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From reaction to initiative: Potentials of contributive participation

Participation in spatial planning has been studied extensively in the past decades, but many cases of spatial planning have nonetheless seen a gap between decision-makers and local residents. This is why participation in spatial planning has become a classic research question of many urban planning–related sciences. The greatest focus has been on cases of participation that present some kind of reaction to plans or actions, whereas far less attention has been given to cases of participation based on initiatives and the search for new content for underused or decaying areas. Such cases usually start with initiatives for the new use of particular places and often result in physical changes to these places. This article defines various types of local initiatives, and it especially studies the distinction between reactionary and contributive local initiatives and relates them to the notion of community. The article is based on an analysis of two particular cases. The differences in these two cases represent a foundation for the article's conclusions, which emphasises the potentials for stimulating contributive participation. The conclusion includes recommendations for the spatial planning system to become more open to participation in terms of revitalising underused spaces because such space has been increasing during the economic downturn. The complex and inefficient system of spatial planning is turning away many creative initiatives.

Key words: participation, local initiatives, urban regeneration, community.

1   Introduction

The concept of participation gained importance in spatial planning after the Second World War. An important landmark was the ninth International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) and the subsequent search for new practices in architecture, which included withdrawal from the technocratic approach to spatial planning and the transformation of the role of the omniscient architect. Consequently, greater emphasis has been laid on participative urbanism (Chasin, 2011). Modern spatial planning has often resulted in uses of space that have significantly differed from the planned ones (Uršič, 2008) and, moreover, modern spatial planning has often triggered opposition and resistance from the public (Čerpes, 2011). Consequently, experts have focused on more systematic analysis of including participation in spatial planning. The main aim has been to democratise spatial planning, which was in line with the political changes in the developed world as an increasing number of countries adopted a democratic political system. Such a system usually joins a representative and direct democracy, combined with formalised participation as some kind of corrector of the representative model. Democratisation of spatial planning was related to reducing the gap between planners or decision-makers on the one hand and the public or local residents on the other. Related to this, there have been attempts to analyse participation by distinguishing different types by scale, based on the influence that the participants had on decision-making. Sherry Arnstein (1969) has pointed out types of participation and nonparticipation. Types of participation have been divided into three areas: nonparticipation, tokenism and citizen power. The scale has eight levels; the lowest one is manipulation and the highest one is citizen control. Specific methods of participation and their potentials have also been analysed (see Sinclair, 1977). Both of these studies of participation have focused more on the top-down aspect of participation. Techniques of participation have primarily been analysed from the point of view of the planner, with an emphasis on the potential of including the results in spatial planning by city officials, decision-makers and planners. It could be argued that explaining participation in this manner is insufficient because some local participation practices are never linked with the local decision-makers; for example, cooperation between neighbourhood residents in improving the quality of public space or publicly accessible privately owned space within a neighbourhood. This would present a shift from definitions of participation as established by political science, which define participation as a communication process between residents and decision-makers (see Lavtar, 2007). In my case I tend to define participation as involvement of an individual in social processes, which is more in line with the sociological definitions of participation. This article is founded on the following definition: diverse, specifi-

cally undefined activities at the neighbourhood level that seek to improve the neighbourhood (Filipovič Hrast & Dekker, 2009). The concept of participation has often been divided into formal and informal participation. Sometimes authors have used the terms *vertical* and *horizontal participation*, and *bottom-up* and *top-down* have also been used (see Mlinar 1973; van Beckhoven & van Boxmeer, 2007; Foster-Fishman et al., 2009; Pek Drapal & Drevenšek, 2001; Blakeley & Evans, 2008; Bizjak, 2012). These distinctions deal with the more or less same method of dividing participation into sub-concepts that are often related to participation as required by law (formal, top-down) and participation not required by law (informal, bottom-up; see Bizjak, 2012).

It is mostly the public and the local community that have been highlighted as dealing with institutions in relation to planning matters. The *public* probably refers to a community of stakeholders because the term *local community* usually refers to a community of more or less interlinked local residents. Such an understanding of a local community might be rooted in Toennies' concept of *Gemeinschaft,*[1] referring to a strongly tied community of individuals that meet each other often, trust each other and are similar in specific characteristics (Mlinar, 1973; Brint, 2001; Filipovič, 2007). There has also been extensive research on which conditions allow participation in spatial planning (e.g., Larrsen et al., 2004), and which techniques facilitate planned interventions. It has been concluded that local communities generally try to participate when they are somehow attached to the place in question. This raises the following question (see Jones, 2003; Mathers et al., 2008) about the motives for participation: if the motives are individual and pragmatic, do people become involved because there is an aim they want to achieve, and should this therefore be explained as an instrumental action? If so, the decision to participate at the individual level would be based on comparison of costs and potential benefits of the specific participation. However, analysing participation in such a manner rarely provides unambiguous conclusions, particularly if the residents of a certain locality become involved at the local level, whereas in another place local residents do not become involved, neither as individuals nor as a community, even though certain disagreements have been expressed in relation to the planned intervention (see also Gans, 1962; Granovetter, 1973). Analysis of specific case studies has highlighted the limitations of explaining participation as an instrumental action and, because of that, two new concepts have been incorporated into researching participation: *social capital* and *community*. A simple definition of social capital explains it as capital that is based on social ties and on norms and trust (Putnam, 2000). I avoid defining "community" because the concept of the community has often been analysed within sociological theory; moreover, many established sociologists have explained the concept;

for example, Ferdinand Toennies, Emile Durkheim, Benedict Anderson, Louis Wirth, Amitai Etzioni, Pitirim Sorokin, and many others. Thus a particular definition of the community is avoided. It is sufficient for the further development of this article to note that a community is a crowd of more or less interlinked individuals. The number of ties linking these individuals matters because there could only be one tie (residing in a particular neighbourhood, for example) or a commutation of several ties (residing in a particular neighbourhood, similar lifestyle, profession, religion, etc.). Pitirim Sorokin and Carle Zimmerman have defined a community in a similar manner (1929; cited in Mlinar, 1973). Some attention has also been focused on the duration of these ties.

This article mostly focuses on selected local case studies, on which the conclusions are based. These offer a contribution to the local system of spatial planning, but are universal enough to provide a contribution to research on participation in spatial planning at a more general, transnational level. That represents a contribution to the theoretical understanding of participation in spatial planning. The topic of participation was selected for this research because it has been noted that participation should be further developed in order to link it with potential cases of urban regeneration. The importance of including local residents in urban regeneration has often been argued (e.g. Križnik, 2008; Ho et al., 2012). In Ljubljana, the most important issue is probably regeneration of the housing developments built in the second half of the twentieth century, as claimed by Dejan Rebernik (2002). Slovenian housing developments are characterised by fragmented individual ownership of the housing stock, which is a consequence of laws from the early 1990s. Therefore regeneration would not be possible without intensive inclusion of the residents (i.e., the owners of the flats), which means that a step forward is needed in participative spatial planning in terms of urban regeneration. Therefore the following research questions were deliberately formed in a loose manner:

- Which factors stimulate participation in spatial planning?
- How do these factors influence the form of the participation?
- How did the changes at the level of community formation affect participation in spatial planning?
- What is the relationship between social capital and participation, or what types of ties link participants in local initiatives?
- Are there any obstacles at the system level (in the local and transnational sense) that could be noted as a setback in the development of local initiatives that aim at place-making in terms of decayed urban areas?

The research questions have been formed in a loose manner deliberately in order not to limit inductive reasoning. The research does not seek to confirm (or reject) any particular hypothesis, but to inductively develop new theses or substantial theories. This is what the research methods are based on.

2 Theoretical premises

2.1 The meaning of social capital in participation in spatial planning

The role of social capital in spatial planning or in place-making has often been emphasised. Mainly it has been claimed that the level of social capital correlates with the probability of the participative practice at the neighbourhood level (Docherty et al., 2001; Leilevendt, 2004; Hays & Kogel, 2007). Those neighbourhoods in which the connectedness between residents is stronger, as well as the attachment to the neighbourhood, could be described as neighbourhoods with stronger social capital. Most authors tend to agree on the correlation between participation and social capital; however, the division between the bonding and bridging form of social capital has been noted as important. Bonding social capital could be linked to homogenous communities in which the members are strongly connected (the *Gemeinschaft* type of community), whereas bridging social capital stands for heterogeneous individuals connected with weaker ties (Woolcoc, 1998, cited in Bull & Jones, 2006). Participation (in the political sense of meaning) is primarily a result of the bridging type of social capital (see Gans, 1962); that is to say, a consequence of the weaker ties that embrace a greater number of individuals (Granovetter, 1973). Similarly, participation has been linked with the notion of community. Primarily a transition from a rural to urban community has been discussed in this relation (Wirth, 1939). The urban way of life has often been perceived as a threat to the traditional definition of the community because an individual in an urban, industrialised society did not need a community affiliation for his survival (see Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Therefore an individual could afford not to be a member of any community, which is believed to impose a negative influence on political participation (see Putnam, 2000) because mobilisation of unconnected individuals is far less likely. However, this should not be understood in the sense that local communities are meaningless in urbanised society; a sense of local community has been developed in some neighbourhoods, particularly in neighbourhoods in which residents are linked through workplace and residence; that is to say, older working-class neighbourhoods (Križnik, 2008). To sum up, participation is more likely if local community members cooperate and communicate among themselves. On the other hand, an outside threat can stimulate social capital at the local level, even though the community members have not cooperated significantly before (Sennet, 2002). In such cases, anger and opposition represent a link connecting the members of the local community. With all this in mind, it makes sense to

analyse participation from the social capital point of view, and in relation to the presence of a threat at the local level, in order to highlight the differences between various local initiatives. However, these variables may be less useful when analysing local initiatives that are not rooted in the perception of an outside threat.

Analysis of participation as a reaction to a particular threat has mainly been related to the above understanding of the concepts of community and social capital, whereas participation as a contributive component of place-making has been far less researched. At this point I posit two new concepts, contributive and consumptive participation in spatial planning, which were introduced by Zdravko Mlinar (1973). Contributive participation refers to contribution to a group or community in order to profit from particular goods or services from this group or community. Consumptive participation refers to participation in place-making that is based on fulfilling the specific needs of an individual through participation in a community. This article modifies Mlinar's theory because the preliminary study that was carried out before the actual research began mainly pointed to a slightly different bifurcation of participative practices. The first form is a reaction to a particular perceived threat, whereas the second represents a search for (and implementation of) a new use of underused spaces and places (the distinction between place and space will not be expanded; the basic distinction that links a *space* to instrumental functions and a *place* to reflective scenery (Hočevar, 2000) is sufficient for this article). These spaces cannot be linked to any specific threat or, to put it differently, communities that participate in the transformation of these spaces do not perceive these threats as relevant. Because Mlinar's manner of distinguishing two types of participation is most in line with my bifurcation, Mlinar's term *contributive participation* is used throughout the article because the respective type of participation represents a contribution of community to the place-making process in terms of underused or decayed spaces. Participation that refers to a reaction by the local community has been referred to as *reactionary local initiative*[2] because it represents a reaction to a particular outside threat. Explaining the differences between these defined two forms of participation is the main topic of this article.

2.2 The potentials of contributive participation in place-making

Reactionary local initiatives are a consequence of a threat by which a local community is mobilised. According to Marxist thinkers (see Harvey 2008, 2012), a perceived threat has often been linked with investments; that is to say, capital. It has been argued that a surplus of capital has often been invested in real estate development projects in order to provide

accumulation of capital and potential profits, to put it simply. Therefore urbanisation has been presented as a process of capital absorption. In line with this, a growth coalition has often been formed (see Molotch, 1976, 1988). If local residents or the local community that has used and/or identified with the particular space has not seen their own interest in the project initiated by the growth coalition, they might form a local initiative that opposes the implementation of the project. This presumption could be tested in a local manner if the amount of local initiatives before and after the crisis were noted, presuming that the diminishing purchasing power and demand would result in a lower amount of real estate developments. Obviously, such comparisons are impossible because a methodologically reliable and valid overview of local initiatives does not exist. Moreover, periodical overviews (every few years) would be needed in order to enable the comparison. However, concluding from Marxism, the number of reactionary local initiatives should have dropped because of the diminishing level of demand that would cause a drop in the amount of investments in the real estate project. Furthermore, this would influence a drop in traditional urban regeneration projects, and because of the diminished purchase power the demand for flats and retail space would decrease, and so would the demand for the office space as a result of a shrinking economy. This has been confirmed by the decrease in building permits in Slovenia. The number of building permits issued has decreased significantly since 2006; for example, in 2006 43% more permits were issued than in 2011.[3] Consequently, urban regeneration projects, developed in a bottom-up manner, have become more important in terms of place-making.

At this point, a cultural change theory (see Inglehart & Welzel, 2005) is incorporated into the article. It has been claimed that post-industrial society is supposed to favour self-expressive values. This would be a consequence of specialisation, higher level of education, greater emphasis on creativity and the increased complexity of post-industrial society. In line with this, there has been increased elite challenging behaviour and more spontaneous and specific social actions. That could be further developed into local initiatives that are based on self-expressive values and the creativity of their members. This would result in physical or spatial transformations of a specific place. As a result, the social factors on which reactionary and contributive participation are based are theoretically explained.

3 Methodology

This article is based on research that was carried out for a doctoral dissertation. In the article only the main methodological issues are explained. A qualitative method rooted in a grounded theory (GT) approach was used in the research. Even though GT is an entire research model (see Kavčič, 2012), it has been

adapted in this research in a manner that fits the domain and aims of this research. There has been a withdrawal from early forms of GT in which an inductive approach was excessively emphasised. That would have been less appropriate in my case because quite some research has already been carried out in relation to participation in place-making, which should not be overlooked. In doing so, the possibility of forming conclusions that had already been made before would hypothetically increase. GT as a research method does not seek to confirm or reject any particular hypothesis. Quantitative measurements could also not be argued as among the aims of GT. The aim of GT is to develop new theories that contain meaningful characteristics of specific research phenomena. Matic Kavčič (2012: 7) noted that "This defines concepts analysing the conditions in which actions and interactions through which these phenomena are expressed occur. Consequences of these phenomena are described as well." In addition, a local context was selected for study because one of my research goals was to apply the conclusions to the local spatial planning system. Moreover, it was not aimed at positing universally valid theories. The goal was to contribute to potential urban regenerations[4] with new findings, which was the main reason for selecting GT. Therefore precisely set hypotheses that would be confirmed or rejected through the research were avoided. Instead, loosely formed research questions were set and further developed throughout the study by forming ad-hoc hypotheses that were set by constantly combining an inductive and deductive research approach, meaning that a kind of abduction was the case, which is the usual approach of GT. The deductive part is a theoretical introduction followed by the development of sensitising concepts: reactionary and contributive participation in spatial planning. Sensitising concepts are a kind of guideline for researchers by which a domain of the research is defined. Afterwards, the categories of the research are formed, based on the theory studies and case studies. The categories were *threat*, *expectations*, *structural possibilities* and *social capital*. In addition to the theoretical part that I have already explained, in which sensitising concepts and consequently categories were formed, the research was also carried out the case studies and provided foundations for the final conclusions. Two case studies were selected, based on the sensitising concepts and noted categories. Both cases could strongly be associated with (at least some of) the categories. The selection was content-based. The first case, the Fond houses, could be associated with the category called "threat". The second case, Tabor, could be associated with the category of "structural possibilities". Both cases are located in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

In the research on the selected cases – that is to say, two local initiatives – potential interviewees were theoretically selected. Theoretical sampling is the most usual part of GT and involves deliberate selection of the subsequent interview units, based on

knowledge and information already gathered (Kavčič, 2012). The interviewing ended when saturation occurred, at the single case level. In the first case, the interviewing started with local residents that were most deeply involved in organising the local initiative, then with local residents that did not take part in the local initiative and afterwards with residents that were against the local imitative; at the end, residents of the surrounding neighbourhoods were interviewed. The second case was addressed in a similar manner; first individuals involved in the local initiatives were interviewed, then local residents, afterwards individuals linked with the local initiative that did not reside in the area and so on. Because the importance of the municipality and its relationship with the selected local initiatives was pointed out in both cases, two interviews were carried out with the representatives of the urban planning department and section for citizens' initiatives.

The data gathered through interviews were analysed by coding. First open coding took place in order to define concepts, then axial coding was performed and the process of coding ended with selective coding. The concepts were linked into substantial theories on which the conclusions were founded.

4   Results
4.1   First case: Fond houses

Fond houses is a neighbourhood in Ljubljana close to the Bežigrad Sports Park. The history of the neighbourhood has been well analysed by Nataša Žlender (1987). The houses, which are actually small apartment blocks, were built in the 1930s by the railway company fund. In the Fond houses, which are named after the railway fund, about 125 families and some additional individuals initially resided. What they had in common was a link with the Yugoslav railways. This tie became less significant after a while, but even so the railways employed more than half of the neighbourhood residents in the years after the Second World War. There was a cooperative within the railways at that time that helped its employees find housing. The process of building the Fond houses was governed by a board, which was divided into an administrative board and supervisory board. Apartments in different locations were offered and often a main reason for choosing an apartment in Fond houses was based on a garden belonging to an apartment in the Fond houses. The land where the gardens were decreased as time went by. Because of this, the gardens were repartitioned in order to provide gardens for every apartment. The repartitioning created a high level of solidarity among the residents.

The selection of the Fond houses case was based on the assumption that it represents a rather classic case of local mobilisation triggered by a threat to the real estate value or to the quality of life. The mobilisation was triggered by a plan for the Bežigrad

Figure 1: Local community in the gardens of the Fond houses (source: Internet 1).

stadium renovation to be organised as a private-public partnership in which the Municipality of Ljubljana and a private investor would have had a joint role. The main trigger for local mobilisation was a plot that the city invested in public-private partnership. The ownership of the plot was discussed, but that is not the subject of this article. The research showed that the gardens are the main community place within the neighbourhood from a historical perspective. In the past, building on that plot had been considered, but was never implemented. The local residents formed some kind of local opposition towards the respective plans, but my interviews did not show that the previous opposition significantly influenced today's practices. The threat that was perceived in recent years not only influenced the mobilisation of local residents, but also significantly influenced the links between them in a positive manner. The level of cooperation in the neighbourhood was much higher after the threat. Exhibitions and picnics were organised, and also mutual help based on solidarity, such as when digging through the gardens. One could posit that an outside factor – for example, a threat – influenced the level of social capital. However, the social capital that was witnessed in the case of the Fond houses has been astonishingly strong in terms of strength of the ties. The community itself has also been strongly interlinked. The links between the residents are based on a historically strongly linked community. The indigenous residents were linked between themselves through their work with the railways, and women through taking care of the house and work in the gardens, and the children attended the same primary school (Žlender, 1987). In the interviews it was pointed out that connectedness diminished as time went by; however, an outside threat, planned renovation of the stadium, revitalised it. Therefore it could be claimed that there had been a high level of (latent) bonding social capital. That the form of the social capital was bonding social capital was concluded from information from people that had recently started renting an apartment in the neighbourhood or that resided on nearby streets. They did not take part in the events organised at the neighbourhood level because they did not feel that they were

community members. During my research the history of the neighbourhood was often emphasised as rather important. It could be reckoned that the local initiative was founded on the historical characteristics of the neighbourhood's function. One of the aims of the local initiative was a revitalisation of the neighbourhood management structure that was in use decades ago. Members of the local initiative encountered opposition in a growth coalition that includes the investor and several institutions, which is in line with the Marxist critique of spatial planning (e.g., Molotch, 1976, 1988). Their activities mostly focused on finding a way of bringing the planned renovation of the stadium to a standstill in this manner. The pace of the local initiative was in line with the actions of the local institutions in charge of spatial planning. The members' expectations vary, but in general their position is that it is difficult for local initiatives to influence spatial planning in Slovenia. The expectations of the members of the local initiatives in which they participate were rather ambiguous, as concluded from the interviews. However, residents that have been involved in the local initiative at a more significant, deeper level have high expectations for the potential success of the initiative. Despite this, even these residents felt strongly about the lack of structural possibilities for local initiatives to influence the planning process. This power could be acquired by outstanding effort and endeavour, as was noted in the interviews. The residents based such statements mostly on their own experiences.

The way some of the residents were informed of the redevelopment plan could be argued to be important. Some of them only realised that there was a redevelopment planned when they saw a plot where gardens had already been fenced off by construction workers. As the interviews pointed out, this diminished the possibilities for dialogue between the investors and the residents.

4.2 Second case: Tabor Park

Tabor Park is located on the eastern side of the centre of Ljubljana, between the Tabor Gym, the Park Hotel and a local church. One of the prevailing characteristics of the Tabor area is a concentration of arts and culture institutions; for instance, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum, the National Museum of Slovenia, Bunker Productions and so on. There are several subculture institutions in the area as well, particularly on the northern part of Metelko Street, where an autonomous social cultural centre is located. Most of the local arts and culture institutions are incorporated in the Tabor cultural quarter initiative. Mostly residential buildings are located in the area, alongside some public institutions, schools, a student residence, a home for the elderly, hotels and hostels. In addition, a significant presence of cultural and creative industries has been noted in

the area, particularly in the northern part of the neighbourhood (Žaucer et al., 2011). Socioeconomic analysis makes less sense in the case of Tabor because the neighbourhood is rather heterogeneous, with luxury apartments alongside older houses and apartment buildings. Because there are new buildings in the area, a process of gentrification could be claimed. A significant portion of local residents resides in the area temporarily. This is mostly a consequence of the student residence and the home for the elderly (Žaucer et al., 2010).

In terms of the local initiative for Tabor Park, it is obvious that it was not triggered by any kind of threat. Even though the park was obviously decaying and unattractive to residents, before the revitalisation process started the local residents did not perceive this as a threat, at least not in a manner that would have mobilised them.[5] It could be argued that the level of connectedness between the local residents was not particularly high; the residents were not deeply affiliated with the neighbourhood and there was no such thing as a closely connected local community at the neighbourhood level. By focusing on social capital, in case of the local initiative this does not necessarily seem to deal with residency in the area. Socialising in the park and identifying with it was not directly related to residing in the area. Therefore the theory of social capital was not particularly helpful in terms of explaining the local initiative, unless the theory was shifted to the community level in relation to NGOs. The local initiative was based on the network that links different NGOs,[6] which could all somehow be related to creativity and culture.[7] The park revitalisation process was based on incorporating different communities in the process, at least in terms of providing the event in the park. Basically, it is about different creative communities that organise events in the park or take part in these events. People that take part in the events organised by local initiatives in the park are not necessarily from the area. Local residents that use the park often meet people in the park that do not reside in the area. From all of this I conclude that the local initiative was based on a weak network of communities, which is why it is rather easy to participate in the local initiative. That could also be relevant for involvement in the events in the park. Therefore the case of Tabor deals with a local initiative, which, in contrast to the initiative from the Fond houses, was not so focused on local residents only, but was based on the network of communities that are linked by lifestyle characteristics and creativity. This was expressed in my research.

The initial expectations of the local initiative were based on cases of urban revitalisation from foreign cities. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that foreign cases functioned as an inspiration. People less affiliated in the initiative expressed slight surprise in relation to the success of the local initiative because they had not been used to such cases in Lju-

Figure 2: Event in Tabor Park, Surprise Fair (photo: Matjaž Tančič).

bljana. Later, the local initiative of Tabor Park became some kind of inspiration for other local initiatives across the city.

Institutional support for the local Tabor Park initiative was also analysed. It could be argued that a couple of European projects were important sources of initial support because they enabled the NGOs involved to support a local initiative. However it was noted that the local initiative had no direct contact at the municipal and sub-municipal levels that would have enough decision-making and policymaking power at the local level. This does not mean that the local initiative was not supported by the Municipality of Ljubljana, which did support the initiative, as did the centre borough and some national institutions. The emphasis is on the lack of a contact point with the municipal institutions and the consequence is that the local initiative had to deal with many administrators and decision-makers that operate within the institutions. This results in a complex environment with many administrative obstacles that local initiatives must deal with, which consequentially averts part of the potential contributive participative practices. The main NGO involved in the local initiative (ProstoRož) has been dealing with place-making related issues for quite some time now and is therefore experienced enough to know well how to establish a relationship with an appropriate institution and has some knowledge about the local spatial planning system.

It was pointed out above that there is significant potential in organisations that could link local administration and institutions on the one hand and local initiatives and engaged individuals on the other. Often other local initiatives contacted the NGO most involved in the Tabor case in order to cooperate in revitalising other localities. The individuals interviewed also contacted the NGO and not the municipal institutions, even in the case of matters that are controlled by the municipality. Based on that, I posit that organisations that would represent a contact point for local initiatives have significant potential in stimulating contributive participation. In my research I pointed out that a significant share of creative individuals or communities did not realise their initiatives because they did not

know who to contact, and at the same time they anticipated facing a bureaucratically complex system when implementing the initiative. This was pointed out by many interviewees that participated in the Tabor Park local initiative, even though they resided elsewhere. In the localities where they resided they did not take an active part in local community matters. One of the reasons is they did not have any acquaintances in the localities where they reside.

5   Discussion

In my discussion I posit that local initiatives could be formed without an outside threat; that they can be grassroots networks by different communities. This is based on the case noted above and is a deviation from the notion that perception of a threat and a high level of social capital at the neighbourhood level stimulate participation (see Larrsen et al., 2004). However, my findings are in line with theories that analysed cultural changes in relation to postmodern society and noted an increase in spontaneous, specific issue-related social activities (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). However, this did not present a diminishment of the importance of a threat and its potential in triggering local initiatives in a particular locality. As pointed out by Richard Sennet, a threat is a factor that has the potential to stimulate the development of a communal identity, but there are forms of participation that have developed regardless of an outside threat. A similar conclusion was posited by Jim Diers (2006), who claimed people have a tendency to stay away from the traditional form of participation but are interested in new forms of community activity at the same time. This cannot be explained by the social capital theory or by local community notions or points of view because, as pointed out in the Tabor case, the local community is not necessarily a community of local residents, but could be a community that is somehow linked to or identifies with a particular urban place, in the case above with Tabor Park. Therefore the traditional notion of a local community could not be argued in this case in which the notion of community has been defined as much more postmodern, which could be differentiated from the concept of a modern community by its temporariness and the voluntariness of its members. Membership in the community could not be claimed as ascribed, but as chosen in this case. This is in line with theories dealing with the notion of the community in postmodern society (e.g. Bauman, 2001). However, the case analysed pointed out that even postmodern communities could be linked to particular localities. Raimondo Strassoldo (1990) has reckoned that localism, which was always an important element of daily life, has not merely vanished, but has transformed into *new localism*. New localism can be argued as a voluntary choice of an individual that should not be taken as obvious, in contrast to the local rootedness of traditional

society. New localism is less demanding and burdensome in terms of the ties between community members. To sum up, the second case analysed shows that it is not only the local communities that participate in place-making, but it could also be other communities that are connected between themselves by a similar lifestyle and identification with a particular space. This has raised a new question of different urban populations. Guido Martinotti (1996) noted four urban populations: *inhabitants*, *commuters*, *city users* and *metropolitan businessmen*. If the definition above were shifted to the communities involved in the Tabor Park case (I refer to actively and passively involved communities here), then Tabor Park could be related to Martinotti's theory. City users can be involved in a participative practise or, so to speak, local initiative, and could therefore contribute to a higher quality of life in a specific locality. This means that city users are not necessarily a wind in the sails of urban gentrification, particularly if the presence of the city users is not disturbing for the local residents. Such conflicts have been noted before; Jon May analysed them in the case of London (1996). Even in case of local participation, a conflict is possible between residents and citizens from elsewhere, which was researched by Jonathan Lepofsky and James Fraser (2003). The authors point out cases in which communities (or individuals) identify themselves by participation in place-making in localities that are not their place of residency. These could also be professional community builders whose lifestyle includes being globally oriented and somehow placeless, but who participate in bottom-up practices (Lepofsky & Fraser 2003). Therefore their goals might be opposite from the goals of local residents (Lepofsky & Fraser 2003). In the Tabor Park case, this would mean a conflict of interests between local residents and those involved in the local community, but another context was pointed out in my research. The local residents claimed that they actually liked the presence of the city users in the area where their lived. Often it was impossible for them to differentiate between residents and city users, which indicates that the local community is interlinked with weak ties. This notion could be argued as important if related to theories that connect social capital with local participation, which has been argued by many authors to date (e. g. Marschall, 2001; Lepofsky & Fraser, 2003; Leileveldt, 2004; Hays & Kogl, 2007; Márquez, 2011; Cirman et al., 2013).

Social capital in the case of the Tabor Park local initiative could much more easily be related to weak ties than to strong ties. The role of weak ties can be more decisive than that of strong ties in local participation. Weak ties enable larger networks and therefore greater mobilisation of resources (Granovetter, 1973). This notion is even more useful for the article if it is related to Richard Florida's idea that creative individuals are supposedly part of a so-called creative class, meaning individuals

with creative occupations (see Florida, 2004; Egedy & Kovacs, 2010; Kozina, 2014). Florida argues that creative individuals seek communities connected by weaker ties because they make fewer demands on the individual and are consequently easier to fit into because such communities limit an individual less. Similar issues have been noted by Herbert Gans (1969), who noted cases of communities linked by strong ties that were abandoned by the creative communities because they were the first that felt limited in such communities. It has been noted in my research that a significant share of individuals involved in a local initiative were involved in creative occupations, which is in line with Florida's notions. At the same time, the Tabor Park case confirms that a local initiative does not have to be rooted in the local community but could be rooted in local communities. Therefore a local initiative could provide virtual and physical contact between different communities, which then transforms itself into a social network composed of different communities, which is, up to some point, in line with the theory of communities posited by Sorokina and Zimmermana (1929, cited in Mlinar 1973). These local communities are linked to the decision-makers and institutions dealing with the spatial planning through the NGO, which is in charge of the local initiative. This did not surprise me (the potentials of NGOs as links between communities and institutions) because the public has no resources (knowledge, for instance) or human resource potentials (Bizjak, 2012). The potentials of NGOs involved in regenerating housing developments has also been noted by other authors (e.g., Ploštajner et al., 2003; Filipovič Hrast & Dekker, 2007).

The first case analysed, the case of Fond houses, seems to be more of a classic case of local participation. It is a consequence of an outside threat and is based on a high level of social capital. The social capital is based on stronger ties, which is typical of older neighbourhoods in which local residents are connected though labour and residency. This type of connectedness could be labelled an imagined one (e.g. Križnik 2008, 2009). This claim is based on Benedict Anderson's concept of the imagined community (1983, cited in Brint, 2001), but adds that imagined communities do have a genuine impact on the relationships between the members of these communities (Križnik 2008, 2009). In the case of Fond houses, it was about the imagined community that was based on the latent social capital that was revitalised by an outside threat. The genuine impact in the Tabor case was expressed in local mobilisation in the form of a local initiative. However, it should be noted that Fond houses was not a traditional working-class neighbourhood because the indigenous residents were socially mixed even though the residents were linked by strong ties. A significant level of solidarity between the residents was pointed out in the interviews and frequent socialising at the neigh-

bourhood level on a daily basis as well. In forming the local initiative, social capital played an important role: a local initiative was founded on the remnants of the social capital from the previous decades which the initiative has restructured. It is not just the bonding social capital that has been involved in the local initiative – even though it was most important. Bridging social capital was important for the activities of the local initiative in terms of links with significant experts living outside the neighbourhood but linked with the residents. That enabled the local initiative to acquire information relevant for their activities (e.g., legal opinions). The distinction between working-class and middle-class participation practices has often been based on the relationship between bonding and bridging social capital because the lower classes often lack this kind of social capital (see Gans, 1969; Marchal, 2001).

In terms of community, in the case of Fond houses it could not be claimed that the overlap was complete, but it was at least considerable. The community of gardeners seemed important because they were most directly faced by the threat. The community of gardeners significantly overlapped with the community of local residents. The gardens were the main space for socialising in the neighbourhood. Therefore it could be argued that the case was not a local community, but several local communities between which the relationships might have been tense. However, the community linked with the gardens is most significant within the neighbourhood and is well interlinked.

In the case of Fond houses, the stage of including the residents in the planning process seems important, referring to the late introduction of formal participation. It has been argued by Igor Bizjak that the landlords' negative attitude was not unusual in terms of public hearings in relation to spatial plans (2012). On the other hand, it has been argued by some authors that shortening the procedures and related exclusion of the public from the early stages with an explanation that the public is the factor that prolongs the procedures has actually resulted in prolonged procedures and has increased the gap between the citizens and institutions (see Peterlin & Cerar, 2011). Only the result is presented to the public at public hearings, meaning that the public does not know about the process of attaining the result and has a lack of knowledge about the planning process (see Bizjak, 2012). This presented an additional factor in terms of mobilisation, as was pointed out in the interviews. Simultaneously, the initiative expressed a high level of organisation and motivation in terms of preserving the plot where the gardens are located as a greenfield. It has been claimed that the initiative would accept another use but would not negotiate building on the plot. Table 1 shows the differences between the local initiatives.

Table 1: Emphasised differences between the local initiatives analysed

Domain of activity / local initiative	Fond houses	Tabor Park
Social capital	Members linked by strong ties.	Members linked by weak ties.
Reason for establishment	Perceived outside threat: stadium redevelopment.	Goal of revitalisation of the neighbourhood, consequently the park. The implementation was stimulated by the funds available at that time.
Relationship with appropriate institutions dealing with spatial planning	Obvious gap between institutions and local initiative. Clear opposition.	Local initiative searches for a contact point within the institutions; success varies. Occasionally it acquires some kind of a support. Weak horizontal cooperation between the municipal departments was noted.
Structure of local initiative	Local initiative structured from representatives of houses and coordination board. Some kind of representative body of local residents.	Network of involved communities. One of the NGOs is in charge and has the role of a coordinator.
Use of formal methods of cooperation with institutions	Public hearings and participation in formal procedures related to planned redevelopment.	Participation in (project) calls at the local and (trans)national level with an intention of acquiring funds for activities related to the park revitalisation.
Legitimisation	Legitimised with formal examination of positions of local residents.	Research on views and preferences of local residents before start of revitalisation; a sample of the residents. Based on that, the park was selected as a potential revitalisation locality.
Self-assessment	Interviews show that the success of the local initiative went beyond the initial expectations of those involved.	Interviews show that the success of the local initiative went beyond the initial expectations of those involved.
Formalisation	Local initiative not formalised.	Some of the communities/organisations involved are formalised, but the local initiative as a whole has not been formalised.
Support among local initiatives	The interviews show a significant level of support. There are some that oppose the initiative, but they are rare.	The interviews show a significant level of support among the local residents. There is a local organisation that has opposed the particular activities related to park revitalisation, but that organisation has been isolated.
Active involvement in local initiative	Some of the local residents are actively involved. Often they are the representatives of particular houses. The research shows that most of them have a garden on the plot that is a part of the redevelopment plan. Most of those involved are local residents.	Most communities that take part in the park revitalisation program could be noted as actively involved; however there are also individuals from the area that are involved. Often it is about individuals and communities linked with creative professions. Residency in the neighbourhood is not directly linked with participation in the local initiative; a significant share of those actively involved do not reside in the area. Most of these people have no direct experience with participation in the area where they reside.
Passively involved in local initiative	Mostly local residents; significant share of people residing in the neighbourhood.	Local residents, citizens and people from other cities as well. Local residents are enthusiastic about sports events in the park (mostly during the week) whereas people from elsewhere mostly visit the park on the weekends when the special events take place.
Type of active participation in local initiative	Local residents most often participate after personal contact with individuals that are more involved in the local initiative. Mostly it is local residents.	Most often they make contact with the main NGO involved. Local residents that would like to hold public events in the park would also contact the NGO.
Communication with local initiative	Most important personal communication with individuals more involved in the local initiative and communication through announcements on bulletin boards located in each house.	Personal communication seems to be important, whereas the bulletin board in the park mostly reaches local residents. Social media also seem to be most important.
Aims of the initiative	Preservation of the plot as a greenfield. Over the course of time, another aim was set: to revitalise the local community and increase the level of participation of the community in managing the neighbourhood.	The main aim was revitalisation of Tabor Park with an emphasis on bottom-up involvement of the community. The long-term goal was to stimulate an increase in local initiatives.

6   Conclusion

The main aim of this article was not to confirm or reject my hypothesis, but to enable inductive reasoning with a loosely stated hypothesis. Therefore it could be concluded that participation in spatial planning is often triggered by the following main factors: perception of a threat, expectations of results, structural possibilities and a high level of social capital. A threat mostly triggers reactionary participation, whereas well-developed structural possibilities might stimulate the development of contributive participation. The expected results seem important for an individual's motivation to participate, although this was less emphasised in my research findings than the other factors. Participation can be stimulated by a high level of social capital, but it is impossible to posit a direct conclusion in which the role of social capital is explained. Social capital could also be a consequence of a perceived threat. Even a low level of social capital at the local level might stimulate participative practice. For instance, from the case of Tabor Park it could be speculated that the low level of social capital between the local residents generated a local initiative that aimed to revitalise the park. If the level of social capital were higher, then the city users' population could be perceived as intruders by the local community.

In my conclusion I posit that a method of including participation in the system of spatial planning influences the proportion between reactionary and contributive participation. If a system (i.e., structural possibilities) is not favourable for participation, then the share of reactionary participation would be higher whereas the contributive participation share would be diminished. A system that is not favourable for participation is a system in which a community hardly has influence on spatial planning, or participation is burdened by a high level of bureaucracy and is very time-consuming. In such a system, the result of the participative practice would be quite unpredictable. Those involved in reactionary participative practice have a greater motivation because the perceived threat represents a potential setback for their quality of life. That is why those affected would choose to participate, even though they are aware that potential success is not very likely. Therefore they would take a risk because the perceived threat has the potential to diminish the quality of life or negatively affect real estate prices in a certain locality. On the other hand, participants in contributive practices are not initiated by a threat, but by an opportunity to seek new uses for decaying spaces. These kinds of local initiatives are often rooted in the creativity of particular communities and therefore do not have such a strong motive as reactionary initiatives. Therefore they give up significantly faster than initiatives if support in spatial planning institutions fails or the initiatives do not find an appropriate contact point (on the institutional side) that could contribute to imple-

menting the initiatives' aims. Based on this, I posit that changes in the spatial planning system could stimulate contributive local initiatives in spatial planning if a greater level of efficiency and predictability were adopted in terms of absorbing local initiatives. This raises the question of potential contact points for local initiatives within the institutions. If these are not close enough to the communities and deal with greater territorial entities or suffer a lack of political power, they are not able to support contributive participation. New political bodies were formed in some cities with the intention of reducing the distance between them and the people, meaning that the new institutions operated at the neighbourhood level (see Musso et al., 2006). Excessive centralisation of the city management affects the flexibility of the administration, which results in less efficient resolution of urban issues (see Bačlija, 2011). There is significant potential in NGOs in terms of bridging between local communities and decision-makers (or policy makers). Development of such practice in the case of Ljubljana would demand certain modifications in terms of the city budget because the city budget would have to make some funds available for local initiatives or NGOs that cooperate with local initiatives. This would present the possibility of earmarking part of the budget in cooperation with local initiatives. This is a form of participatory budgeting, so to speak. In such cases, the role of the institution is to ensure a level of legitimacy of local initiatives in the localities that present their focus because it is not necessary for the initiators to reside in the area. It could be that the initiators are from communities identifying with a particular place. This is why it would make sense to check the legitimacy of their activities and plans among local residents.

The bottom line of this article is that bottom-up place-making needs a contact point from the top down, or else a reduction of participation or reactionary participation is likely. Reactionary participation is a form of local communities' reactions to established plans or projects. As in times of the economic downturn a decrease in development projects has been noted, and on the other hand there was an increase in decayed areas, and so a systematic stimulation of development of contributive participation in place-making makes sense. Potentials of contributive participation lie in searching for new content for public spaces and for private spaces that are publicly accessible (see Jankovič Grobelšek, 2012); for example, spaces within Slovenian housing developments built in the second half of the twentieth century. These developments are in need of regeneration because of their age. The ownership of apartments is private and fragmentised, and therefore top-down regeneration would not be possible in the first place. The owners have not been participating in regeneration of the public spaces; their involvement has been limited to the apartment level, or possibly to the refurbishment of an apartment block (Cirman et al., 2013). A system that would stimulate local initia-

tives' potentials and NGOs in terms of management of public spaces within the developments could be a first step in the renewal of (public spaces) in large housing developments in Ljubljana. No policy has been adopted on regeneration of housing developments at the national or municipal level in Slovenia (see Ploštajner et al., 2004).

This last notion represents a reversion to the initial sensitising concepts: reactionary and contributive participation. The cases noted indicate that both local initiatives contain elements of reactionary and contributive participation. In the case of Fond, a contributive potential of a local initiative was gradually developed. In case of Tabor Park, local residents sometimes contact the NGO in charge of the initiatives in the case of complaints, or would contact them, not the municipality, if they had a reason.

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Notes

[1] Ferdinand Toennies (1957, cited in Brint, 2001) has defined a community in terms of a division between a traditional rural community (*Gemeinschaft)* and modern urban community (*Gesellschaft)*. The main characteristics of the *Gemeinschaft* would be similar lifestyle, strong ties and a small number of individuals involved. A *Gesellschaft* would be related to diverse lifestyle, weak ties and a large number of individuals.

[2] *Local initiative* is a term based on the term *civic initiative*. *Civic* has been replaced with *local* because these initiatives could be linked to a particular locality.

[3] For more information, see: http://www.stat.si/novica_prikazi.aspx?id=4608.

[4] The term *regeneration* has been used because it combines a concept of physical renewal with economic and social aspects (Couch, Fraser & Percy, 2003).

[6] Before the local initiative started to deal with the Tabor Park revitalisation, research was implemented. The focus was on the wishes and opinions of the local residents. The selection of the park as a revitalisation area was based on this research. According to my information, the author was Matjaž Uršič.

[7] Mostly ProstoRož and Bunker Productions were involved, and also the Institute for Spatial Policies in the initial stages.

[8] The individuals involved were linked by their profession: creative professions. In that relation, the findings are to some extent in line with the findings of Richard Florida on the creative class (2002, 2005). However, it should be noted that the creative class concept has been ambiguous and widely criticised as a concept. Because social stratification is not an issue addressed in this article, I do not deal with the critics I mentioned.

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