever changes this brings. To my knowledge, this is yet another area of uncharted waters in Greek academic literature.

Finally, there is a personal motivation since I, the researcher, am a part of the community which I planned to explore, but also have been myself part of local citizen participation initiatives in the past. Trying as an IS researcher to determine what should I focus on in my attempt to “make a better world with ICTs”, I found that one way is to be involved with my local community and provide my budding skills to try my best to improve the actual everyday life of myself and my fellow citizens.

Purpose

The purpose of this research it to explore and establish through direct engagement with citizens an understanding of how people of a specific municipality perceive and act – or don’t act – upon the concept of citizen participation. Forming an understanding is necessary since there is very little academic research concerning either this subject or the specific Municipality where the research took place.

Understanding is not an end in itself for this research, but rather the means to providing a constructive criticism of the current available citizen participation forms, and define thus the reasons behind discontent in order to suggest participation forms to better suit the needs of citizens, as well as the needs that rise between the interaction of citizens and the Municipality.

The engagement of citizens in participation does not aim only at including their opinions and experiences which are invaluable, but also making them aware of the current forms, their limitations and capacities, and also of their roles as citizens and motivate them to act upon the right to have a say in their civic lives. The fact that no significant research has yet been done on the perception of ICTs as supporting technologies of citizen participation in the Municipality level, indicates that there is a need to elaborate on the few current available ICT
supported forms, explore their extend and find forms, which will correspond to the knowledge gained by interacting with citizens.

Summarizing the above, the research question is presented as follows:

What forms of citizen participation can be supported by making use of ICTs in the Municipality level?

1.3 Delimitations of the Research

The research setting has been focused on the local level. That means that this is not a large-scale research for the collection of a large amount of data, but a more in depth research based on qualitative data. Furthermore the local level is in this case a specific neighborhood of the Municipality in question. That means that the data collected in this neighborhood will provide an image only for this part of the Municipality, and may vary if the same methods are applied to another neighborhood.

The participants of the research are also selected according to specific criteria and roles in the neighborhood. First of all, they are all current residents of the neighborhood. Then, they have a specific role concerning their relation to the Municipality and neighborhood. They are either citizens, members of active groups, or representatives of the Municipality.

Also, in order to provide as best I can anonymity and assure confidentiality of the participants, the name of the Municipality will not be mentioned. That means that there will be a limitation as to the amount of details that will be given for anything mentioned concerning the research setting and the participants and no photographic material will be available from the neighborhood and the Municipality.

Finally, since the purpose of this research is to provide suggestions with the prospect of being able to be implemented in the Municipality, there will be a commitment to legislative limitations. This is mentioned here because several informal citizen participation initiatives have been acting outside legislative limits with actions such as occupying public spaces and hindering of private businesses. Since the appearance of citizen participation movements and actions has been relatively recent, there is no knowledge yet of how far and what kind of forms the relationship of the citizen and Municipality or between citizens themselves could take.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The chapters of the thesis are structured in the following way:

Chapter 2 Research Setting – Participation and ICTs: In this chapter a presentation is given of the Municipality in which the research takes place. Its characteristics as well as the current forms of participation and ICT use are introduced so the reader can create a picture of the research setting.

Chapter 3 Literature Review: In this chapter, the connection of ICTs to citizen participation and the benefits and con-arguments of citizen participation are presented through a review of literature on the subject. Examples from ICT use in citizen participation initiatives are also given from around the world, as well as some examples form the Greek context.
Chapter 4 Research Strategy: In this chapter the selection of paradigm, methodology and methods is presented, as well as the Participatory Design approach. The planning of the methods is presented along with the empirical data and the way of analysis. Ethical considerations that emerged during the research are also presented and a mention of the validity and reliability of the research is made.

Chapter 5 Findings: In this chapter the results of the thematic analysis of the data collected during the research are presented.

Chapter 6 Discussion: In this chapter the findings of the research are discussed according to the literature presented along with the suggestions that originated from the research. Also a reflection of the research strategy and issues that emerged during the research and the future of the suggestions are presented.

Chapter 7 Conclusion: In this chapter a conclusive summary of the research is given. The contribution of the research is presented as well as points which show directions for further research.
Chapter 2: Research Setting - Participation and ICTs

In this chapter a description of the setting of the research will be given. The meaning of setting includes not only the neighbourhood in question, but also the current participation forms and ICTs used by different stakeholders that take place in the Municipality.

2.1 Characteristics of the Municipality

The Municipality where this research is situated is located near the centre of Athens, the capital of Greece. It was formed in 1934, has a population of around 120,000 citizens and covers an area of around 9,200 km². It has a rich cultural history since it was created to shelter refugees fleeing from Asia Minor in 1922. Due to this surge of population a lot of rushed houses were built and urban planning remains a problem to this day. None the less the remaining refugee houses and labyrinths of narrow alleys make most of the neighbourhoods of the Municipality retain a nostalgic air.

The Municipality is also one of those often connected with resistance movements during World War II, signs of which are several memorials built as tribute to people perished in the war. Additionally, it has a lively cultural life with annual festivals some of which are widely known in the city of Athens and attract prominent artists and a large audiences.

2.2 Participation in the Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood that this thesis focuses in, of which I am also a resident myself, has been rich in citizen participation initiatives in the last years. Most of these were initiated by citizens. The Municipality as a structure started to promote citizen participation in the last couple of years when a left-wing Mayor was elected.

Participation has mainly taken the form of informal citizen groups most of which are an aftereffect of the large assemblies that took place in the centre of the city of Athens by initiative of the Indignant Citizens Movement in 2011. Our neighbourhood was one those who adopted the concept of informal assemblies after the dissolution of the main assembly. I was also present in this local assembly which was an attempt to involve citizens in their community and have a say in problem solving. As those initiatives toned down with the ascent of a left-wing government in the country, the local assembly was unified with two other assemblies from neighbouring Municipalities and is functioning informally until today. In the assemblies local matters are brought into discussion and actions to deal with those matters are decided through unconcealed vote.

Another initiative which stemmed from the local assembly was that of the Social Cultural Centre. In order to prevent the privatization of a public park in the neighbourhood, a part of the assembly decided to move to an occupation of the park in 2011. The occupation is still active today and the Centre provides to all who are interested a plentiful program from literature readings to dance lessons and political discussions which is updated weekly.

Two more groups are active in this neighbourhood with more specific orientations which were initiated by volunteers in 2012. Those are the Solidarity Network and the Social Pharmacy. The Solidarity Network is focused on covering basic needs of citizens who are facing difficulties due to the economic crisis, such as food and clothing. The main body of
volunteers running the Network belong to those citizens who receive help from it, but there is also a network of volunteering professionals who also help, such as bakers who provide bread daily for the Network. The Social Pharmacy, as indicated by its name, is focused on providing medical care and medication to citizens who cannot afford it. The Pharmacy is run by volunteers including doctors and pharmacists.

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the presence of all those citizen groups acting voluntarily to help the local community indicate that there is an effort to participate, even if it is in different ways with different aims and means. There are several more groups active in other neighbourhoods of the Municipality.

The Municipality itself has also opened up to citizens in the last year by introducing the opportunity for citizens to have a face to face meeting with the Mayor. These meetings take place around a simple small table and the Mayor takes notes of what citizens come to converse about. Though the availability of this meetings is limited to one afternoon once a week, it has been an indicator of the direction the Municipality wishes to take towards citizen participation.

2.3 Participation and ICTs

Both the groups and the Municipality took the opportunity of employing ICTs in their citizen participation initiatives. All of the groups active in the neighbourhood have their own web pages, some of which are rather elaborate such as the Social Cultural Centre’s which features a live calendar constantly updated with the new activities and meetings taking place.

Social media are also widely used though not with the same eagerness by everyone. Those include mainly Facebook and Twitter, but also Google+, Youtube and Instagram. The most active social media user from those mentioned above is the Municipality itself, which is also the most recent. None the less, even by being the most active user of social media, there are still few followers of the Municipality, perhaps due to the activity being yet new. The main content presented in social media by the groups and the Municipality are local news, events and photographic material from them, and urgent requests for the collection of food or clothing. Such calls for basic needs through social media have not only been made by groups for local citizens but also from the Municipality to support the needs of Syrian refugees, a large number of which are currently situated in the country.

Finally, another means of ICTs used are e-mail newsletters or informative e-mails. The groups are in this case more active than the Municipality. The Social Cultural Centre is again the most active in this case, sending e-mails to its subscribers almost daily including news, corrections or changes to the activities’ schedule, or even just statements concerning political happenings.

One of the unique initiatives concerning the use of ICTs by the Municipality is a suggestion form featured in the Municipality’s webpage where citizens are free to submit their ideas grouped by subject so they can be addressed to the proper service.
Chapter 3: Literature Review

In this chapter I will present how ICTs and citizen participation came to be associated and what values in the IS field led to this association. I will then present some arguments for and against the use of ICT in citizen participation coming from different scholars and researchers. I will provide some examples of projects from around the world which have used ICTs to promote citizen participation in different ways and with different purposes, some of which also include Participatory Design practices which will be later elaborated in Chapter 4. Finally, I will give some examples coming from the Greek context.

Looking back at the history of the IS field, Dalhbom (1996) writes about the four stages of computer technology use. These stages were distinguished according to the nature and use of computers. In the first stage around the 1940’s, computing machines are an automatic version of calculating machines an example of which is the famous ENIAC. These calculating machines were designed mainly to facilitate military processes, and secondly insurance companies and banks. Then, in the 1960’s computers started to be used as data handling information systems since they had the ability to handle large amount of data. The aim of those systems was to eventually automate administrative work.

In the 1980’s the Personal Computer (PC) makes its appearance and the time of personal computing begins, also giving spark to the field of human-computer interaction since the computer interface was now significant. The final stage started in the end of the same decade, with the creations of the first networks in an attempt to share information among computers. With the rise of the internet the use of information and communication technologies became extremely popular, and computer technology was now much more than a means for quick and complex calculations. Adding to its use in military and business, it was also a means of communication, entertainment, education, news, marketing and more (Dahlbom, 1996, p.33).

In this history of the IS field, the concept of citizen participation has not been a prominent concept, neither as a feature nor as a purpose. So how did ICTs come to be associated with citizen participation?

3.1 ICTs and Citizen Participation

For Dahlbom back in 1996, the IS field is seen as a discipline that is concerned with the development of information technology “with the ambition to put that technology to good use, acting both on the technology and on the organization of its use” (p.45). We can relate this concept of Dahlbom’s “good use” to Walsham’s concept of making a “better world” through the use of ICTs mentioned in Chapter 1.

Walsham argues that the IS field has dramatically changed due to the pervasive nature of ICTs in all aspects of people’s everyday life. So technology has now become ubiquitous through ICTs not only in the professional life, but in the personal too (Walsham, 2012, p.2). Commenting on his own experience while teaching IS classes 1990’s and forth, Walsham writes that at the time the popular subjects concerning the field were business strategies and implementations issues (2012, p.2), while now, having moved to what Dalhbom would call the fourth stage, ICTs are brought to the spotlight as they are brought into all aspects of human life.
Bradley also speaks of this ubiquity of technology and especially ICTs. Having previous studies in psychology and 40 years of experience on research about the way technology affects social life, she developed her Convergence Theory, which shows how different environments of people’s lives – home, work, public life – are now converging together in one virtual environment (Bradley, 2010, p. 184).

Coming one step closer now to citizen participation, both Bradley and Walsham have explored the ways in which ICTs and democracy are connected. According to Bradley the individual within a democracy is not only a subject to the official structures but can influence and form her/his own role (2010, p. 185). One way to do that, is through the use of ICTs. With the pervasion of ICTs in the different environments of everyday life, democratic dialogue can now take place through a computer at home, or through mobile phone in the streets. This gives a new perspective for democratic practices and how citizen participation can be possible.

Walsham (2012) also gives an example about the use of ICTs and democracy in his fore mentioned article. He talks about the “Arab Spring”, a revolution against an authoritarian regime, where social media was used as a communication and organization means for protesters (Walsham, 2012, p. 2).

In her previous work, Bradley (2001) writes that this deepening and broadening of democracy is one of the goals that ICTs should contribute to. Now, 15 years later, there has been a lot of discourse for the relationship between ICTs and citizen participation as we will see next.

3.2 What do ICTs offer to Citizen Participation?

The use of technology and ICTs in citizen participation has both its supporters and adversaries. Though democratization seems to be a prominent goal of employing ICTs in citizen participation as Walsham and Bradley write, some say that there is another side to it.

Having a background both in political economy and IS, and research on ICTs, democracy and citizen participation, Svensson (2011) comments on this other side. According to him, ICTs can easily be used to guide the public and sustain the existing power relations (Svensson, 2011, p. 279) contrary to the democratization value mentioned earlier.

Jasanoff, a prominent figure in Science and Technology Studies and how science and technology are used in modern democracies, has also identified some issues concerning citizen participation through the use of ICTs. According to her, trying to include citizens and allow them to participate through formal established forms may face some obstacles. For instance, citizens may lack in specialized knowledge and material resources when it comes to using formal procedures, and the fact that they can participate in a decision making process does not guarantee that either the process or the decision itself will indeed improve (Jasanoff, 2003, p.237).

On the other hand the opportunities opening up for citizen participation through ICTs cannot be overlooked. In 2012 the *Journal of Information Systems Management* published a special issue for European Research on Electronic Citizen Participation and Engagement in Public Policy Making. The editors of this special issue, Loukis, Charalabidis and Millard, write what they have identified as benefits that citizen participation can gain from ICTs. According to them, citizen participation can provide better quality of public policies, better government

They also identify some of the uses of ICTs in citizen participation. ICTs can improve the dissemination of information towards the public concerning ongoing policies, improve the consultation between government and citizens, and finally enhance public participation in decision making, regardless of whether the initiative was top-down from the government or ground-up from the public (Loukis, Charalabidis and Millard, 2012, p.255).

While conducting a review of ICT resources for citizens in USA, Kumar and Vragov (2009) identified three categories of ICTs used in participation similar to what Loukis, Charalabidis and Millard wrote. The categories were set according to their use: communication, deliberation, voting (Kumar and Vragov, 2009, p.118). The first category of communication is a one way flow of information from the government towards the public clearly for informative purposes. The second category, deliberation, is a two way communication model where citizens are provided with some sort of platform that allows them to discuss on public matters. Finally, the voting category refers to the ability of participating in decision-making.

Their findings showed that there were a lot of communication services available, less deliberation, and close to none voting services (Kumar and Vragov, 2009, p.119). So even though ICTs are employed in many ways they are not yet being used to their fullest and there seems to be a gap between the possibilities for interaction between government and citizens, and the actual available tools.

### 3.3 Examples of ICT Use for Citizen Participation

The literature review shows that ICTs are used, albeit differently, across the world. The context, participants, level or means of participation, motivation, purpose and results vary from project to project. I chose the following examples exactly to indicate this plethora of possibilities in citizen participation.

Walsham mentions that ICTs are also used in developing regions. To quote his words: “even the poor of the world have started to engage with ICTs” (Walsham, 2012, p.2). So citizen participation does not only appear as a possibility in the developed world. One such example comes from the Pathways for Progress report of the World Economic Forum (2015). It has to do with a simple yet innovative design by Open Mind, the Question Box, which is employed throughout India and Africa and constantly gaining popularity.

True to its name, the Question Box is just that, a box for asking questions. To be precise, the design consists of a box located somewhere within the neighbourhood, which provides free calls to a network of community call boxes and is either directed to a central destination or distributed to several public services. According to the developers, the Question Box provided a way for “data invisible individuals” of the community to participate in the community. By “data invisible individuals” the authors mean those who are often not accounted for through formal structures such as “women, the elderly, children, migrants, indigenous populations and slum dwellers” (WEF, 2015, p.11). By allowing a two way communication channel, the Question Box also promotes reciprocity between citizens and formal structures.
This kind of reciprocity takes another form in the following example from Pakistan, where the initiative of a single government official to defeat corruption in civil services in the Punjab province, developed into a district-wide system of citizen feedback.

Masud (2015) provides a detailed account of the birth of the Citizen Feedback Monitoring Program (CFMP). Everything started with Zubair Bhatti, a government official who realized the large extent of corruption in civil services. Bhatti decided to take it upon himself to personally contact by phone citizens who had used the services in order to gather information on their experience. Through this direct contact with citizens, Bhatti realized that people had a lot to say concerning how the public services were being run. At the same time he also realized through the reactions he received that this personal initiative he took made citizens feel that government officials were trying their best to be honest and seek to help them (Masud, 2015, p.2). Thus, he decided to expand his initiative into an official mechanism.

The initiative had to face many challenges but with the presence of staff with technological expertise it managed to turn into a mechanism using automated text messaging to receive feedback from citizens.

Perception of the CFMP from the public was very positive and by 2014 it covered all 36 districts in Punjab province and served more than 100 million citizens (Masud, 2015, p.14). Born from a strong personal initiative the CFMP proved to be revolutionary by having the province actively seek out the opinion of citizens. On the other hand citizens received importance as customers of public services and were provided with a means of stating their opinions where it matters (Masud, 2015, p. 15).

Those two examples show how citizen participation initiatives take form in developing regions, in what context they work and with what kind of social challenges they are faced with. So what kind of examples can we find in Europe and USA? The following example is within the same theme as the above two, the communication between citizens and formal structures, but in a different context this time.

Examples from Europe and USA

In Denmark, Borchorst, Bødker and Zander (2009) conducted a project to see how web 2.0 technologies could be used to help the communication between citizens and municipality in the cases of parental leave. The purpose was to improve the communication to and from the municipality which provides the permission for parental leave. However, the process of acquiring a parental leave is often so time consuming and tiring due to bad communication of citizens with the municipality that many settle for an alternative but less satisfying option.

The project was based on the action research methodology and made use of participatory design related methods including a series of prototyping workshops. The participants of the workshops included employees of the municipality, mothers, caseworkers and members of other municipalities. The result of this exploration of possible uses of technology that can allow communication with the municipality straight from one’s own home, was a collaborative visualized timeline with information on parental leave that can be accessed both by municipal employees and citizens.

According to Borchorst, Bødker and Zander (2009), such collaborative tools blur the role of employees and citizens since they share now access to information concerning each case, but
also share the actions that are needed for the tool to work properly. Also the Municipality is burdened with the accurate validation of the information it shares since it is directly fed to citizens. Great responsibility also falls on the part of the citizens since they have to become familiar and able in using new technologies and acquire knowledge on the relevant legislations.

But reliable communication between citizens and formal structures is not the only theme that citizen participation is concerned with. The next example comes from the theme of urban planning and the use of public participation geographic information technologies (PGGIS) (Garau, 2012, p.593). Geographic information technologies (GIS) are a broad category of tools that allow storing and representation of information, and even interaction and communication based on geographical data, usually in the form of a digital map.

Garau (2012) writes about the Detailed Plan project that was conducted in the Cagliari Municipality in Italy from 2008 to 2009. Its aim was to include citizens in the urban planning of the historical centre of Cagliari. By recognizing the knowledge of the citizens about the city since they live and experience it every day, the research team sought to include them in a new participative decision-making process. According to the author, one of the reasons to adopt participatory approaches, was to make sure that all issues between citizens and administration would be resolved during the design process as they would have the chance to come to dialogue with one another. That way the implementation of the decisions would be quicker.

The participants of the Detailed Plan project were not selected at random, but were given a preliminary questionnaire to determine their knowledge of the territory and their needs in it. The reason was to find participants who were involved in some way with the territory of the historical centre. After setting up a WebGIS platform with a map representation of the territory, both citizens and technicians could insert information on parts of the territory and discuss upcoming proposals concerning the urban planning. Tools such as forums, blogs, newsgroups and discussion lists were also available to citizens allowing them to work together with technicians.

Assessing the project afterwards, the research team found out that only few of the participants collaborated with the technicians in design and ICT tools were not very popular among participants who favoured face-to-face communication with designers and technicians. This kind of direct communication allowed the participants who were unfamiliar with technologies to express their minds. None the less it seemed that even though participants did not all favour the ICT tools, they all did agree that it is necessary for citizens to work alongside public administration, not only in decision making, but also in planning and designing.

This concept of co-designing is considered a core value of Participatory Design. Manzini and Rizzo (2011) write about how co-design in small Participatory Design projects involving citizens can lead to large changes. They describe five projects that were part of the European lifelong learning programme PERL, which explored the role of innovative design in everyday life.

The projects came from UK, Italy, China, USA and Sweden. These were large scale projects that had three characteristics in common: they aimed at sustainable changes on an urban scale, they wanted to achieve their goals through activating citizen participation and they had been in some way led by design initiatives (Manzini and Rizzo, 2011, p.203). The contexts of
the projects varied from environmental sustainability and agriculture to the co-production and amplification of social innovation. But despite their different context all projects were the result of small-scale projects which were coordinated with one another.

In the UK project Design of the Time (Dott07), a series of community projects were organized to bring awareness on different levels of society and promote innovation concerning the environment and economy of local community (Manzini and Rizzo, 2011, p.203). In the project ICTs were present through the use of tools and collaborative platforms. For instance, the creation of a shared-transport dashboard which allowed the visualization of proposals for transportation, or the creation of video narratives for a time bank for citizens of the community with dementia.

In the Italian project called Feeding Milan, the gap between demand and availability of high-quality fresh food was addressed, as well as the relationship between the city and the countryside where production takes place. The aim was to find a scenario for a sustainable agricultural model. Different tools were used to assist participants express their ideas and create their scenarios such as mock-ups, videos and storyboards (Manzini and Rizzo, 2011, p.205). Finally, a digital platform was created to support the communication and connections of different stakeholders involved in the agricultural model, but also to allow broader participation of potential stakeholders.

The Chinese project, Chongming Sustainable Community, dealt with the mutual advantages that could be gained for the rural Chongming and urban Shanghai through collaborated initiatives. Through local workshops, a variety of participants including urban planners, architects, interior designers and local stakeholders were brought together to create possible scenarios of collaborations (Manzini and Rizzo, 2011, p.206). Through the project, several technologies were explored such as the use of mobile phones to support agricultural services, virtual collaborations for the reuse of untended spaces, and a product service system to monitor the food chain of the area.

The USA project, Amplify, sought to experiment with how communities can recognize, envision and diffuse social innovations in their local environment, through some “amplification method” (Manzini and Rizzo, 2011, p.207). The project was based in the idea that social innovation stems from small self-organized groups trying to improve their everyday lives. Designers set up an interactive exhibition which was to act as a communication tool for designers to present their ideas and for the public to provide their feedback. Designers also created digital toolkits, downloadable from the project’s webpage, to encourage collaborative services.

Finally, in the Swedish project, the Malmö Living Labs, three labs were set up in the city of Malmö to provide a place for co-production and social innovation (Manzini and Rizzo, 2011, p.209). Each lab conducted its own independent projects according to the community of people that lived in its area. ICTs were used in diverse context in this project. In one case, social media were used to keep contact and provide further services to orphaned immigrant children who had passed from Sweden and received care there for a short time. In another case, Bluetooth was used to transfer media files through mobile phones for the Voice and Face of the Street Movement, a youth grassroots movement. So each lab had its own small-scale projects which were guided by the concept of how new technologies can activate and involve citizens in the community life and in designing for public spaces. Ehn, Nilsson and Topgaard (2014) also write about this initiative in Malmö, and how this also posed a new
approach to development based not on economic growth, but on social investment. This is achieved by promoting more democratic forms of innovation and governance through citizen participation (Ehn, Nilsson and Topgaard, 2014, p.1).

Through these small-scale projects that are part of a larger framework, changes start to occur concerning the meaning and the ways of participation as well as the role of the participants and designers. It is important that people are actively collaborating and find solutions to their concerns in these projects due to the fact that they have a strong personal interest in participation since it affects their everyday lives (Manzini and Rizzo, 2011, p.210).

The examples presented by now show a commitment to involve citizens in participation and strengthen democratic practices and empower citizens themselves. But what about the other side of ICTs and citizen participation mentioned earlier?

Tewksbury (2012) writes about the Texas Virtual BorderWatch, a very different example of citizen participation with the use of ICTs. Tewksbury explains in this article about how the atmosphere of anxiety and terror after the 11/9 attack in USA has become the grounds for citizen participation initiatives, not so much for protecting citizens’ rights, but for defending their country. According to the author, rather than being an act of patriotism, these initiatives are guided by specific politics that aim at retaining the power relations between government and citizens.

One of those initiatives was the Texas Virtual BorderWatch, which was one of the main points of Governor Rick Perry’s re-election campaign back in 2006. The Texas Virtual BorderWatch was comprised by a 200 cameras network in the Mexico border, the footage of which is streamed live into the homes of citizen within but also outside the USA. The purpose of the project was for citizens to actively patrol the borders for any suspicious movements of immigrants.

The cameras network not only spans the Mexico border but also includes private properties of citizens which are placed along migratory routes (Tewksbury, 2012, p. 254). This is something that was done with the citizens’ consent. The initiative itself proved to be very popular at first among citizens and already had 221,562 users registered on its first trial run. But after a number of administration changes and sever stop and go phases, its popularity dropped. It’s noteworthy that there are no special criteria for citizens to participate in this Virtual BorderWatch. Just by registering on the website one can become a “Virtual Texas Deputy” (Tewksbury, 2012, p.256).

Even though according to assessment data the project consistently did not meet its expectations, it continued to be funded with a respectable amount by the government. This is proof according to the author that there is more to the Texas Virtual BorderWatch than looking for illegal immigrants. It is a way for a culture of terror and threat to infiltrate the house of Americans, a place normally linked with safety and security (Tewksbury, 2012, p.260). Though no record of terrorist threats coming from the border of Mexico exist, the border is presented as a constant source of threat and citizens are invited through the use of ICT to become involved in the security of the country.
3.4 The Greek Context

There are scarce examples of works concerning the connection of ICTs and citizen participation in the Greek academic literature, even though such initiatives are not lacking in the Greek environment.

In her thesis about electronic participation (e-participation) of citizens, Δρακοπούλου [Drakopoulou] (2009), conducted a case study involving several participation initiatives from around the world. The purpose of the research was to identify how e-participation through ICTs can empower citizens.

With the use of data from international organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Committee several citizen participation initiatives around the world are evaluated. Among those examples the Greek context is also explored.

By conducting an observation of webpages of Greek Ministries and General Secretariats, Δρακοπούλου [Drakopoulou] (2009) came to the conclusion that participation with the use of ICTs in Greece is still in a primary level and the few tools of participation available were mainly for commenting and nothing more.

The case study showed that one of the main issues with e-participation is the lack of a unified policy for planning, implementation and evaluation. Specifically for the Greek context, though there seems to be a turn towards citizen participation initiatives, the latter are mainly concerned with the dissemination of information towards citizens. This one-way communication from the government towards the citizens does not motivate active engagement.

Another example from the Greek context comes from the Greek Parliament. Loukis (2011) has followed a pilot project of using ICTs in the Greek Parliament. Though the Greek Parliament has a website, it does not host any means for citizens to participate and discuss on current issues.

With the occasion of the “Contracts of Voluntary Cohabitation” bill which was under formation at the time, an e-forum tool was used to provide space for a pilot electronic consultation. The participants were 79 citizens, ages 18 to 35, coming from the university and parliament environment.

The forum made use of visualizations to facilitate participants in stating the purpose of their visit, for instance to present an issue, an alternative, to make general comments, to comment in favour or to present a con-argument for the bill. Additionally, the participants were electronically provided with the justification report of the bill, the content of the bill and minutes of the discussion of the bill in the relevant parliamentary committee.

To assess the pilot project, questionnaires were used to gather information from the participants concerning their demographic characteristics and their interest on the subject of the bill, but also their experience with using the e-forum. Later, focus groups were used to come into direct contact with the participants and collect their comments for the e-forum.
Though several technical problems were identified, all participants in the focus group agreed that such a tool would be very useful in collecting opinions on a bill from several representatives and stakeholders (Loukis, 2011, p. 27). Loukis himself also identified some concerns such as the lack of experience and knowledge of citizens that may affect their judgment of a bill. Another concern was that of anonymity, which was adopted in this project, which could give grounds to malicious intents and promotion of specific agendas (Loukis, 2011, p. 28).

3.5 Conclusion

To sum up, the relation of ICTs and citizen participation has come forth from a stance towards democratization in the IS field and a commitment for giving the means to citizens to participate in the design and decision-making that affects their lives.

There are several benefits to be gained from the use of ICTs in citizen participation, both for citizens and for the government. By taking into account the knowledge and experience of citizens, the government can make better policies and decision, while on the other hand citizens become active and have a way to express their opinions and contribute. However, ICTs can also become a means for guiding the public opinion and sustaining existing power relationships so care needs to be taken about the implementation of any ICT tools.

Citizen participation is expressed in many ways as seen in the examples. Initiatives can stem from individuals, groups, educational or international organizations and the government. Citizen participation forms can also appear in relation to the state or in relation to other citizens. This plethora of possibilities is proof for the need to further research the relation of ICTs and citizen participation.

In the Greek context little information is available. None the less, similar to findings from the rest of the world, available ICT tools are mainly concerned with information dissemination and commenting. Participation in decision-making and in design for participation itself is still to be explored.
Chapter 4: Research Strategy

4.1 Paradigm

A paradigm points out what is important in research, what should be explored about it and in what way. According to Kuhn (1996), the scientific paradigm has two functions. First it provides a scientific context for research through scientific concepts and theories, and second, it states a commitment concerning what types of instrumentation is to be used and in what ways (Kuhn, 1996, p.40). These are guiding lines for the researcher for all sorts of decisions, from the selection of the subject to the selections of methodology and methods and the way they will be used.

There have been three paradigms used in the Informatics field: the positivist, the interpretivist and the critical. This research is situated within the critical paradigm. Since critical research is relatively new to the IS field compared to the other two paradigms of thought, it still does not possess a clear guide neither on its definite characteristics nor in its conduct in the field. None the less several researchers have proposed, through reviewing critical research literature and its theoretical background, sorts of guidelines.

Walsham (2005) writes about the critical paradigm and why researchers are adopting it. There are tremendous asymmetries in the world concerning wealth, power and access to resource, especially concerning groups of unprivileged people. Walsham argues that the IS field, and specifically ICTs which are one of its main focuses, are closely related to those asymmetries since they have entered every aspect of human life thus also affecting how societies are built. However, the purpose of the critical paradigm is not only to identify those asymmetries, but also initiate “positive change” by challenging the status quo (Walsham, 2005, p.226-227).

Since citizen participation is a subject closely related to democratization and questions the level of the political power of citizens, the critical paradigm is fit to both explore how citizen participation is manifested in the Municipality in question, and to suggest changes that will alter the relationships between citizens and Municipality towards a more democratic state.

Among the researchers who have tried to propose guidelines for critical research, Alvesson and Deetz, have identified that there are three elements, as they define them, which are all present in a critical study, and those are: insight, critique and transformation (Alvesson and Deetz cited in Myers and Klein, 2011, p.23). Those elements represent different aspects of the critical research.

The first element, insight, has a descriptive and interpretive character and aims at acquiring knowledge about the situation being researched. This knowledge aims at providing not only a description of the issue and context, but also a deeper insight that hints to the current status quo and to the power relations that exist.

The second element, element of critique, aims, as Myers and Klein put it, in revealing the “normative basis of the current situation found in the research site and the forms of legitimation and justify the current social order” (2011, p.23). Those two elements are intertwined, since insight often contains traces of critique and critique often draws on information from insight.
The third element of transformation, indispensable in critical research, is concerned with using what was gained in the elements of insight and critique in order to provide opportunities for changes in the current situation. In this element alternatives to the current situation and power relations are sought to instigate change.

Those three elements will be incorporated in this research to ensure that whatever changes are proposed will be based on substantial knowledge of the context and people who are affected. In order to acquire insight and critique in the context of this research there needs to be a direct engagement with citizens. This will be achieved through the Ethnographic methodology and the Participatory Design approach.

4.2 Methodology
Methodology is essential in planning a research since it holds the guiding principles that determine which methods will be used, in what way and with what purpose in data collection. Methodology selection can determine for instance whether the type of data sought will be qualitative or quantitative, or what the structure and aim of an interview will be.

It is the ethnographic methodology that was selected for the purposes of this research. The word ethnography is built on the Greek word ‘ethnos’ which means a group of people who are bound together by some common characteristic such as culture, language, religion, and thus have a sense of common identity. So ethnography is the systematic study of such a group of people; in this case the citizens of the selected neighbourhood of the Municipality who are bound together by a characteristic of locality, which in its turn generates other additional common characteristics due to the similarities of the everyday life that is shared. For instance, a similar financial status, similar problematic situations faced, similar opportunities for participation in the community and so on.

One of the main aspirations of ethnographic research is the understanding from the part of the researcher of the so called “native life” (Randall, Harper and Rouncefield, 1994, p.169), meaning the everyday context within which the research is conducted. The so called “natives” are the ethnographic group being researched.

One reason for selecting the ethnographic methodology was the need, according to the critical paradigm, to attain insight and critique through exploring the native life of participants. Ethnography is ideal for this since it is “a qualitative orientation to research that emphasises the detailed observation of people in naturally occurring settings” (Randall, Harper and Rouncefield 2007, p.169). That means that as a methodology it will support the need to come to direct contact with citizens and examine first-hand their views and their relationship with citizen participation and ICTs.

This direct contact with the participants and the immersion of the researcher in the research setting will also provide a new perspective for the Greek domestic research, which is still, as mentioned in previous chapters, mainly based on a theoretical level using secondary data.

4.3 Participatory Design
Participatory Design (PD) is a design approach which aims at the democratization of science and technology and the exploration of alternative future uses of technology through the participation of end-users, however they may be defined according to the design context.
The Participatory Design (PD) approach has its roots in the concept of giving a voice to workers concerning the use of technology in their workplace. Having established its worth in the work environment through decades of projects, PD was adopted in other environments such as educational and cultural organizations, the public sector, and the community.

Participatory Design is as much a design approach as it is a political stance since it is strongly based on its principles and values. Those principles and values are not fixed but rather evolve and emerge as PD is adopted in different contexts by different researchers. Those principles and values have also been used to establish a link between PD and the ethnographic methodology as will be shown later in this chapter.

Emergence of PD

The introduction of new technologies in the workplace in the early 1970’s in Scandinavia set in motion several movements which advocated the right of workers to be part in the development and design processes of ICTs in their working environment. These movements were given rise to address issues such as the de-skilling of workers through automation of their tasks, decrease in wages due to the de-skilling and the lack of proper information concerning the technologies employed in the workplace (Kensing and Greenbaum, 2012, p.24).

Through their historical retrospect on Participatory Design, Kensing and Greenbaum have identified three working principles and practices that have inspired PD projects: political economy, democracy, and feminism (Kensing and Greenbaum, 2012, p.31).

For instance, in the workplace political economy can be seen as addressing the power relationships between workers and employers. Taking away the skills and knowledge of workers for the sake of mass production can provide the means to control workers and exercise power over them (Kensing and Greenbaum, 2012, p.32).

Democratization in the workplace was also a concept that played a great role inspired by John Dewey’s concept of active engagement both in the creation but also the preservation of democratic practices (Kensing and Greenbaum, 2012, p.32). Democratization in the participatory design approach does not only mean eliminating inequalities in power relationships. It also concerns providing the means for equal rights to information since education and engagement of people who are acting on their own interest and that of the common good, is a democratic requirement (Kensing and Greenbaum, 2012, p.32).

Another theoretical approach that influenced participatory design was that of Feminism and of the concept of typically neglected voices being heard (Kensing and Greenbaum, 2012, p.32). In the 1980’s the Florence project dealt with how the computer systems designed to support nurses, never consulted and took into account the personal experience and knowledge of the nurses themselves thus ending up causing hindrance rather than support. This was a typical example of why participation of employees in the plans of technology implementation is necessary and how important their experience is in design.

These working principles and practices that Kensing and Greenbaum write about are still relevant in PD today and have defined its principles and values as is presented next.
Principles and Values in Participatory Design

Having as a basis their historical retrospect and theoretical background that inspired PD, Kensing and Greenbaum have identified the following principles (2012 p.33):

1. Equalising power relations: so everyone can have a saying irrespective of their power and influence.
2. Democratic practices: not only in the sense of equality among stakeholders, but also in the sense of access to necessary information.
3. Situation-based actions: direct engagement with people to see how technologies are employed in their actual setting.
4. Mutual learning: participants and experts exchange knowledge to enrich one another’s understandings.
5. Tools and techniques: to actively engage different actors and help them express their needs and visions.
6. Alternative visions about technology: the result of the engagement of different actors through participatory tools and techniques to achieve expressions of equality and democratic practices concerning the use of technology.

The commitment of PD in these principles and its connection to politics and ethics which are both led by values, as well as its ethical motivation, has made PD also a value-centred design approach (van der Velden and Mörtberg, 2015, p.7). Through this, Participatory Design has broadened its field from the democratization of the workplace to the concept of “shaping a better future” (van der Velden and Mörtberg, 2015, p.8), something that relates it to Walsham’s idea of the IS field creating a better world through ICTs.

This broadening outside the workplace is evident in the PD literature. From the literature review in Chapter 3 we can see how Participatory Design has been used to facilitate interactions for parental leave cases between parents and the municipality in charge in the example from Denmark. Also how PD is used to support urban planning projects such as the Detailed Plan in Italy by enabling citizen participation. The examples mentioned by Manzini and Rizzo also provide a diverse set of participatory projects in different contexts.

Another recent example of PD is that of “Threads - A Mobile Sewing Circle” by Lindström and Ståhl (2014). Whereas PD used to be concerned with how technology is employed in the workplace, Lindström and Ståhl now look at how technology is present in community life. In their project they explore ways of living with technologies in everyday life through participation of people from local communities in a sewing circle where SMS messages are embroidered in different media. This also gives a fresh view in the idea of citizenship that is not only bound to decision-making and is not only seen in a relationship between citizens and the state, but also between citizens themselves.

Other research from participatory design has also been focusing on the aspect of democratization. Binder, et al. (2015, p.152) has been exploring how participatory design can move from “democracy at work to broader democratic matters of citizenship and democratic engagement”, thus broadening its context. Examples like that show that participatory design is not a fixed approach but rather evolves together with how, when and where it is employed. The same goes for its values that may change according to its context of even emerge from it.
Participatory Design - Ethnography - Critical Paradigm

Blomberg and Karasti (2012) write about the connections that can be found between the ethnographic methodology and the Participatory Design approach.

As mentioned earlier ethnography aims at acquiring a deep understanding of the ‘native life’ of the group it is exploring. However, it is not necessarily concerned about contributing to change. On the other hand, PD aims at the active engagement of participants in imagining alternative futures, thus making change.

By juxtaposing both ethnography’s and PD’s principles and values, Blomberg and Karasti show how the two can be connected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnography</th>
<th>Participatory Design</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every day settings</td>
<td>Respect for different knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic view</td>
<td>Opportunities for mutual learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive understanding</td>
<td>Joint negotiation of project goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member’s point of view</td>
<td>Tools and processes to facilitate design</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Blomberg and Karasti, 2012, p.88)

As mentioned earlier, ethnography looks at the native life of people that is their everyday settings. This is connected to PD’s principle of situation-based action which is concerned with the direct engagement with participants and their context. This in turn is related both to PD’s respect for the participants’ knowledge which is used in co-designing, and also to creating opportunities for mutual learning which takes place in the research context.

The holistic view of ethnography which indicates that activities must be seen and understood within their context, acts, according to Blomberg and Karasti, as a reminder to PD practitioners that even if the design space is limited, the design outcome may differ according to its context later on (2012, p.90). On the other hand, PD can act as a booster to ethnography’s descriptive nature of the present situation, and through PD’s tools and techniques move to imagining an alternative ‘to be’ state. These interactions also provide a chance for negotiating what needs to be taken into account in design.

These concepts can also be traced in the critical paradigm through the three elements mentioned earlier in this chapter. The descriptive nature of ethnography and its commitment to acquiring a deep understanding of the context of the research, are connected to the first element of the critical paradigm, the insight. Also, in addition with PD’s commitment to mutual learning and the respect for participant’s knowledge, the second element of critique is also fuelled. Finally, PD can provide the means for the third element of transformation that aims at change. The concept of imagining alternative futures stemming from PD can also be related to the critical paradigm’s commitment for positive change.

4.4 Methods

The methods of the research were selected based on the combination of the critical paradigm, ethnographic methodology and PD approach. These are: interviews, probes and participatory observation. I will first present how people were invited to the research methods, the participants, and then explain in detail the methods and the data collection.
Invitations

Invitation should be considered as an integral part of research since it “frames the problem, how to engage with it, and who is to participate” (Lindström and Ståhl, 2016, p.5). That is not to say of course that there needs to be a strictly defined problem introduced in the invitation since this could end up leading participants in a specific direction and losing valuable information later on in the research. As Lindström and Ståhl say, rather than pointing to a specific problem, an invitation can spark interest in an “area of curiosity” (Lindström and Ståhl, 2016, p.5).

For this research, the term “citizen participation” was avoided as an expression in the invitation and was rephrased as “ways we become part of the community”. Direct mention to ICTs was also avoided in the invitation and the questions “how do you get informed” and “how do you communicate” were used to direct attention towards the means of getting informed and communicating.

Invitations were to be made to three categories of participants present in the Municipality: citizens, representatives of the Municipality, representatives of the active groups. After exploring different ideas about how to invite participants in the research, a flyer handout was created (see Appendix A1-2) to invite the citizens of the neighbourhood.

The appeal of the flyer consisted of a coloured background coming from the coloured paper on which the invitation was printed on and simplistic sketches drawn by the researcher to provide small depictions for each piece of information mentioned in the invitation. The design of the invitation was overall simplistic.

Five distinct boxes of information concerning different aspects of the research were included in the flyer. The first two boxes, under the heading “invitation”, provided general information on what the research is about, who is the researcher and her motivation and why would someone participate. The two boxes below, under the heading “what will you do?” included information on the two methods, on which the recipients of the invitation were asked to participate in. Finally, in the bottom, below the heading “how can you get in touch”, the last box included the contact information of the researcher: name, telephone number and e-mail. In order to ensure the safety and privacy of the researcher, a new mobile telephone number and e-mail address were created for the purposes of the research.

The invitations were handed out personally to citizens in the streets of the neighbourhood. An introduction to the research was also made by the researcher when handing out the invitation in order to give a chance to the recipients to get to know the researcher and ask for any extra information needed. This was also a means to ensure that recipients would not discard the flyer without glancing at it. This personal contact seemed to be favourable since instead of using the contact information written down in the interview, most recipients who wished to participate mainly gave responses such as: “Why don’t you come back here the day after tomorrow, in the morning, so that we can talk about it”.

The invitation was generally well received and most recipients showed interest even if not wishing to participate in the end.

Apart from the invitation flyer which was given to citizens of the neighbourhood, an invitation was made in the form of e-mail to the Municipality’s Head of Communication. The
main reason for contacting the Municipality through e-mail, was to see first-hand how the Municipality responded to the use of an ICT, since e-mail contact information was posted in its Facebook page. The response was indeed very quick and I was again and again informed that I could contact the Head of Communication through any means I desired, including e-mail, personal message on Facebook, mobile telephone or the Municipality telephone of the corresponding office.

The invitation to the active groups of the neighbourhood was more impromptu than that of citizens and Municipality. To be accurate, the invitations just “happened”. The plan was to invite group members by going to the space of the group and talking to them face to face. Indeed, my first visit to the Solidarity Network coincided with their weekly assembly, so the invitation took the form of me coming in and talking about myself and my research to all present volunteers.

Participants

The idea of inviting those three categories of participants in the research – citizens, Municipality, groups – was to acquire a more holistic understanding of the perspective of citizen participation and the use of ICTs in the neighbourhood.

There were no criteria set for the selection of citizens other than them being residents of the neighbourhood. Characteristics such as age, gender, education or occupation were not set as criteria in order to acquire a randomly selected group of citizens. The same applied for representatives of the groups whose only criterion for participation was that of being an active member of a group. As for the representative of the Municipality, the Head of Communication was contacted being that he is the one responsible for the planning and use of the Municipality’s social media.

Overall, the research had ten participants. The Head of Communication of the Municipality, a member of the Solidarity Network, a member of the Social Cultural Centre, and seven citizens of the neighbourhood. In order to facilitate the reading of the thesis, the seven citizens will be nicknamed by the seven colours of the rainbow: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet, with no specific correlation to the colour and their characteristics. The Head of the Communication and the two members of the groups will be mentioned as such.

In the next part of the chapter, the methods and the participants who took part, as well as the data collected are presented.

Interviews:

Interviewing is a means to get to know the participants and their presence in the research setting through their own perception. According to Crang and Cook (2007, p.60): “along with participant observation, interviewing has been a primary means through which ethnographic researchers have attempted to get to grips with the contexts and contents of different people’s everyday social, cultural, political and economic lives”.

The interviews in this research were semi-structured in order to allow the discussion of emerging themes connected to the main topic. Several reasons necessitate the use of different questionnaire arranged beforehand (see appendices C1-3) for each of the selected types of participants. First of all, each kind of participant has a different role within the local
community and a different relationship with the Municipality. Also solidarity group members for instance are more familiar with the concept of citizen participation and already have experience on acting upon that concept. There were also different kinds of data to be collected from the different kinds of participants. Knowledge on the Municipality’s strategy planning and available resources could not have been obtained by citizens, nor could reasons for not participating be exclusively learnt from people who are already participating.

This set of questions was neither standard nor exhaustive. This allows questions to be altered, added or omitted according to the flow of the interview and the responses of the interviewee. The questions were of the open type, allowing freedom to the interviewees to express themselves, but also the chance for the researcher to acquire new knowledge on the topic of the research and avoid losing important insight from participants.

Additionally, to the questions, examples of citizen participation were given at the end of the interview from different countries of the world in order to broaden the imagination of participants on the use of ICT in participation and see what they think of such technologies being used in their context. These examples were taken from the literature review and were: the Question Box, the Citizen Feedback Monitoring Program (CFMP) and the Texas Virtual BorderWatch.

In order to incorporate the critical theory here, the set of questions for the interview were structured according to the insight-critique-transformative redefinition elements.

The first set of questions corresponding to the insight element aimed at collecting personal information of the interviewee such as his/her relationship with the local community and the Municipality, or his/her relationship to ICTs and technology.

The second set of questions corresponding to the critique element aimed at looking deeper on topics such as the presence of solidarity groups, the use of current participation forms and possible obstacles and setbacks that prevent citizens of the neighbourhood from participating.

The third and final set of questions corresponding to the transformative redefinition element aimed at exploring the interviewee’s disposition towards change, personal initiatives, and suggestions of ideal form of communication within the neighbourhood as well as participation and ideal uses of technology.

Interviews – Data Collection

There were 10 interviews conducted during the research, one of which was with the Head of Communication of the Municipality, two were with solidarity groups members, and the remaining seven were with the randomly selected citizens.

The interviews were conducted in different places according to the participants’ wishes. Those places include parks, coffee shops, the middle of the sidewalk, and buildings’ external stairs. This was not only to ensure that participants would feel comfortable with the setting, but also to “have access to people and objects that may figure into the talk as it unfolds” (Blomberg et al., 1993, p.134). Indeed, in several instances the setting came into discussion either in the form of people of the neighbourhood, or of characteristics and actions taking place.
The duration of the interviews spanned from twenty minutes to one hour according to the participant’s schedule and talkativeness. Before the interview started, participants were asked to read and sign the consent form (see Appendix B1-2). All interviews were conducted in good atmosphere and there were no signs or comments on any discomfort on the part of participants.

Participants did not seem hesitant to talk in general, some even seemed eager to comment on the topic, but recording of the interview was a major reservation for everyone. For that reason, no recordings were made during the interviews, instead notes were kept in a notebook, something that participants did not have an objection to. The notes were short and written down quickly in order to avoid losing contact with the participant or keeping them waiting. They were transcribed to full text the day of the interview as soon as possible, to avoid forgetting important information.

The arrangement of the interview slightly changed from first to last participant. As Blomberg et al. (1993, p.134) suggest, beginning with unstructured interviews in the beginning of the research helps shape the discourse and later, after knowledge has been gained on the topic, plan on more structured and specific questions. Indeed, some of the questions asked in the last interviews or discussions were derived from information of the previous interviews. For instance, Blue informed me early in the research that he saw several comments on the Municipality’s Facebook page concerning the price of using the Municipality swimming pool, something that he realized later led to the price being lowered. That was provided as an example from the participant which later was used as a bit of information in exploring with the last participants whether contacting the Municipality has results and whether the use of social media is meaningful in this context.

Concerning the examples of citizen participation ICT forms from around the world, participants responded with amazement and often commented that they hadn’t realized such a thing could either be done, or be considered as a form of participation especially concerning the case of the Texas Virtual BorderWatch.

Probes

Cultural probes were first used in the late 1990’s in a project aiming to include senior citizens in local communities through technology (Mattelmäki, 2006, 42). Trying to find a way to encourage and stimulate senior citizens and provide knowledge on their local community, Gaver, Dunne and Pacenti, created an assortment of objects that could provoke reactions by the seniors such as maps, postcards, cameras and booklets (1999, p.22). These probes were meant to be partly open to interpretation and give room for imagination and creativity to participants. So a probe can be anything that provokes and enhances the creativity of the participants and create a kind of dialogue between them and the researcher.

The probes of this research consisted of a small notebook with a pen attached to it by string as to avoid the scenario of participants wanting to write down something and not having writing means on them. The participants were asked to carry the notebook around with them for a week and write in it thoughts, concerns and propositions concerning daily happening in their neighbourhood. Propositions could concern the way the participants themselves would like to be able to participate in this daily happening, or who they would like to communicate with and what would they like to be done about it. Additionally, they were asked to write down what means of technology they feel would assist them in each situation.
The purpose of this probe was to provide an incentive for critical thinking of a daily troubling situation and give a direct means of noting this critique for later use. It also gives an incentive to participants to trouble themselves over how they should act upon daily happenings either themselves or by contacting someone they see fit. Contrary to the interview which demands of the participants to think quicker and respond immediately, this probe allows them to ponder and provide suggestions they might think of during a span of time, or reconsider and built upon previous thoughts. There is also the difference of written speech in the paper medium versus verbal speech and the process behind each one of them.

The notebooks were crafted by the researcher, a total number of ten, presented in Figure 1 below. Different colours and patterns of hard paper were used to create a variety of notebooks. This aimed at attracting participants and providing an element of fun by giving them the choice of selecting something they like. In the inside of the notebooks cover was attached a small label containing the contact information of the researcher (name, telephone number, e-mail address) and a blank field indicating the date the notebook should be returned which was filled on the spot.
Probes – Data Collection

The notebooks were given at the end of interviews to the citizens and solidary group members who participated in the research. Participants responded with enthusiasm when seeing the different covers of the probes and seemed to enjoy having the ability to choose what fitted them most. All participants also commented on the fact that the probes were handmade with responses such as: “You made these? For real?” or “Did you make all these? They’re really nice”. The notebooks with more elaborate pattern designs such as flowers, lively fish, or even just colourful covers, were the ones that were selected first.

All participants returned their notebooks. Out of the nine notebooks that were given out, one came back empty. According to that participant, she did not have the mind and time to get to write in the notebook. From the remaining eight notebooks, half had only one page of written notes, and the other half had around ten pages. There was no notebook that had three to four pages of notes, it was either a little or a lot.

Each participant wrote in the probe in their own way. For instance, Blue had a very detailed presentation of issues, followed by whom should be contacted for the resolution of the issue and in what way. The member of the Social Cultural Center and Green, who also happened to be friends, wrote in a journal style, and every separate entry was noted with the date of the day. Yellow on the other hand spent a significant part of the probe explaining the causes of the issues found in the neighborhood before describing them. Indigo used the probe as a form of discussing with her self and even put comments in brackets to show that they don’t belong to the main text.

When asked about how they found the experiences of this particular probe, they responded by saying it was fun to hold and they would have written down more if they had more spare time.

Participatory Observation

Observation is a central method in ethnographic research. As Crang and Cook (2007, p.37) say: “ethnography is, after all, defined as participant observation plus any other appropriate methods/techniques/etc.”

Participatory observation was planned to take place in the spaces where solidarity groups work. This would provide a chance to observe the use of technology as in what means are used, how often, with what ease and by whom. Observation would also provide a chance to see how members of the solidary groups and citizens who interact with them, understand and act upon the concept of participation.

Especially in the case of technology use, observation was used to complement interview and probes in determining whether indeed technology was used in the way it was mentioned to. Also besides the technology used by groups as a structure, it was important to see what the personal relationship of members with technology is. Personal use or lack thereof could provide important information about how technology is used in the level of the group.

Observation is not only limited to people and actions, but also to every feature of the context within which the observation takes place. Features such as smell, sounds, mood and level of activity are also important. For instance, the level of engagement of group members in their
everyday tasks or the environment of their setting could also provide not only important insight but also information of which the groups themselves might not be aware of.

Participatory Observation – Data Collection

Participatory observation was conducted in the Solidarity Network, which was selected due to being one of the two groups, along with the Social Pharmacy that act within legislative limitations and actually received support from the Municipality by being hosted in its webpage.

Though the actual participatory observation conduct was set to be performed in one day, there were two other occasions where observations were possible.

The first was when I was introduced to the group members during their weekly assembly. Since I was invited in to talk to them about my research, I was then asked to stay and participate in the assembly myself. This provided me with the chance to see how communication between members of the groups takes place, what kind of relationship members have with technology, what kind of means are used to keep the minutes of the meeting or if there is any technology supporting the discussions.

This also provided a chance to get to know what kind of work the Solidarity Network does, what kind of problems it faces and how it deals with them and of course who are the members volunteering there. During my stay in the assembly I was also asked a couple of times to state my opinion on some topics and express any interest I had towards them.

The second opportunity for observation was during an approach to find members of the group to interview. Being invited to stay there again, now in a daily tasks context, my presence prompted a group discussion between the present members which, besides general problems of the Network, included problems that occurred on the spot with the work being done at the moment.

The actual participatory observation conduct took place in a full 3-hour shift in the Network. This was an invaluable experience since luckily it was a busy day with tasks out of the ordinary which provided me with a chance to see how volunteers of the Network reacted to urgent situations and again, what kind of technology they used. Having already appeared twice in the space of the Network, my presence seemed not to be something strange there anymore. I was assigned work to do along with other volunteers, until at one point I was left to do the work myself. Being aware of my presence as a researcher did not seem to make volunteers hesitant, instead they would often go out their way to come and comment to me something they deemed might interest me for my work.

I was assigned that day to help with the separation of rations of groceries like sugar, flour and cooking oil. Those were usually received in large quantities and in large packages and had to be separated in smaller rations to be distributed. For instance, there were around twenty 10-kilos packages of flour in the back room of the Network. This was an extremely time consuming process which employed 4-5 volunteers. I was also assigned to assembly bags of groceries which included one of each of the available groceries at the time, a total of 8 items: rice, barley, pasta, tomato sauce, cooking oil, condensed milk, sugar and flour. During these assignments I was able to collect data on how groceries are collected in the Network and what kind of technology use is made in the process of registering them.
4.6 Thematic Analysis

To analyse the collected data a thematic analysis was used. The data included here are the interview transcriptions, the probe’s writings and the observation notes. For the analysis, the 3Cs model is used which provides a process of dissecting and categorizing the data in order to uncover emerging themes from the data (Robson and McCartan, 2011). That process starts with generating codes from raw material, creating categories by relating codes to each other, and finally identify the key concepts that emerge from the categories.

(Robson and McCartan, 2011, p.252)

There are six specific steps in the 3Cs thematic analysis:

Step 1 – Initial coding: The initial coding was done by revisiting all raw data of the research. This included transcribed interview notes, observations notes, and the data from the probes. This provided a good opportunity to attain a wholesome view of the material collected since it is hard to remember everything from the first participant to the last. Through the initial coding 342 codes emerged.

Step 2 – Revisiting the initial coding: When revisiting the initial coding duplicated codes and codes that were not deemed useful when juxtaposed to the research question were removed, leaving the codes to a number of 212.

Step 3 – Initial categories: Categories were created based on the remaining codes by organizing them together according to their relevancy. There were 21 categories created through initial categorizing.

Step 4 – Revisiting the initial categories: A final of 16 categories were left after revisiting and combining or removing non useful ones.

Step 5 – Revisiting categories and sub-categories: In this step, the naming of categories was adjusted according to the research question in order to represent the data in the best possible way for the analysis.

Step 6 – From categories to concepts: By merging the categories according to their content and relevance, the concepts of the analysis were created. A total of 7 concepts emerged that
will be discussed in the next chapter. A table containing an example of how the codes are merged in categories and how they add up to a single concept is available in appendix D.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

In the conduct of research certain ethical considerations rise. Crang and Cook (2007) offer in their book *Doing Ethnographies* several lists that contain research ethical consideration, but which are focused only on the part of the research that is planned beforehand. Since research, and more so ethnographic research, is an ongoing process which demands that the researcher gets entangled in the context, potential ethical issues cannot always be anticipated. For that reason, Crang and Cook (2007, pp.31-32) suggest that there should be a capital E ethical providence including subjects such as honesty about the conduct and aims of the research and confidentiality of the participants which can be planned early in the research, as well as lower e ethics which will deal with everyday ethical issues that might occur during the conduct of the research.

In this research, the capital E ethics were cared for through the consent form (see appendix B1-2) which explicitly described the aim of the research, the methods for which participation was requested, the ways in which confidentiality would be ensured and the rights of the participants. During the actual conduct of the research, some lower case ethical issues also appeared.

One of the main ethical considerations of this research was the compromising of participants in their everyday scenery. For instance, two of the interviews took place near a kiosk in a busy crossroad of the neighbourhood. Though the participants did not express any discomfort, I observed that passers-by would turn and see “what is going on” since they saw someone talking to a person who was taking notes. So, had someone stood by and listened to the interview the participant could have perhaps been compromised by expressing their own thoughts and opinions. It is interesting to note here that though participants were negative towards recording they did not seem hesitant at all to speak their minds in the middle of the street.

The same of course goes for me since I am also part of this neighbourhood and community. My trait as a researcher is now connected with me from now on for those in the community that have been part of my research. That is something of which the consequences I cannot foresee.

Another one of the ethical considerations I expected to face in this research was during the conduct of the participatory observation, since I would be present in spaces where personal information on financial situation and living conditions would be obvious. The presence of a researcher in a space where a person comes to ask for help for sensitive issues such as food and clothing could cause feelings from awkwardness to offence according to one’s perception.

Indeed, the first time I tried to go for a planned observation in the Solidarity Network, due to arriving just after the Network had opened in the morning, I was faced with a problem. There was a great number of people in the Network at the time since bread is distributed in the morning. Coincidentally, the two volunteers present at that time were unknown to me, and I was not sure that they had been informed by the other volunteers about my presence and research topic. I had been told in my previous visit that I should just go in that day and talk
about who I am, say that I had been present in the assembly and I could then sit in. But due to the great number of people inside the Network I was hesitant of going in and introducing myself to the volunteers - note here that they also had people in their desks so there was no way to approach them discreetly and privately - since I thought it could disturb the people coming to get their bread and groceries. Coming in and saying I am here for a research could sound frightening to someone who is in a sensitive position. After re-approaching the Network in a short time and seeing that the number of people inside did not decline, I decided to reschedule my visit in order to avoid causing any problems to the volunteers and the work of the Network.

4.8 Validity and reliability

It is not so easy to check the validity and reliability of an ethnographic research based on qualitative data, since the focus is on a specific group of people in a specific time, and it would be impossible to replicate the exact same conduct of methods, let alone the relationships between researcher and participants (Crang and Cook, 2007, p.146-147). Since the researcher is not distanced from the research, personal characteristics from education to personality all affect how the research is conducted and how the data are analysed.

Baxter and Eyles (1997, cited in Crang and Cook, 2007, p.146) propose a set of parameters to assess the validity and reliability of a research. Below are those parameters as concerned with this research:

1. Credibility: this has to do with the authenticity of the representation of occurrences in the research. Direct access to the collected data cannot be given to third persons according to the agreement between researcher and participants in the consent form in order to ensure their confidentiality. For this reason, credibility can be based on a combination of the information presented in the thesis. The invitation form, consent form and interview questions are available in appendices and can be juxtaposed with the data presented to have derived from the methods and the correspondence between them established.

2. Transferability: has to do with making the occurrences of the research comprehensible to the audience. The data from the methods was collected and transcribed into a form that can be presented. Interview notes, probe writings and observation notes were all transcribed into text in a computer. Direct quotes and text are given to connect the reader to the context and participants of the research.

3. Dependability: concerns the coherence of the research interpretations and its capacity to be reproduced. Analysis of the data will be made through thematic analysis which will be correlated to the theory presented in previous chapters as well as to the content of the participant’s sayings and to my observation, in order to ensure that no part of the analysis is detached from the research context. The exact reproduction of the research would be impossible since it is based on qualitative data which is strongly connected to the exact context and participants during the conduct of the research. None the less readers of the thesis should be able to follow the coherence of the research and the reasoning that led to its findings.

4. Confirmability: is about the ability to audit the research. Confirmability here is possible through the accurate presentation of the train of thought behind the planning
and the conduct of the research methods based on the background theory, on previous literature, and the way this is expressed in the analysis and in later suggestions in accordance with the data collected.
Chapter 5: Findings
In order to stay connected to the way the critical theory has been incorporated in this research, I will present the findings of the thematic analysis according to the three elements of insight-critique-transformation.

5.1 Insight
To this element belong three of the concepts produced in thematic analysis: (1) information sources, (2) communication means, and (3) participation forms.

1. Information sources: this is an important concept for this research since being informed is the first step to participating. Information sources play a great role in awareness of citizen participation initiatives as well as in forming opinions and critique for current issues. Participants were both asked directly how they get informed, but also told about the information sources and initiatives they weren’t aware of. A lot of participants commented in the end of interviews that they were unaware that so many things were going on in the Municipality concerning participation initiatives or group activity.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the purpose of direct engagement with citizens was not only to get their insight, but also make them aware of citizen participation initiatives in their local community and their role as citizens in them. A great example of this awareness through the research came from participant Green. Green repeatedly responded negatively to questions about information sources saying he didn’t know about them, but during the course of the interview he realized he was more informed than he thought: “No I’m not aware the Municipality had a Facebook page...Oh wait! I think I have. I actually have it. I don’t recall how this happened though”, or when asked about the Solidarity Network: “Nope, never heard of it. Where is that? Ah! Yes, yes, yes, yes! Behind the bus stop! Yes I know it! Will you look at that? I know lots of the groups after all”.

Green himself attributed this in the fact that you unconsciously learn information about your neighbourhood. Yellow and Orange also mentioned that their information doesn’t always necessarily come from information sources, but from acquaintances in the neighbourhood. These information sources also emerged from the thematic analysis: family members, friends, the school, members of the local community, posters and local papers.

ICTs were also mentioned in information sources, mainly the social media and the website and secondary the e-mails and newsletters. The two members of the groups, the Solidarity Network and the Social Cultural Centre, were the ones who were informed by e-mail concerning the work of the groups.

2. Communication means: this concept was rich in ICT references. Aside from traditional forms of communication such as face to face and telephone, other forms such as e-mails, the suggestion form of the Municipality and Facebook comments, were mentioned.
Technology seemed to be favoured as communication means especially towards the Municipality.

Of all communication forms the telephone seems to be the most prominent of all. The Head of Communication mentioned that he spends a lot of time speaking on the phone with citizens, and the telephone was also the solution for the Solidarity Network during the 800 kilos of chicken legs emergency.

A larger social structure had donated 800 kilos of frozen chicken legs to the Network on the occasion of Easter. Because it was impossible to retain all this frozen chicken in the one freezer and fridge of the Network, there had to be immediate communication with the beneficiaries so they could come and receive chicken independently of the day they received groceries. The only computer available in the place remained turned off, and a binder containing all registered beneficiaries of the Network was deployed by one volunteer - conditions did not allow for someone additional to help - who commenced phone calls from the Network’s telephone. Of course due to the restricted working hours of the Network she only managed to reach the letter B, and had to leave a note for the volunteer who would continue the same process the next day.

The telephone was also used to communicate between Solidarity Networks and other solidarity groups in other neighbourhoods and Municipalities. During my first visit in the assembly of the Solidarity Network, the eldest member, aged 75, was narrating a story about a man who came some days ago with his wife and baby demanding in a rude manner to be registered in the Network. After being told that he had to bring certain documentation proving he is a citizen of this Municipality and he is financially eligible to be registered in the Network, he threw a tantrum and threatened to resolve to violence. Thankfully there was no incident since the volunteer managed to sent him away. Immediately after his leaving, the members of the Solidarity Network contacted other Solidarity Networks and solidarity groups to inform them to be careful of this individual.

On the contrary, the Social Cultural Centre seemed to favour e-mail communication very much. E-mails are the primary form of communication and information between members and towards citizens. E-mails are also used to send the minutes of the assemblies to its participants afterwards. Additionally, they are used to inform citizens about changes in the schedule of lessons and events. Lately there have also been e-mails sent towards citizens expressing the stance of the Social Cultural Centre to political developments. Finally, e-mails are also sent to ask for the support of citizens to other groups or individuals which are close to the Social Cultural Centre.

3. Participation forms: participation was not mentioned as a concept to participants and no direction was given as to specific forms. A lot of participation forms emerged especially from the discussions in interviews. It is important to see what citizens perceive as participation forms in order to focus to the employment of ICT in the suggestions.

Those were: attending Municipal events, attending local religious events, attending events organized by the groups of the neighbourhood, participating actively in those events, attending the lessons in several topics and activities provided by the Municipality, voting,
local assemblies, reforestation initiatives, activities on school grounds on the weekends, Municipality’s athletic teams, recycling, parades and fairs. The key to participation seemed to be joining in the activities that fellow citizens were already conducting.

Reactions to the participation examples given in the interviews were also an indicator towards the perception of citizen participation. For instance, concerning the “question box”, participants all thought the presence of a box for direct support in the local community was a fantastic idea, but all also agreed that it would not work in Greece since the boxes would most probably be used for pranks or will end up being vandalized and broken. As Green said half serious have joking: “If I were a child I would definitely use it for fun!”

The second example of the CFMP from Pakistan had similar reactions. Participants said that even though it is not a bad idea per se, people would most likely be bored and would not bother providing the feedback. For instance, Red mentioned that she had received similar SMS messages from the Telecommunications Company she is subscribed to, which asked how she found the services on the store she entered. Surprisingly during writing this thesis, I also received a similar SMS from my Telecommunications Company asking me to rate the employee and the services I received at the store when I left. By receiving the message, I instantly thought of the words of the participant, who when asked why she only answered once to those kind of messages, simply replied: “I was bored!”

Yellow also had a very interesting comment concerning the first two examples: “I assumed when you said you would tell me examples of participation from other countries that it would be from some more advanced country. I expected to hear something from Switzerland!”. I was glad to receive such a comment since the reason I selected those examples was to show that creativity in ICT use for citizen participation often sparks from a lack of abundant resources.

Finally, the third example, perhaps the most unexpected for participants, was that of the Mexican borders. Participants were all negative towards this example insisting this is not the place of citizens and even went as far to say this seems like an intolerable case of squealing. Upon hearing the example during the interview, Yellow was dumbfounded and would not speak for a minute trying to realize the nature and extent of that project. Green also commented strongly on this: “What? For real? Like snitches. I don’t approve of this. Everything that involves civilians in surveillance is a bad idea.”

From the side of the Municipality concerning participation forms, valuable insight was gained for the strategy used to connect to citizens and invite them to many local events that the citizens mentioned as participation forms. The Head of Communication said that due to the frugal financial situation of the Municipality, care had to be taken in promotion and invitations to citizens. Social media was used to promote and invite citizens since it was a cost effective solution. At the same time targeted promotion with other means such as flyers and posters was used for specific groups that were deemed to be the most interested for each occasion: “We try to use our resources the best we can. Online social media, newsletters and e-mails as well as our webpage is a means we can involve people with low cost. But we need to take to account that not everyone can be invited through the internet. So we have specific target groups that are significant for each event and we try to address them first before all others. For instance, a young lady like you would not be as interested in a school event since
you don’t have children yourself. You might attend it from general interest but you are not directly involved.”

5.2 Critique

In this element belong two of the concepts produced in thematic analysis: (1) communication issues, and (2) participation obstacles.

1. Communication issues: a lot of issues were mentioned concerning the quality of communication and what is troubling the participants. There was a strong sense of disbelief that reaching out for the Municipality would have no result so communication might be futile. There were also some participants who mentioned that abrupt treatment or delayed responses from the Municipality employees were a discouraging factor in deciding to communicate a second time. Additionally, lack of correspondence was also seen as a discouraging factor. Orange mentioned once such example when asked about whether he ever communicated with the Municipality: “I won’t anymore. I had called them about the life-long learning programs. The programs never happened and the Municipality never called me back even though they said they would. I don’t think communicating with the Municipality ever solves anything.”

Yellow and Indigo also doubted the responsiveness of the Municipality in e-mail communication. Indigo said: “Sure, I could mail the Municipality. But do you think they would mail me back? I doubt it.”

Participants also talked about the lack of personal contact in communications with the Municipality. Most said that they would like to know who they are talking to when on the phone or exchanging e-mails. Red said that it is important, especially for groups such as the elderly or troubled individuals, to know who you are talking and she also connected this to the relationship between citizens and the Municipality: “Ok for instance, say you make a call to the Municipality. Who is on the other line of the phone? You don’t know them and they won’t introduce themselves. It’s like the Municipality has become something vague and distant for people. It makes people indifferent in the end.”

Another communication issue concerning the relation between citizens and participation was the personalized presence of the former Mayor in social media. The Head of Communication mentioned that the previous Mayor and staff, had created a Facebook page that was in the name not of the Municipality, but of the Mayor. None the less it was promoted as the Municipality’s official page. This was problematic as it hindered a consistent presence of the Municipality regardless of the current Mayor. The participant from the Social Cultural Centre also commented on this: “I had received a Facebook friend request from the previous Mayor. Though it would be useful to get information from there, I didn’t want to be associated with him. There was no point in having a ‘friendship’ with that person if a new Mayor was elected later.”
2. Participation obstacles: there was a lot of mention of the obstacles that prevent people from participating in the local community and the initiatives of the Municipality. Contrary to my personal expectations which included stress due to personal problems caused by the economic crisis and lack of time due to workload, the first comments of all participants on the subject concerned the attitude and behaviour of citizens.

Blue said concerning why people won’t participate: “I believe it’s a matter of culture. People aren’t bold when it comes to these things. They think about issues, they’ll talk about it in the coffee house where they meet, but they won’t take the extra step and pass it through to the Municipality.”

Time was mentioned as an obstacle but not from all participants and always late in the list and low in the hierarchy. The most common answers were ignorance and indifference. Ignorance can perhaps be traced back to a lack of good information sources. As for indifference there were several similar reasons given, most pointing the connection and personal interest of a citizen to a specific issue and the motivation produced to participate.

Another obstacle similar to indifference was that of inactiveness. This may be caused by a combination of indifference and the disbelief mentioned earlier. When asked what exactly he means by inactiveness of citizens, Green answered: “It means that you realize something is wrong. And perhaps you even know that there are people and groups who try to fix things. But you just don’t have the motivation to get up and do something. Maybe not a strong enough motivation. You become indifferent. You think ‘so what! What’s the big deal?’ You become a nihilist!”

The two group members from the Solidarity Network and Social Cultural Centre also shared these opinions about ignorance and indifference. And so did the Head of Communication of the Municipality: “I believe people want to participate. They do. But there is a need for responsible attitudes from all of us to find the ability for solutions. This is hard because people hold strong disbelief against the Municipality and end up ignoring and not being interested in the initiatives we take.”

5.3 Transformation

In this element belong the two final concepts produced in thematic analysis: (1) desirable ICT characteristics, and (2) Suggestions.

1. Desirable ICT characteristics: those characteristics were either directly mentioned by participants or emerged from the data gathered. The most prominent characteristics were that of immediateness, directness and availability. Participants said it was important for them to have direct and immediate responses when for instance communicating with the Municipality.
As for availability, participants said they would like a participation form that would be available 24/7 for them. Directness and personal touch were also mentioned as important; not only knowing who you are talking or addressing to, but also receiving answers directed to you. Green said for instance: “I think the ideal would be if everyone could be heard, but also have a personal response from the Municipality. When you get a personal answer it makes you feel important.”

2. Suggestions: participants ended up providing suggestions either consciously or unconsciously in the flow of the conversation. The suggestions were connected to the issues and desires previously mentioned. Some of the suggestions were concerned with the way the Municipality gets informed about the local community, others with the communication between Municipality and citizens, or the way citizens could participate as well as communicate with each other with the use of ICT, and last but not least, with the way the Municipality could make use of ICTs to promote its own initiatives. Those suggestions are mentioned and developed in the next chapter after the discussion of the findings.
Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Insight

Information Sources and Communication Means

By examining the available sources from the Municipality and the active groups of the neighborhood, as well as looking at the data from the research, it is evident that ICTs are present both in information sources and communication means. Webpages, social media and e-mail/newsletters were mentioned as sources for information concerning ongoing issues in the neighborhood and Municipality.

Looking back at the ICT review of Kumar and Vragov (2009), one-way information tools were identified as the vast majority of ICTs employed for citizen participation. Drakopoulou (2009) also presented similar findings for the Greek context writing that most ICTs were for information dissemination and at best commenting. This is consistent with the findings of this research too. Most ICTs used, both from the Municipality and groups, are concerned with providing information towards citizens. This could concern events, news, and information on classes and activities.

Access to information is an essential condition for participation. In Participatory Design, access to information about technologies was and is equally important to the idea of having a say in their future application in the workplace. In the principles of PD, Kensing and Greenbaum (2012) mention within democratic practices the right of equal access to information. The same goes for citizen participation which is also based in democratic practices and shares a lot with PD.

Again taking an example from the Greek context, in his project of use of ICTs in the Greek Parliament, Loukis (2011) deemed it significant to provide participants of the project with the proper information. Those were the content of the bill of the “Contracts of Voluntary Cohabitation”, the justification report of the bill and the minutes of the discussion in the parliamentary committee. Without information on the bill, participants would not have the background to form a coherent opinion on the subject. Having a say presupposes that there are information available to form opinion and critique and move to deliberation.

ICT tools to facilitate deliberation are close to minimum concerning the Municipality explored in this research. The use of social media with active commenting and responses from the Municipality could be considered a tool for deliberation. An example would be the incident of the pricing of the public pool, where citizens used Facebook to complain for what they found was a high price to use the pool. However, the possibilities for structured deliberation are limited due to the nature of each social media.

This is also consistent with the findings of Kumar and Vragov (2009) who placed deliberation tools in second place. The active groups of the neighborhood however seem to use ICT tools more in order to deliberate. For instance, shared mails are used sometimes to discuss current issues. This may be connected to their personal commitment and strong motivation to participate in local issues.

Deliberation is an important procedure both for citizens and the Municipality. Loukis, Charalabidis and Millard wrote that by taking into account the subject-specific knowledge of
citizens, but also their opinions and attitudes, can benefit public structures to create better policies (2012, p.255). At the same time this inclusion of citizens and their invitation from the Municipality can also renew the will of getting involved in politics. As the Head of Communication of the Municipality mentioned in his interview, according to the strategies of the Municipality’s use of social media, they hope that citizens will not just be informed but rather mobilized concerning the issues of their local community and engage in participation.

Participation Forms

Several forms of participation were mentioned that were all linked through the joint participation of fellow citizens. That means that participation is not necessarily seen as something that takes place in relation to a formal political structure but rather is a community based concept. Such examples were mentioned before in this thesis. For instance, the “Threads - A Mobile Sewing Circle” by Lindström and Ståhl (2014) project were citizenship was explored beyond the citizen-state relationship by involving citizens with each other in participating and engaging with technology.

The presence of many self-organized groups that promote activities spanning from cultural to solidarity, is also proof of this citizen-to-citizen relationship. For instance, the Solidarity Network may operate legally, but it has no support from the Municipality or State. So the relations developed there are mainly citizen-to-citizen and in some cases group-to-group. When citizens organize in such groups they try to make the best of their resources and become creative in supporting the community with little or no financial support.

As with the concept behind the Amplify project (Manzini and Rizzo, 2011, p.207), the self-organized groups of citizens trying to improve their everyday lives can act as a trigger for social innovation. This project was supported by Parsons The New School for Design and the Rockefeller Foundation and focused on the local community and on the way citizens themselves envisioned a more sustainable neighborhood. This personal and direct engagement seems to be a key concept for motivation in citizen participation.

Initiatives exist both from the side of citizens and the Municipality, though it seems that they do not relate to one another. This may be caused by the disbelief citizens have towards the Municipality. However, this is not necessarily a bad thing, since the top-down and bottom-up initiatives can form a dialogue to identify their common goals and values and create a participation form to suit both. Loukis, Charalabidis and Millard (2012) also noted that ICTs can support citizen participation initiatives regardless of their orientation.

On the other hand, a conflict of interest can arise from those two different kinds of initiatives. For instance, groups such as the Informal Assembly and the Social Cultural Center which have their own decision-making processes often contradict the Municipality’s decisions. The different nature of the initiatives, top-down and bottom-up, set different boundaries and possibilities for their initiators. For instance, the Municipality, due to its legal substance, would not have moved to the occupation of a park to avoid privatization as the Social Cultural Center did. But, provided a willing attitude from all sides, such conflicts could provide creative grounds for the nature of citizen participation and the role of individuals and groups in the local community.

Loukis, Charalabidis and Millard (2012) wrote that it is important for governments to promote citizen participation since it can provide to the valuable information, knowledge and
ideas that as Manzini and Rizzo (2011) also support, can lead to public innovations. Loukis, Charalabidis and Millard even go as far as to talk about the concept of “co-production” for public services with government and citizens cooperating (2012, p.255). This concept of co-production can be related in a way to the concept of co-design in Participatory Design which is based on one of its principal values, that of mutual learning.

In the case of this research, the Municipality can make use of current and future ICTs to promote this idea of mutual learning not only towards citizens but also towards active groups. This was evident in the example of the Detailed Plan by Garau (2012), where the Municipality acknowledged the knowledge of citizens and involved them in the city plan through PD methods.

6.2 Critique

Communication Issues

Participants often mentioned disbelief and discouragement towards the Municipality. Loukis, Charalabidis and Millard (2012) had identified this problem and wrote that the restoration of faith between citizens and state is one of the things that ICTs can offer to citizen participation. This can be achieved through accountability and better communication between Municipality and citizens.

For instance, the ability to follow the progress of one’s suggestion form in the website of the Municipality is a way to support the accountability of this initiative. Citizens offer a proposition, and the Municipality in turn gives them an account of its progress online.

Accountability and trust are very important since participants of this research seemed to worry more about whether their comments will be actually heard and used, rather than how they will communicate with the Municipality. More accurately, participants did not go as far as figuring out who to contact and how, because they believed it would be futile.

Loukis, Charalabidis and Millard (2012) also mentioned that ICTs can provide better consultation between citizens and the state. This is reflected in this research by the need of participants to have personal and direct communication with the municipality and feel like they are being heard. A lot of complaints and opinions go unheard of due to disbelief and this is a hindrance to consultation since both sides lack crucial information.

Participation Obstacles

Attitude issues concerning ignorance, indifference and inactiveness were identified as the main obstacles in participation from the side of citizens. What most participants connected to these attitudes was a lack of personal interest to motivate citizens towards engagement. This was also identified, but in its positive form, by the examples mentioned my Manzini and Rizzo (2011). In their examples, people in small scale projects in local communities were actively collaborating due to the strong personal interest they had in the projects that affected their everyday lives.

Those attitudes of indifference and inactiveness could lead to the conclusion that, as Jasanoff (2003) wrote, including citizens in the decision-making process is not granted it will make it better. Loukis (2011) also shares in this hesitation by commenting that the lack of experience
and subject specific knowledge of citizens participating, can have negative effects for decision-making. So lack of good information resources and lack of commitment from the citizens’ part to get educated on the subject in deliberation can be a combination used to argue against citizen participation initiatives.

On the other hand, if citizens are never endowed with the responsibility of participation they might never mature to act as engaged and empowered citizens. The Head of Communication of the Municipality also mentioned this concept of mature citizens. According to him, not allowing posts from citizens in their Facebook page, is a way to avoid immature and malignant posts. So the Municipality wants citizens to participate but in a responsible way.

Asking for responsible and mature feedback and comments means that there is a basic level of respect both for citizens and for the Municipality itself. This attitude can be contrasted with Tewksbury’s (2012) report on the Virtual Texas BorderWatch where citizens are asked to engage is surveillance. In this case citizens are also asked to share a responsibility of public safety but are also asked at the same time to perform the job of a security guard or military soldier.

Democracy is not all about rights, but also about responsibility, and so is technology. In the example provided by Borchorst, Bødker and Zander (2009) about the cases of parental leave, the technology developed to facilitate the relationship between parents and Municipality also created shared responsibility between them. So the participation initiative and the electronic timeline were used to facilitate the communication between parents and Municipality but parents would now be also responsible for the information they inserted in the timeline and their accuracy.

Responsibility was also mentioned in this research. Participants mentioned that local issues are not all fault of the Municipality, but fellow citizens should also take their share of responsibility concerning their every-day behaviours in the neighbourhood – littering, driving, parking – but also in actively communicating with the Municipality and expressing their concerns and problems. This also raises the issue of the accountability of citizens in citizen participation.

In his project on the Greek Parliament, Loukis (2011) identified among other issues that the anonymity of users in the e-forum designed to support citizen participation, could end up giving the opportunity for specific interests to be promoted. So the lack of accountability from the participant’s side could end up as an opportunity for exploitation of citizen participation initiatives. This leads back to what Svensson (2011) wrote about ICTs having the opposite effect of democratization, by being used to maintain existing power relations and guide the public opinion.

6.3 Transformation

Suggestions

Most issues and obstacles mentioned in the thematic analysis seem to trace back in attitude. That does not mean that ICTs are irrelevant as a supporting tool, but rather that the use of ICTs in affecting the attitude of citizens and filling the gap of ignorance is a factor that needs
to be taken to account when examining current and possible ICT tools for citizen participation.

Another important relation that needs to be accounted for in the suggestions is that the current ICT supported participation forms demand of the citizens to actively search and engage with them. Since ignorance and indifference have proven to be the main obstacles in participation, this means that there is an attraction shortfall that needs to be filled. Reactions on the participation forms mentioned in the interviews also add to this remark since participants mentioned they would not devote time to contribute to mechanisms such as the Citizen Feedback Mechanism which demands they take time out of their routines.

So if citizens are not engaging by themselves, they need to be prompted in a way to get to participating. Also they need to find motivation to do so. As mentioned earlier, citizens connected the willingness to participate to the gain of personal interest. That means that participation initiatives need to make clear to the people they invite of what is in it for them. The strong connection between participation and local everyday life that was present in the examples mentioned in Chapter 3, and especially in cases using PD, needs to be evident to citizens of the Municipality.

The various ways in which citizens feel comfortable using ICTs is also important to take into account. One of the participants mentioned in the interview, and also noted in the probe, that there should be a plethora of participation forms to accommodate the abilities and wants of different citizens since not everyone holds the same access, skills and expressions when it comes to citizen participation. The various ways in which participants wrote in their notebook probes - legible structure of issue and resolve, dated journal, cause and effect explanations, listings of issues - also underpin this point of view that plurality of opinions needs a plurality of expression means.

Loukis, Charalabidis and Millard (2012) have identified several benefits of citizen participation, both for public structures and for citizens. But in order for those benefits to be achieved, citizen participation needs to be used in the best possible way. Vragov and Kumar (2009) through their review of ICT tools for citizen participation identified a great disproportion of the nature of tools, with information tools holding a large number against deliberation and decision-making. That lead them to the conclusion that there is a gap between feasible and existing ICT tools for citizens’ participation and there are more to be explored concerning those two categories.

Going further back to Bradley’s (2010) words, the idea that the individual of a democracy is not only a subject but needs to influence and form her/his role, leads us to the conclusion that deliberation and especially decision-making tools need to be created. Even better, such tools can be formed and inspired by citizens and groups in collaboration with the Municipality.

Taking into account this lack of deliberation and decision-making tools, the desired characteristics of ICTs mentioned by participants, and the findings of the thematic analysis and observations from the research, the following suggestions were formed concerning possible citizen participation forms for the Municipality according to the suggestions proposed by the participants.
The Municipality Web Platform - or the Web Alternative to the Coffee House

This suggestion is based on an idea by Green. The idea is for a web platform to be hosted by the Municipality where citizens can participate digitally. In this platform citizens will have the opportunity to socialize with each other and create a communication network with their fellow citizens. They will also be able to discuss matters of the Municipality and receive feedback from the Municipality itself. The difference with the suggestion form which is now available, is that a platform, which anyone can access live at any time, is more direct and allows not only for communication between citizens and Municipality but also interaction between citizens that now is not available except perhaps in the comments of the Facebook profile of the Municipality.

A point of caution in this suggestion would be that the comments of people who write on the platform would be open and exposed to everyone. As with the citizen participation example of the Virtual BorderWatch of Mexico, such a platform could be the grounds for the surveillance of citizens and their sayings. Of course this is an issue that is present in all forms of public writing in the online environment.

This platform could also work as a type of assembly of citizens – a participation form which seemed rather favourable – for deliberation, the discussions of which would act as feedback data for the Municipality. It could also work as a web alternative for coffee houses’ conversations for local issues that remain unknown to the Municipality authorities. Discussions could stem in the same way they do in coffee houses or similar settings, by the comment of one person on an issue.

Information could be available as in the example of the Greek Parliament by Loukis (2011), were information sources were embedded in the e-forum. Or, there could be a guide redirecting members of the platform to appropriate information sources for each subject.

It is important for this suggestion that the platform is accessible to all citizens of the Municipality. For this to be possible one needs to have the means to access the platform, some kind of device such as a computer, tablet or smartphone, and of course an internet connection. Considering that not all citizens may have the means, or have the means but not know how to use them, there needs to be support from the Municipality. The best solution would be to provide access from structures of the Municipality such as the Citizen Support Centres or even best through the library where available librarians could assist citizens, but which is currently out of operation.

Another solution to this problem provided by Green himself who suggested this idea, was that the Municipality offer free Wi-Fi spots where people would have the opportunity to access the internet. Taking this idea one step ahead, there could be promotion in selected local coffee houses of this initiative in return for internet access, so that citizens could be tempted to participate.

The Team

Several participants mentioned it would be a good idea if there was a team that would go out on the streets of the neighbourhood, talk with citizens and take a look at issues in their context as they are happening. One of the participants, Blue, was more elaborate and suggested that a team should be created within the Municipality with expertise in different
fields which would be able to give quick but substantial answers to the citizens’ e-mails. This would respond to the citizens’ wished for direct and immediate communication.

The team also has an advantage over individuals, even if that were the Mayor himself, going out on their own, since each team member can have a different set of background and skills to contribute. Considering the financial problems of the Municipality and the fact that it would be difficult to hire employees for just that, a team could be formed by existing employees of the Municipality, or even better by a combination of employees and citizens. The team can also have altering members to allow a number of citizens to participate in co-operation with the Municipality.

The inclusion of citizens in such teams could first of all help in such a way as participation in the urban planning of the Detailed Plan of Cagliari, mentioned in Chapter 3, worked; and that is like a “conciliation tool” between Municipality and citizens. This is necessary since disbelief was an often mention attitude towards communicating with the Municipality. It could also work as a participatory approach from the Municipality for an open invitation to involve citizens in the co-articulation of issues. Participation needs not be a temporary act nor deal with a specific issue only. Participation of citizens in a team concerning their everyday issues could provide new insight for the Municipality.

ICTs can be a support for such a team by providing tools to record and share information gained in the field. A central database holding all the material from all teams at all times can be maintained where data collected from teams can go straight to and be available for further use by the Municipality. An application which would allow data to be stored according to subject or type of data (written notes, video, audio, picture) would save a lot of time in sorting the material. Ideally a small device such as a tablet or smartphone could be used for this.

There is no need for sophisticated technologies to support such an endeavour. Making use of simple cloud technologies such as Dropbox could for instance be used to transfer data directly from the field to the Municipality. With a good naming and archiving model such a try-out project could be run without the need for a database. Inclusion of citizens would also give them a chance to see how ICTs can be employed and broaden their imagination in later propositions.

Let’s Promote!

Though most of the participants were aware of the Facebook profile of the Municipality, the other social media or the suggestion form of the Municipality were not as popular since no more than half of participants were aware of them.

Since indifference is one of the main obstacles identified in the collected data and a lot of participants gave comments such as “people will only bother searching for something they want”, waiting for people to discover the Municipality’s ICT initiatives may not be the best strategy. A clear indication of what forms are available, with whom a citizen can communicate and how, would also cover the lack of information and ignorance that citizens mentioned during the research.

Commenting on this, Violet said that the Municipality should at once promote its actions towards citizens. Active promotion of the participation and communication forms of the
Municipality can be done through the use of ICTs already being employed. Violet also mentioned that geographical data of Facebook users for instance could help advertise the profile of the Municipality. To quote her words “if shoe shops can find me, then the Municipality can too!” But even simpler means can be employed: a private message, or a message on the board of the Municipality’s profile asking current followers to share and invite their friends who live in the neighbourhood.

Additionally, e-mails can be sent to those addresses of citizens which are available to the Municipality through other processes, informing them about their initiatives in the form of a newsletter. Also information can be given when someone makes a phone call to the Municipality. Before hanging up the phone, employees can inform of the social media and suggestion form. The same can be done when someone visits the building and services of the Municipality.

Since the phone seems to be one of the most popular means of communication it could be more actively used in promotion. A telephone campaign from the Municipality could be initiated to inform citizens in their houses about available participation forms but also acquire their feedback. This could also be a way to call out to “invisible voices” as was the case with the example of the Question Box. By reaching out into people’s homes, voices that would remain unheard could find an opportunity to express their thoughts.

Groups acting within legislative limits and holding a supported relationship with the Municipality could also be called upon to help in promotion. Some of the webpages of groups are already hosted in the webpage of the Municipality. Accordingly, groups can use their own means to inform citizens of the initiatives of the Municipality. This would also create a communication channel involving citizens, groups and the Municipality all together.

Another idea would be to use the already determined target groups the Municipality uses to inform about news and events and add to flyers and posters a mention about participation forms and communication according to the target group. Posters promoting these initiatives can also be placed in specific places where it is sure they will be seen by people, such as news boards in squares, the local bus stations, or Municipality’s services like the gym, swimming pool, Cultural Centre, Citizen Support Centre and similar places.

It is important to note at this point that both the obstacles and desires stated by citizens and group members where corresponding to what the Head of Communication mentioned. That means that at least he has a relevant view of what is going on in the neighbourhood but this is something that is not getting through to citizens. Also according to participants, both the Municipality and fellow citizens were to be responsible for the troubling issues, whether it be dirty sidewalks or bad communication. A chance for citizens to participate more actively and communicate with the Municipality would help a better understanding of the Municipality structure, and bring detached citizens closer to the community again.

6.4 Reflections on Research Strategy

Conducting Research in the Local Community

As mentioned in the Ethical Considerations part of the thesis, the consequences of conducting research in the the community of which I am a part myself, are something that I cannot foresee. Several of the participants characterized our neighborhood as a “village”, in the way
that residents feel comfortable with communicating with each other and everyone seems to know what is going on to other people’s lives. Faces are familiar to people who cross the streets often. Perhaps this is also the reason that many people answered to my invitation by saying: “sure, if I can help out with your thesis”. Helping out a student who belongs to the same “village” was perhaps an incentive for participants in this research.

There were incidents when I realized that this village characterization was not unjust. A lot of interviewees mentioned people from the neighborhood who were not direct acquaintances but rather a part of the local setting. Also one of the participants mentioned a person they knew from the neighborhood which they believed was a very active citizen, and coincidently this was a person I had already interviewed for my research. I also found out when asking the Head of Communication how long has he been living in this Municipality, that he had previously taken residence across the street from my current workplace. My research also sparked interest in the Solidarity Network and I was repeatedly invited to join and help the Network after I am done with my research.

All these were indications for me that indeed the ethnographic researcher cannot be detached from the community being explored. Even if not belonging to a community in the first place, interaction and the perception of participants towards the researcher create new attachments between them.

Contrary to Expectations

I recall saying several times to my supervisor and friends and family when talking about my experience with the research that many things I saw were contrary to my expectations. Forming expectations about things is only normal, and those expectations are based on one’s own experience and perception of what is happening around.

Conducting an ethnographic research based on the collection of first hand qualitative data was an eye opener for me first of all on how far expectations can be from reality, but most of all, of the importance of research and direct contact with whomever the research is concerned before setting out to make a better world. You cannot venture on change if you have no idea what it is you are trying to change and in what direction.

Planning vs Conducting

Setting out to do a field research demands a lot of time having been spent on the planning of methods. Selecting methods, planning on how the methods should be conducted, with what purpose and expectations of the forthcoming data, all demand their attention in planning. When setting out to do the actual research though, things are not always so neatly arranged.

Aside from the probes, the other two methods, interviews and observation, often came into each other’s territory. In my visits to the Solidarity Network, I ended up discussing when going to observe, and observing when going to discuss. This was something that emerged from the situational context. For instance, while attending the assembly of the Network I ended up observing things, and in my first visit to observe I ended up being part of a group discussion sparked from my presence.

The roles of participants were also not always very clear. Of the participants which were invited as a randomly selected citizens, two were part of groups, and one of them I ended up interviewing as such, since I learnt about it just before conducting the interview. Also other roles of participants emerged through the interview discussions which could have been useful
in the planning but had not been known then; for instance one participant was formerly employed in the Municipality’s cafeteria, and another mentioned that she personally knew the Mayor from his previous profession.

That is not to say that planning is useless and one should not have spent their time and energy on it, but rather that since ethnographic research is indeed an ongoing process where new information is constantly gained, the planning of the research is always subject to changes. The research plan can be enriched or adjusted to what new emerges from the conduct of the research as it moves on.

The Future of Suggestions

The purpose of this research was to make suggestions that could actually be implemented afterwards. Both the Municipality and the Solidarity Network expressed an interest for the results and believed they had benefits to gain from them.

The Head of Communication of the Municipality was very clear since the first correspondence we had, that he would like to know after the end of the research, what kind of suggestions were formed, but also what was the opinions of citizens concerning the current available forms and especially the use of the Municipality’s social media.

The suggestions of this thesis will be given then to the Head of Communication of the Municipality, not necessarily to be implemented as such, but to provide ideas based on the citizen’s perspective, and even better impel the Municipality to think of its own participatory initiatives to invite citizens to engage with the Municipality in the discussion of participation and ICTs. It will also be shared with the Solidarity Network that wanted to be informed of how citizens engage with the local community so they can find a way to attract citizens to support their work.

Suggestions can also act as a starting material for co-design initiatives between the Municipality and citizens since they derived from the local community itself. They could work as an incentive by inviting citizens to work on the suggestion formed again by citizens.
Chapter 7 – Conclusion

7.1 ICTs and Citizen Participation - the Aftermath

This research set out to find what forms of citizen participation could be supported by the use of ICTs in the Municipality level. The methods used provided plentiful and insightful data, but most participants seemed hesitant to provide suggestions.

ICTs do not seem to be unfavorable in the community explored in this research. The Municipality is eager to make the most out of its use and citizens seem to react positively to this. There are also cases like the Solidarity Network, which is not negative towards using ICTs to support its work, but rather lacks the time and knowledge to employ them.

Expanding the use of already familiar ICTs would perhaps be the first step in introducing a more active ICT approach in citizen participation. For instance, the use of telephone could be expanded and take advantage of the fact that this is a technology already in use, and the fact that it is used in a traditional way does not prevent citizens to learn to use it in other ways too. The use of smartphones is important to be explored here since they are an offspring of mobile phones. As for the fact that not everyone uses a smartphone, this does not stop them from suggesting a use for it.

Care should be taken to use ICTs to deal with the substantial issues that prevent citizen participation in this case, such as ignorance and indifference. ICTs can be used not only to better information flow and communication, but also to better the attitude towards them. Only by capturing the interest of citizens and engaging them in the plans for ICT use, sufficient information for their needs and desired can be obtained.

7.2 Are we Making a Better World with ICTs?

This research employed the critical paradigm of thought, ethnographic methodology and participatory design approach to explore the possibilities of ICT use in citizen participation in a specific context. Though there were limitations in this research it was possible to see through the interactions with citizens, group members and the Head of Communication of the Municipality that ICTs are indeed being used and can provide new opportunities for participation.

The direction of this research was pointed by the employment of the critical paradigm and participatory design approach, which both are strongly concerned with power relations and how they are expressed, but also how inequalities in those power relations can be eliminated through democratization and participation.

My answer to the question “are we making a better world with ICTs” is, we are trying. There is a limitless number of philosophical and ethical stances one can adopt, there are limitless technologies, and there is limitless creativity in humans to combine them and come up with technologies that truly make the world better.

7.3 Research Contribution

As mentioned in Chapter 1, there is yet little first hand qualitative data on the subject of citizen participation and the use of ICTs to support it in the Greek academic literature. The current research contributes towards that direction by engaging first hand with different kind
of stakeholders who play a role in citizen participation, each from their own aspect. These are gained from the employment of the ethnographic methodology and participatory design approach.

The research also contributes to the local community, as was its purpose, by having provided its findings and suggestions to the Municipality. Not only the suggestions themselves, but also the basis on which they were designed and the reasoning behind them will be of use to the Municipality that is trying to engage citizens.

7.4 Further Research

The Full Potential of Participatory Design

Though this research tried to incorporate the participatory approach design, it could not make use of its full potential. Methods often used in PD such as future workshops and prototyping were not used in this research. Though suggestions were based on the data collected from the research and their personal suggestions, they were not actively engaged in their final creation.

Including the participants in the design of suggestions through workshops, prototyping and scenario making, would have different results. Especially by including citizens, group members, and the Municipality in co-design citizen participation tools would be a great continuation of this research. Through their interactions not only suggestions will get distilled but the values of each different participant will be taken into account and discussed by others.

An opportunity where citizens, group members, representatives of the Municipality and other relevant stakeholders would come together in the same space, to co-design with the help of a researcher, who has previously acquired knowledge on how these participants view the subject at hand, would allow for a truly participatory design approach on this research.

Empowerment

The concept of empowerment is connected to the critical paradigm as well as the participatory design approach and of course with the concept of citizen participation. There was no time to dwell on the concept of empowerment in this thesis though there were excuses in the research to be used for that reason.

Such excuses were the presence of participants such as Green, who insisted he had nothing to offer to this research, but ended up feeling amazed at his own knowledge and acquired a more energetic attitude when receiving his notebook. Probes also provided a feeling of empowerment since they gave the chance the participants to express themselves in their own way. Some were especially meticulous in their writing to make the most of the opportunity.

Paradigm and Methodology Combinations

As mentioned previously, this research was based on a combination of critical paradigm and ethnographic methodology. That means that it was guided by specific aims that emerge from them, such as a purpose to change things and a purpose to acquire a deep understanding of the community being explored. This combination provided certain data as a result, but a combination of a different paradigm of thought and a different methodology, could provide another aspect on the same topic; for instance the adoption of the action research methodology which is oriented in change that takes place during the research and not as a
result of it. Both the critical paradigm of thought and action research are strongly oriented towards change and could work with the participatory design approach.

On the other hand, to acquire a deeper insight on the topic, a methodological research could be made under the interpretive paradigm which is oriented in understanding rather than changing a situation as is the critical one.

Combinations of paradigms, methodologies, methods, approaches and so on are endless, and it is important to have in mind that the background of a researcher plays a great role in methodologies that demand her/his being immersed in the context and let his/her characteristics be shown through her/his work. That does not mean that different combinations on the same topic will provide different results, but rather different aspects of the topic which might very well complement each other and offer a wider overview. Multiple interpretations can not only come from different participants but also from involving them in different ways.

Creating a Basis for Domestic Academic Literature

The application of various combinations is also another way to enrich the domestic literature. It is important that an academic literature basis is created so future researchers can have something to refer to when setting up to do new research on the topic.

A collection of Greek literature previous to and relative with the topic could - and should - be one of the directions of further research. Especially since citizen participation initiatives have been emerging in the past years in Greece, it would be an exciting outing for IS researchers to venture in these uncharted waters.
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INVITATION!

What is this about?

This is about our neighbourhood and about us. This is a master thesis research about the ways we become part of this community. Is there room for improvement? In what ways can thing change? And what is the kind of change we want?

Why me? Why you?

I am also part of this neighbourhood and I want my research to be relevant and have an impact in my community.

You are a part of this community too, so you are relevant to my research and my research is relevant to you.

What will you do:

Discuss it:

Have a short interview with me about your thoughts of the neighbourhood. What do you like? What troubles you? What would you like to be able to do? How do you get informed about what is going on? How do you communicate with others?

Let me hear your “this and that”!

Write it down:

Get a notepad and a pen from me, carry it in your pocket for a week and get it out whenever you see something in the neighborhood you wish you could do something about. Your thoughts will give shape to change.

Get it out of your system!

How can you get in touch:

Zoi Angelopoulou
Tel: 69694895207
E-mail: angezoi@outlook.com

Feel free to contact me for any questions or information you want.
ΠΡΟΣΚΛΗΣΗ!

Περί τίνος πρόκειται;

Πρόκειται για την γειτονιά μας και για εμάς. Αυτή είναι μια διπλωματική έρευνα για τους τρόπους με τους οποίους μπορούμε να υπάρξουν περιθώρια βελτίωσης; Πώς μπορούν να αλλάξουν τα πρότυπα; Ποια είναι η αιτία που θέλουμε:

Γιατί εγώ; Γιατί εσείς;

Ανήκω και εγώ σε αυτή την γειτονιά και θέλω η έρευνά μου να είναι σχετική με την καθημερινότητά μου και να έχει αντικτυπο στην κοινότητα που ζού. Καθώς ανήκετε και εσείς σε αυτή την κοινότητα είναι σχετική στην έρευνά μου, καθώς και η έρευνά μου είναι σχετική για εσάς.

Πώς θα συμμετέχετε:

Συζητήστε το:

Μιλάτε σε μια μικρή συνεδρία μαζί μας τις απευθείας για τη γειτονιά μας. Τι σας αρέσει; Τι θα θέλατε να μπορείτε να κάνετε; Πώς πληροφορείτε για το τι συμβαίνει; Πώς επικοινωνείτε;

Γράψτε το:

Πάρτε από εμάς ένα σημειωματάριο και ένα στυλό, κρατήστε τα στην τοπική σας για μία εβδομάδα. Όταν βλέπετε κάτι για το οποίο θα θέλατε να μπορείτε να κάνετε κάτι, γράψτε το! Όταν είστε αυτές τις επιστολές να δώσουν μορφή στην πίσω όψη αλλαγή.

Πώς μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μου:

Ζωή Αγγελοπούλου
Τηλέφωνο: 6948952017
E-mail: angelo@outlook.com
Επικοινωνήστε ελεύθερα για πληροφορίες και απορίες.
Η δράση θα διαρκέσει από την 1/4/16 έως τις 30/4/16.
Appendix B1 - Consent Form Translated in English

Research Topic
New citizen participation forms supported by ICT in the municipality level.

Researcher
Zoi Angelopoulou, Master Programme in Information Systems, Linnaeus University

Purpose of the Research
The purpose of this research it to establish through engagement with citizens an understanding of how people of a specific municipality neighbourhood participate in their local community. This understanding aims at providing a constructive criticism of the current available forms and suggest new forms of participation which ICTs can support by making use of their unique characteristics.

Description of the Research Process
Participants will be asked to participate in a short interview conducted by the researcher the aim of which is to explore how participation in the municipality level is perceived. Additionally participants will be asked to carry a notebook for a specific time period provided by the researcher in which they will note their thoughts on possible participation based on everyday occasions they encounter.

The Benefits of the Research and the Benefits to You
This research will provide a new point of view on the participation of citizens and the use of ICT in this topic since it will be based on direct contact with citizen and its results will be based on actual concerns and desires. Participants will have a chance to provide their insight and constructive criticism on current participation forms and have their ideas made available through the process of this research to the academic society and the municipality administration. Finally, through this research awareness will be gained on current participation forms and of the role of the citizens in them.

Risk and Discomfort
The names as well as any personal information of participants referred in any part of the research will neither be mentioned in the thesis document nor revealed to third parties in order to ensure their privacy.

Participant’s Rights
The participation is voluntary, meaning that participants may withdraw at any time they feel the desire to do so without any obligation of providing justification for it. Contact details of the researchers will be available to participants for any information or questions regarding the research. The data and the resulting analysis of them will be available to participants upon request.

Access to Interview and Probes Material
The data gathered by the participants will be accessible by the researcher and supervising professor only without personal information of participants being correlated to the data. The data will be used strictly for the purposes of this thesis only, and will be deleted after its completion.
Consent
I understand and agree with the above statements.
Yes No

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw from the research any time I desire to do so.
Yes No

I understand that I can ask the researcher to remove any data provided by me.
Yes No

I consent to participate in the research study and I allow you to use the information that I will provide in your master thesis.
Yes No

I agree to audio record our interview
Yes No

Date and place of interview: _____________________________________________

Participant's name and signature: Researcher's name and signature:
Φόρμα συγκατάθεσης συμμετοχής σε έρευνα διπλωματικής εργασίας

Το θέμα της έρευνας
Νέες μορφές συμμετοχής πολιτών στην τοπική αυτοδιοίκηση με την υποστήριξη των τεχνολογιών πληροφοριών και επικοινωνίας.

Η ερευνήτρια
Ζωή Αγγελοπούλου, Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα Συστημάτων Πληροφόρησης (Master Programme in Information Systems), Πανεπιστήμιο Linnaeus.

Σκοπός της έρευνας
Ο σκοπός αυτής της έρευνας είναι να οικοδομήσει μία κατανόηση για το πώς οι πολίτες συμμετέχουν στην τοπική τους κοινότητα μέσα από την απευθείας επαφή μαζί τους. Μέσω αυτής της κατανόησης σκοπός είναι να δημιουργηθεί μία εποικοδομητική κριτική για τις υπάρχουσες μορφές συμμετοχής και να προταθούν καινούριες μορφές τις οποίες θα μπορούν να υποστηρίξουν οι τεχνολογίες πληροφοριών και επικοινωνίας κάνοντας χρήση των ιδιαίτερων χαρακτηριστικών τους.

Περιγραφή της ερευνητικής διαδικασίας
Από τους συμμετέχοντες στην έρευνα θα ζητηθεί να συμμετέχουν σε μία σύντομη συνέντευξη με την ερευνήτρια της οποίας σκοπός είναι να ερευνήσει ποια είναι η σχέση τους με τη συμμετοχή στην τοπική κοινότητα. Επιπλέον θα ζητηθεί από τους συμμετέχοντες να κρατήσουν πάνω τους ένα σημειωματάριο για ένα συγκεκριμένο χρονικό διάστημα στο οποίο θα σημειώνουν τις σκέψεις τους βάσει των ιδιαίτερων χαρακτηριστικών τους καθημερινές καταστάσεις καθώς και τις δημοτικές αρχές.

Τα οφέλη της έρευνας και τα οφέλη των συμμετεχόντων
Η έρευνα θα παρέχει μία νέα οπτική γωνία στη συμμετοχή των πολιτών και την χρήση των τεχνολογιών πληροφοριών και επικοινωνίας, καθώς θα βασιστεί στην άμεση επαφή με πολίτες και τα αποτελέσματα της θα αναφέρονται στην οικοδομητική κριτική για τις υπάρχουσες μορφές συμμετοχής καθώς και να τις κάνουν διαθέσιμες μέσα από αυτή την έρευνα στην ακαδημαϊκή κοινότητα και τις δημοτικές αρχές.

Κίνδυνοι και δυσφορία συμμετεχόντων
Τα ονόματα καθώς και οποιεσδήποτε προσωπικές πληροφορίες του συμμετέχοντος αναφερθούν κατά την διαδικασία της έρευνας δεν θα καταγραφούν στο κείμενο της εργασίας, ούτε θα αναφερθούν σε τρίτους για να εξασφαλιστεί η εμπιστευτικότητα και να προστατευθούν αναφερθούν στο κείμενο της εργασίας καθώς και να τις κάνουν διαθέσιμες μέσα από αυτή την έρευνα στην ακαδημαϊκή κοινότητα και τις δημοτικές αρχές.

Τα δικαιώματα του συμμετέχοντος
Η συμμετοχή στην έρευνα είναι εθελοντική και οι συμμετέχοντες μπορούν να αποχωρήσουν στιγμή θελήσουν χωρίς καμία υποχρέωση να υποβάλουν περαιτέρω εξήγηση για αυτό. Στοιχεία επικοινωνίας με την ερευνήτρια θα είναι διαθέσιμα στους συμμετέχοντες για συμμετοχές πληροφόρηση ή απορία που αφορά την έρευνα. Τα δεδομένα και τα
αποτελέσματα της έρευνας θα γίνονται διαθέσιμα στους συμμετέχοντες κατόπιν αιτήματός τους.

Πρόσβαση στα δεδομένα της έρευνας
Τα δεδομένα των συμμετεχόντων, συμπεριλαμβανομένης και αυτής της φόρμας, θα είναι διαθέσιμα μόνο στην ερευνήτρια καθώς και στην επιβλέπουσα καθηγήτρια της διπλωματικής εργασίας χωρίς όμως κανέναν συνεχισμό με φυσικά πρόσωπα. Τα δεδομένα θα χρησιμοποιηθούν αυστηρά στα πλαίσια αυτής της εργασίας και μόνο.

Συγκατάθεση
Κατανοώ και συμφωνώ με τα παραπάνω.
Ναι [ ] Όχι [ ]

Κατανοώ πως η συμμετοχή μου είναι εθελοντική και μπορώ να αποχωρήσω οποιαδήποτε στιγμή επιθυμώ χωρίς περιττό εξήγηση.
Ναι [ ] Όχι [ ]

Κατανοώ ότι μπορώ να ζητήσω από την ερευνήτρια να αφαιρέσει δεδομένα μου από την δημοσίευση της έρευνας χωρίς περιττό εξήγηση.
Ναι [ ] Όχι [ ]

Συναινώ στην αποχώρηση με αυτή την έρευνα και επιτρέπω την χρήση των πληροφοριών που θα παρέχω στην διπλωματική εργασία.
Ναι [ ] Όχι [ ]

Ημερομηνία και μέρος της συνέντευξης:

Όνομα και υπογραφή του συμμετέχοντος: ______________________________

Όνομα και υπογραφή της ερευνήτριας: ______________________________
Appendix C - Interview Question Sets

C1: Interview question for neighborhood citizens
1. Have you been living long in this neighborhood?
2. How do you like it here?
3. Have you ever participated in an event happening here?
4. Have you ever used the Municipality’s structures or services? (e.g. art lessons, the gym, the swimming pool)
5. How do you get informed about these?
6. Have you ever contacted the Municipality for some reason? How did you do it?
7. Do you know the Municipality’s suggestion form featured in its webpage?
8. What do you think happens to these suggestions?
9. Are you satisfied with the available ways you have to express yourself on local matters?
10. Have you ever thought you could do a better job than the Mayor about something?
11. What do you think about the groups that are active in the neighborhood?
12. What is your opinion on volunteering?
13. What do you think are the obstacles that prevent citizens from participating?
14. Do citizens discuss between them about the local issues that trouble them?
15. What would be your ideal form of communication?
16. Have you ever thought of doing something yourself about what troubles you in the neighborhood?
17. How would you like it if the Municipality asked you to do a task according to your skills?
18. If you could magically change one thing about the Municipality, what would it be?

C2: Interview questions for group members
1. Have you been living long in this neighborhood?
2. How do you like it here?
3. How long have you been part of this group?
4. How did you come about being in this group?
5. What is it that you do in this group?
6. What is your relationship with the Municipality?
7. How do you communicate with other members of the group?
8. How do you get informed about the news of the group?
9. Does the group use social media?
10. How do you think citizens of the neighborhood perceive your group?
11. Are you satisfied with the available ways you have to express yourself on local matters?
12. What is your opinion on the other groups which are active in the neighborhood?
13. What do you think are the obstacles that prevent citizens from participating?
14. What would you like to be able to do to support this group?
15. What would be your ideal form of communication?
16. If you could magically change one thing about the Municipality, what would it be?

C3: Interview questions for the Head of Communication
1. Have you been living long in this neighborhood?
2. How do you like it here?
3. How did you come about this occupation?
4. What are your responsibilities as Head of Communication?
5. What was the situation you faced when receiving your post?
6. How did you come about launching the Municipality’s social media?
7. What were your criteria for starting from the social media?
8. Do you feel like the Municipality provides sufficient information and ways of communication to citizens?
9. Do you believe citizens want to express themselves?
10. What do you think of the groups which are active in the Municipality?
11. What do you think are the obstacles that prevent citizens from participating?
12. How would you like the citizens to participate?
13. What would be an ideal communication form for you?
14. If you could magically change one thing about the Municipality, what would it be?
### Appendix D – Example of coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Obstacles</td>
<td>People think about issues but don’t talk about them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People should dare to act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mentality is the main issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Citizens should also learn to conform to rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People are not careful of what they throw in recycling bins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People are losing touch with each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Citizens should support groups more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People think it’s a waste of time to try to participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People don’t see the point in participating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People only talk at coffee houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People don’t mind their own behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Citizens should not only complain but also act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People should get educated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People realize problems but don’t do something about it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No one cares about the trees and green in the neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The employees of the Municipality are often rude</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bad organizing in the Municipality’s activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What is the motivation of the Municipality in inviting citizens?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of know-how of Municipality’s employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of good management in the Municipality services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Municipality is distant from the local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of knowledge of the demographics of the Municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of strategic planning in the action of the Municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obstacles</td>
<td>Disbelief towards the Municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indifference of citizens</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inactiveness of citizens</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ignorance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of motivation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People don’t get down to searching about ways to participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No time to participate due to long working hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of news concerning participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of awareness of the Municipality’s initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People are immersed in their daily rhythms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People lack the good will to participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There is lack of information on how one can participate and to what</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E – Declaration of Submission of Thesis

Linnaeus University
Sweden

Declaration – Submission of the Thesis

This form should be included in the thesis. Before you sign please see
http://refero.linnaeus.se/english/what-is-plagiarism/ where you found information about
plagiarism and check also the Harvard System of referencing
http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zoe Angelopoulou</td>
<td>Course Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree project in Informatics at Master Level</td>
<td>5IK50E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did you write the thesis alone or in cooperation with someone? Tick one of the boxes

- [x] I am the sole author of the thesis.
- [ ] The thesis is co-authored with other students, and together we are responsible for the entire project.
- [ ] The project report is co-authored with other students, and I am responsible for part of it. The parts I am responsible for are specified in the project report.

I declare that in my/our thesis, I

1: did not re-use my previous work without referring to it
2: did not use others work without referring to their work (e.g. course literature, scientific publications, other types of articles, web sites or lecture material)
3: use the references and quotes in a proper way
4: included all references and resources in a reference list

I am aware that not citing and using references in a correct way may be considered as plagiarism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
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