Does **Participatory Governance** Matter **?**

Exploring the Nature and Impact of Participatory Reforms

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Executive Summary

On May 9-10, 2011, twenty scholars and practitioners from seven countries gathered at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars to assess what scholars and policymakers have learned after nearly three decades of the widespread adoption of participatory governance institutions. The "third wave" of democracy was accompanied by decentralization, not just in new democracies but also in older, better-established democracies. This decentralization provided government reformers, civil society activists, and ordinary citizens with the opportunity to establish new institutional arrangements that alter how citizens engage each other and government officials.

The purpose of this workshop was to establish the conceptual and methodological approaches that will allow us to assess the impact of participatory governance on the lives of citizens, the organization of civil society, the contours of state reform, and, most broadly, the quality of democracy. Workshop participants expressed cautious optimism about the potential for the new institutional formats to make meaningful changes to their environments. However, properly managing expectations of what participatory institutions can accomplish is important, given that these institutions are inserted into incremental policymaking processes where the rate and intensity of change is likely to be slow. In the context of high demand for scarce public resources, it is vital that scholars and policymakers develop a solid base of evidence that shows how and if participatory institutions are producing the intended benefits.

During the two days of discussion, it became clear that our understanding of impact should be grounded in four areas: 1) the structural context; 2) modalities of adoption; 3) rules, forms, and design; and 4) the nature of participation. Policymakers contemplating the adoption of participatory institutions would do well to focus on adapting existing programs to create a better fit between the rules and local needs.

The next stage of this project will be to undertake a comprehensive and broadly comparative research project. To develop a rigorous methodology that

can be applied from the urban centers of India and Brazil to the rural highlands of Peru and Indonesia to suburbs of the United States and Germany, our research project will gather data on the impact of participatory governance in five areas: citizen capabilities, civil society publics, state reforms, representative democracy, and public policy outcomes.

This workshop sets out an ambitious agenda that will reshape how scholars and policymakers understand the role that participatory institutions can play in improving our democracies and public life.

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Introduction

A significant innovation during democratization's "third wave" has been the widespread incorporation of citizens' voices into complex policymaking processes. Participatory governance brings new actors into incremental decision-making processes; citizens deliberate over and vote on the allocation of public resources and the use of state authority. The adoption of participatory governance is often based on the perception that representative democracy is unable, on its own, to improve the quality of state performance, educate and empower citizens, and make reasonably good use of scarce public resources (Santos 2005; Barber 1984; Fung and Wright 2001 and 2003; Pateman 1970). The adoption of participatory governance is not a rejection of representative democracy, rather it represents an effort to redesign institutions and improve the quality of democracy, social well-being, and the state.

Many academic fields, especially political science, have long concerned themselves with democracy, focusing on issues such as democratic consolidation, presidentialism, party systems, and electoral systems (e. g. Diamond 1999; Przeworski and Stokes 1999; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Shugart and Carey 1992). While political elites and scholars often rely on a Schumputarian model of electoral democracy, civil society activists and political reformers around the world have led parallel efforts to change how citizens and government officials engage each other. Many new participatory institutions are located in developing countries with weak states, broad and intense poverty levels, nascent civil societies, and "low intensity" democracies, which means that these institutions are being inserted into high stakes political environments in which the misallocation of resources, time, and authority can have devastating impacts on the lives of ordinary citizens.

As scholars turn their attention to questions about the role and nature of participatory governance, there is a growing body of evidence that co-governance processes are producing some of the desired outcomes (Abers 2000; Goldfrank 2011; McNulty 2011; Wampler 2007). Decisions about the allocation of public resources are being made by citizens in public venues; implementation processes

are more transparent; citizens are learning about how the state functions and how to leverage some of its authority to meet their goals; citizens are forging ties to each other that help them to expand their ability to mobilize. Although there is a growing body of evidence indicating positive outcomes, we still do not have a systematic account of how participatory governance affects public policies, rights, deliberation, democracy, citizen learning, and improvements in social well-being.

In May 2011, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars' Comparative Urban Studies Project, in partnership with Boise State University, hosted twenty scholars and practitioners to assess how participatory governance institutions affect diverse social, institutional, and policymaking environments. The goal of this workshop was to advance both scholarly and policy agendas to gain a better understanding of the potential for participatory institutions to transform the environment in which they are embedded. Workshop participants represented a wide-range of expertise across sector and discipline—political scientists, economists, sociologists, and urban planners—which allowed the group to move beyond current debates and initiate new lines of thinking.

The workshop had two primary purposes: first, it served to provide a forum for discussion of anticipated impacts produced by participatory institutions. These institutions are, for some, this decade's magic bullet, with the potential to inculcate new values, distribute public resources more equitably, and foster accountability. These possibilities have generated extremely high expectations for outcomes. For others, participatory institutions are *much ado about nothing* as the level of resources and authority granted to citizens is sufficiently low that it is impossible to have much, if any, real impact. This debate plays out in domestic political arenas around the world as well as in the decision-making environs of the World Bank, USAID, the United Nations, and EU development agencies. The seminar thus encouraged a wide-ranging discussion regarding how these new venues should be conceptualized.

Second, what type of research agenda do we need to adopt and implement to improve scholars' and policymakers' understandings of the varied effects? We now have excellent single-case studies and a growing body of research that compares similar institutions within countries and across countries, but we continue to lack a comparative analysis of participatory institutions. Thus, the May 2011 conference laid the groundwork for a multi-region, multi-country study of different types of participatory institutions.

This report serves to summarize the main cases, concepts, policy recommendations, and research agenda that emerged from two days of stimulating discussion. State formation, civil society and participatory publics, economic development, and citizen capabilities are at the core of the debate. The workshop and this report contribute on several different levels—to the academic debates

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on participatory governance, to policy debates on which types of programs can be effectively adopted, and to political discussions on the merits of adopting new institutions.

This paper also represents a call for cautious optimism about this wave of innovation sweeping the world. What makes participatory institutions a rich as well as complex topic for analysis is that the range of potential impact is vast. The changes that are generated can be quite profound because citizens and government officials are interacting with each other in new ways. New forms of political engagement are being generated, new networks and relationships are being forged. Further, participatory institutions can act as generators—they link citizens to each other, thus bridging social capital and "bonds of solidarity"; they insert citizens into policy networks, expanding the contacts available to poor citizens (Alexander 2006). However, participatory institutions produce change that is incremental in nature—they are specifically designed to incorporate citizens into local-level decision-making processes, which significantly constrains their potential impact. Revolutionary changes that will dramatically alter the political or social environment in a short period of time are not likely to be produced. Many of the scholars and policymakers present at the workshop argued that these institutions are an important part of contemporary democratic governance, but there was an explicit understanding that we must do a better job of showing how these institutions are reshaping the state, civil society, democratic life and social well-being.

What is Participatory Governance?

Participatory governance consists of state-sanctioned institutional processes that allow citizens to exercise *voice* and *vote*, which then results in the implementation of public policies that produce some sort of changes in citizens' lives. Citizens are engaged in public venues at a variety of times throughout the year, thus allowing them to be involved in policy formation, selection, and oversight. The inclusion of citizens in state-sanctioned venues means that they are now in constant contact with government officials. These institutions thus generate new forms of interactions among citizens as well as between citizens and government officials.

How does participatory governance differ from more well-known alternatives of direct democracy or deliberative democracy? Direct democracy in the context of the United States has long been associated with state-level recalls and referendums, which allow citizens to express only a binary choice with very little opportunity to engage their voice (Bowler and Donovan 2002); modern forms of direct democracy commonly deployed in the United States were crafted to limit the power of party elites and to increase access of excluded groups. They were not designed to allow people to be involved in ongoing policymaking processes. Deliberative institutions, with *Deliberative Polling* being the most well known, often allow citizens to exercise voice but do not link participants' vote to binding decisions that require government officials to act in specific ways (Fishkin 1991). Participatory governance institutions do not divorce participants from their local political environment; rather, these programs are specifically designed to give interested citizens the right to reshape local policy outcomes.

After more than two decades of experimentation, it has become clear that there are a broad number of experiences that fall under the rubric of participatory governance—from the "Right to Information" campaigns initiated in Northern India to Indonesia's World Bank-sponsored Community Driven Development

program to Uganda's participatory constitution-making process to Brazil's participatory budgeting and to federally-mandated citizen participation programs in the United States. A common thread among these forums is that citizens and/or civil society organizations (CSOs) are actively engaged in state-sanctioned policymaking arenas in which actual decisions regarding authority and resources are made.

Why have these experiments become so prevalent around the world? As Paul Smoke argued in his presentation, this trend has taken place concurrently with the movement toward more decentralized governmental structures. Both decentralization and the emphasis on participation became an integral part of the "third wave" of democratization, as countries around Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe began to hold regular and free elections. Over time, however, many began to note that institutions associated with representative democracy were not working as well as initially hoped. For example, many Central Asian countries seemed to "backslide," or become less democratic. Others countries such as Nigeria, Bolivia, and Honduras seemed stuck in the same patterns of corruption, clientelism, and elite rule that had dominated politics for decades.

As a result, political philosophers, politicians, and activists began to promote the idea of participatory democracy to help to cure the ills facing some representative democracies. Many hoped that institutions that allowed for more direct citizen or civil society participation could solve a myriad of problems. Andrew Nickson sums up the situation in Latin America:

> The newly-established democratic governments of the region regarded citizen participation as a means of containing social tensions and strengthening the long-term prospects of democracy through dialogue and consensus-building at the municipal level. Citizen participation was also seen as a way of improving performance in service delivery by introducing greater transparency into municipal resource allocation as to better reflect the broad interests of the population. (Nickson 2011, 12)

Advocates thus look to participatory governance as a means to improve complex democratization processes.

Box 1. **Brazil**

Participatory budgeting has its roots in Brazil during the country's political opening in the 1980s that led to the return of democratic rule. Social movement activists and oppositional political parties created and then institutionalized new ways of incorporating citizens directly into public life and state institutions. In 1989, a leftist government and its civil society allies in the city of Porto Alegre initiated the rules and process now associated with participatory budgeting. Participatory budgeting is a year-long decision-making process through which citizens negotiate amongst themselves and with government officials in organized meetings over the allocation of new capital spending on public work projects and social services. Citizens are mobilized to attend meetings during which they deliberate over policy allocation, vote for public policies, and elect community representatives. After specific policies are selected, the government implements them under the watchful eye of a citizen-based oversight committee. Many participatory budgeting programs have a "social justice" component whereby poorer neighborhoods receive a greater per capita share of public resources than middle and upper class neighborhoods. By 2011, hundreds of municipalities across Brazil adopted participatory budgeting and adapted the basic rules associated with the program to meet local needs (Wampler 2007).

State of the Debate

The best documented and most well-known experience of participatory governance is Porto Alegre, Brazil's participatory budget process (see box 1). This case has generated the most research on the impacts associated with participatory governance, ranging from participants' improved sense of efficacy and improved skills in deliberation to an increase in associationalism (Abers 2000 Baiocchi 2005; Wampler 2007). All scholars present at the May workshop agreed that we need to move beyond this paradigmatic case and expand our knowledge regarding a broader number of studies and forms of participatory institutions, as well as continue to document impact in a much more systematic way.

We also know that people are responding to these initiatives. When measured in quantitative terms, the research that exists shows that participation is significant and often increases over time (World Bank 2008, 2010; Wampler and Avritzer 2004; Wampler 2007). This is especially compelling as scholars of participatory institutions have identified several costs of participation, including transportation costs, time commitment, and absence of work during these periods. Many agree that, given these costs, when people *do* participate in these institutions, we should take note (Abers 2000; Van Cott 2008).

After more than two decades of academic research on participatory governance institutions during the "third wave" of democratization, there is now a general consensus in the literature regarding the key explanatory variables that account for why they emerged, how these institutions function, and why they vary in implementation. The principal variables employed by researchers to explain how these institutions function include: 1) the political interests of government officials; 2) the configuration of civil society; 3) institutional rules; 4) resources available; 5) the local party system; and, 6) interactions between executive and legislative branches (Abers 2000; Biaocchi 2005; Wampler 2007; Heller 2000). Thus, the academic debate has advanced our understanding of what accounts for the variation in how these programs work. The challenge is to determine the degree to which we can assess impact. It is also generally understood, although

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sometimes overlooked in the literature, that these are dynamic and ongoing processes that are rooted in very specific and complex historical processes.

The two-day conference made a conscious effort to push this debate forward, specifically calling for a more systematic way of thinking about *impact*. During the two days of discussion, it became clear that our understanding of any type of impact should be grounded in four areas: 1) the structural context; 2) modalities of adoption; 3) rules, forms, and design; and 4) the nature of participation. The next section discusses them in turn.

The Unfolding Agenda

1. STRUCTURAL CONTEXT OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

We should begin our analyses of these institutions by studying their broader environment. Too often they are "ring-fenced," as Paul Smoke noted, meaning they are studied in isolation from the context into which they are embedded. There are at least three macro-structural areas that must be analyzed: state formation; civil society configuration; and, the economic environment.

State formation

From a broad macro-level historical perspective, state formation, including factors such as the role of federalism, decentralization, legal tradition, and political parties, helps establish the parameters within which participatory institutions will have an impact. When states are highly effective, we would not expect as much interest in participatory institutions because governments are more likely to adopt public policies that meet their citizens' needs. As states become less effective, there is a growing need for participatory institutions to address basic policy problems. When states are extremely ineffective, often categorized as "failed" or "absent," there is a greater likelihood that participatory institutions will not have an impact. Thus, state capacity should help researchers establish the parameters for expected outcomes.

As the degree of local governments' capacity increases, so too should our expectations of what outputs should be associated with the new institutions. For example, the three countries that are commonly cited as having more successful participatory experiences—Brazil, Indonesia, and India—are middle-income

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developing countries that have far more robust and effective states than many of their neighbors. Conversely, when local governments are weak, it would be prudent to lower our expectations regarding the outcomes that can be produced.

Thus, researchers and policymakers must be adept at analyzing the configuration of the state and then they must be able use different criteria to assess impact. In some environments, merely holding meetings and explaining state policies to citizens may be a critical first step to engage citizens. This is likely true for post-conflict areas or extremely poor regions. In other environments, a fairly well-functioning state means that they have a much greater capacity to implement public policies, which means in turn that we should have greater expectations for what can be achieved.

The level of state fragmentation must also be considered to better understand participatory governance outcomes. States can experience varying degrees of fragmentation along vertical, horizontal, regional, and longitudinal axes. State authority shifts across vertical lines not just over time but also from agency to agency as well as within regions of the same state. For example, a participatory institution in the state of São Paulo may work fairly well, but a similar institution in a different Brazilian state may flounder. Or, if a rival political party wins an election, the same participatory institution may then have fundamentally different impacts.

A final point is that there is often considerable distance between the formal, legal codification of law and the way that laws are used and experienced on a day-to-day basis. A well-known feature of many countries with weak institutions and rule of law is the disconnect between what happens in practice and form. Participatory institutions are not exempt from this. For example, in Guatemala, members of the constituent assembly codified a system of development councils in the country's 1985 Constitution and in several subsequent generations of laws and accords regarding decentralization and citizen participation. The law calls for a system of participatory democracy that collects and responds to the demands of the population to put forth a vision for the development of the country. Yet, in practice, these councils do not meet in the manner called for by law and when they do meet, they are often dominated by the local politicians' agendas. Thus, this system has failed to address serious problems such as poverty, violence, and

Box 2. **India**

In 1993, India's national government passed two constitutional amendments that set up a decentralized state structure and instituted rural participatory governance efforts. Most states ignored the call for more citizen participation in rural settings until very recently. One exception to this is the state of Kerala, where the leftist coalition of political parties, the Left Democratic Front, led by the Communist Party of India, came to power in 1996. Part of their party platform included launching a participatory development planning process, called the "People's Campaign for Decentralized Planning." T.M. Thomas Isaac and Patrick Heller write that local governments in Kerala now create their own development plan "through a multi-stage process of iterated deliberation between elected representatives, local and higher-level government officials, civil society experts and activists and ordinary citizens." To many, this is a very successful example of participatory governance in the developing world (Isaac and Heller 2003, 79).

corruption. This example suggests that an even greater disconnect might exist when adoption is top-down. This observation means that there is no simple checklist that can be filled out by a researcher or policy analyst to ascertain impact; Rather, in-depth research is necessary to understand the distance between the formal rules and the day-to-day exercising of state authority.

Civil society

The configuration of civil society, as part of the broader structural context, is a vital part of any evaluation process. Civil society provides the citizen-based mobilization necessary to create vibrant public deliberations as well as to engage in incremental policymaking processes. Conceptually, the line between where the state ends and where civil society begins is increasingly blurred. Is there space for public deliberation? Is there a history of organization or the state attempting to incorporate marginalized actors? What sectors are more organized than others? Is there a history of rights-based demands originating from CSOs?

Much of the research on civil society relies on typologies and quantitative snapshots of the many organizations working within the participatory governance context. Although the density of social capital does contribute to how the participatory institution is embedded in civil society, it is increasingly evident that *what* CSOs do and *how* they act is more important. When organizations have a history of contestation, when they demand rights, and when they have strong links to leftist political parties, then there is a greater likelihood that citizens will shape how the participatory institutions are used. Conversely, when there is very limited organizational or contestation capacity within civil society, the participatory institution is more likely to be dominated by government officials.

Participatory institutions allow existing CSOs and "participatory publics" to enter into the formal policy making process. "Participatory publics" consist of citizens and CSOs who mobilize themselves around democratic values and then promote the adoption of state institutions that mirror these new practices (Wampler and Avritzer 2004). When participatory programs are institutionalized, we begin to see the creation of "participatory governance publics." These new publics induce civil society activists and government officials to engage each other in public venues whereby they exchange desperately needed information. Government officials gain access to the demands and needs of citizens, often poor residents. Citizens gain access to basic information about state authority, resources, and decision-making processes. The configuration of civil society prior to the adoption of participatory institutions has a significant impact on the shape of these "participatory governance publics."

Economic environment

The economic environment in which participatory governance is formed and implemented influences the internal workings of the participatory institutions and also sets the parameters for the potential impact of the institution. At the core of many participatory institutions is determining how to use scarce public resources to solve public goods provision problems, often in poor or underdeveloped communities. When a large percentage of the population is living in deep poverty, it becomes much more difficult to manage the number of demands. The challenge is compounded by a very low tax base due to the high numbers of people who are unable to contribute to generating revenue streams.

Is there an economic threshold at which participatory governance experiences emerge and/or function better? While most of these experiments are taking place in the developing world, we see many more examples, especially in the areas of participatory budgeting and planning, starting to take hold in Europe, Canada, and the United States. The variety of economic environments that are now hosting and influencing participatory governance around the world suggests an important area for future research.

Are some participatory formats better suited for specific economic contexts? This is a question of paramount concern to policymakers, activists, and reformers but we continue to lack systematic knowledge about which types of institutions are best suited for different economic environments. Given the limited resources available to most countries for institution-building, it is vital to know if there are certain types of programs that are more likely to produce positive effects in specific contexts. For example, there has been considerable world-wide diffusion of participatory budgeting based on successful programs located in Brazil, Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte. However, these cities are not necessarily representative of most urban areas in the developing world. The problem is that we do not know if their unusual characteristics (e.g., wealth, union organizations, social movements, strong leftist parties) would make it difficult to replicate in other cities.

While analytically distinguishable, these three structural factors are closely intertwined. For example, the economic environment is intimately related to state capacity. Countries with lower levels of education and economic resources are going to face greater challenges to strengthening state capacity. Likewise, the nature of the civil society sector is linked to economics as these organizations need resources to function and might even become active agents in participatory institutions in order to further their own economic agenda. For example, in Peru, some professional organizations, such as the Association of Engineers, report that they attend participatory budget meetings not only to promote the public good but also to stay informed about upcoming development projects they might later bid on.

By studying the broader structural context of participatory governance pro-

grams we can generate hypotheses for future research. We would expect, for example, that communities with more capable or stronger governments, with denser and more active civil societies, and with a stronger tax base would be much more able to support participatory governance than those societies with weaker states, less active civil societies, and weaker tax bases. Future research will need to develop additional hypotheses and then test them systematically in order to better understand how these structural factors interact with the various forms of participatory governance.

2. MODALITIES OF ADOPTION

As noted, in many countries, participatory institutions are viewed as potential fixes to illiberal, poorly performing democratic systems (Baiocchi et al 2011; Smith 2009). Workshop participant Archon Fung referred to these participatory experiments as "aspirational," where reformers aspire to fix the "democratic deficits" that occur in electoral democracies. Participatory mechanisms are valued because they are viewed as a part of the solution to other institutional failures.

In many cases, as Paul Smoke pointed out, participatory institutions are adopted in response to some sort of economic or political crisis, such as civil war, a nationwide corruption scandal, a transition to a democratic regime, or a financial crisis. A "critical juncture" leads CSOs and political elites to redraw democratic and policymaking institutions (Collier and Collier 1991). In Peru, Uganda, Brazil, and Kenya, just to cite four examples, the redrafting of the national constitution included explicit articles and language that either *permitted* or *required* citizen participation in local decision-making venues (Ostrom 1990). Thus, in the middle of a crisis, participatory institutions were adopted as part of broad constitutional reforms.

Embedded in these participatory institutions are political agendas that reflect the designers' public and private interests. Leaders mold institutions and then new institutions mold the leaders (Putnam 1993). Thus, the rule structure embedded in the new participatory institutions reflects the interests of their designers. For example, the stated objectives of Bolivia's Popular Participation Law are to: "(i)mprove the quality of life for Bolivian men and women through the just distribution and improved administration of public resources; strengthen the political and economic instruments necessary to perfect democracy; facilitate citizen participation; and guarantee equal opportunities in all levels of representation…."[1] But we must be cognizant, as Kathleen O'Neill (2005) notes, that the national-level designers of the Popular Participation Law produced a process that strengthened municipal governments and weakened potentially rivaling regional governors' powers. This system empowered new actors and in some ways helped Evo

Morales, the country's first indigenous president, to win the presidency in 2005. Similarly, Brazil's participatory budgeting program includes a social justice component that helped the Workers' Party to develop better political and social connections to shantytown residents.

Given the diversity of programs, scholars now need to consider more systematically the dynamics of their adoption. An increasingly common way to describe these efforts is to think about them as either "top-down," i.e. designed and implemented by national governments or international development agencies, or "bottom-up," i.e. innovative processes where participatory institutions emerge organically in response to local demands. Another way of describing these processes, is "induced" and "organic" as argued by Vijayendra Rao.

A paradigmatic case of the bottom-up variety is participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, which began as part of the Workers' Party political project in 1989 (see Box 1). A top-down case is exemplified in Peru's 2002 decentralization reform where national-level political elites simultaneously decentralized and institutionalized participatory institutions in regions and municipalities around the country (see Box 2).

As Jennifer Bussell pointed out, one problem with these categories, of course, is that many cases are "mixed," including elements of both bottom-up and top-down. For example, in India, the national government mandated participatory decision-making bodies in rural areas in the early 1990s. However, until very recently states had a lot of flexibility in their decisions regarding whether to implement them or not. At the same time, in Kerala, the Left Democratic Front began to set up new forms of citizen participation as part of its political platform. Thus, India has experienced both top-down and bottom-up efforts to promote participatory governance. This and other examples push us to think about a more flexible way to categorize the core impetus for adoption. One aim of the research project is to develop a typology that allows us to more succinctly identify a program's modality of adoption.

We lack systematic comparisons of the varying modes of adoption that would help us understand the strengths and weaknesses of these modalities as well as their impact. Preliminary evidence suggests a strong association between the form of adoption and the range of impacts. When local political parties are the driving force behind adoption, there is more likely to be a focus on drawing greater numbers of citizens into the process. When CSOs are the driving force, they are more likely to craft the rules to give themselves greater authority and promote participation by organizations. When international funding agencies drive adoption, there is a greater likelihood that they will push for rules seeking to advance "good governance." Therefore, one task of a comparative research project is to gather information to assess the associations between the modality of adoption and outcomes generated.

Box 3. **Peru**

Facing a political crisis after Alberto Fujimori fled the country in disgrace, in 2002 Peru's congress passed a comprehensive decentralization reform that both transferred new powers to subnational governments and formalized civil society participation at the regional and local levels. A goal of the reform, in addition to devolving political power and resources, is to increase civil society's participation at the local level in an effort to strengthen Peru's fragile democracy. The reform calls for several participatory institutions, such as Regional and Local Coordination Councils, participatory budgets, and health and education councils. Currently, Peruvian regions, provinces, and districts undertake mandatory participatory budgeting processes on an annual basis. When successful, these participatory budgeting processes have increased accountability of local politicians and given civil society a more active voice in development projects. In other cases, they have been manipulated or ignored by local politicians. This illustrates the diversity of outcomes in one country as well as the disconnect between law and practice in the developing world (McNulty 2011).

3. RULES, FORMS, AND DESIGN

When we examine an ever increasing number of participatory institutions, it becomes immediately clear that the rules, procedures, and processes are varied. This leads us to consider an additional aspect of participatory governance that will affect eventual outcomes. The "new institutionalism" school of scholars such as Ostrom (1990), Bates (1984), and North (1990), offers useful tools to show how institutional rules create incentives that induce different behaviors and specific outcomes. Thus, as the specific rules change from institution to institution, we should expect different outcomes.

Given the wide variation in state formation, civil society, and economic conditions, does it make sense for governments to adopt participatory governance rules from other places? Rather than wholesale adoption, it is *adaption* that should be emphasized. Conceptually, "best practices" should be transformed into "best guiding principles." This is not merely a semantic change. Rather, it is a change that reflects a real need for creativity and ingenuity from government officials and civil society activists. The authority and rules of new institutions are more likely to have an impact when they are adapted to solve specific problems identified by the program founder.

During the workshop, Archon Fung discussed the concept of "pragmatic democracy," meaning that we should promote the adoption of institutions whose rules are tailored to address specific problems. The type of rules governing participatory efforts should be created to match the policy problem. If corruption and resource leakage is perceived to be the problem, then policymakers should design programs that focus on citizen involvement in transparency and project-level oversight. On the other hand, if the intention is to empower citizens and to incorporate their ideas into a project, then public officials should focus their attention on the earlier planning stages. There is no "one-size-fits-all," "best practices," or "silver bullet." Rather there are "guiding principles" that can form the basis of how citizens and government officials interact.

The distribution of these responsibilities and authority generates new incentives to shape these expectations and actions. What distinguishes participatory governance institutions from other types of demand making (e.g., demonstrations, letter writing campaigns, etc) are that citizens and government officials are each allocated responsibilities and authority within the state-sanctioned institution. A testable hypothesis is that the degree of authority provided to citizens is highly correlated with the potential transformation of citizens' attitudes and activities.

The diversity of participatory governance programs illustrates the wide variation in the scope of the problem that needs to be addressed. What are these institutions designed to fix or change? What is the range of problem? Small problems

Box 4. **Germany**

In an effort to address the failure of political parties to engage citizens, citizen apathy, and financial pressures, several municipal organizations decided to set up participatory governance experiences. For example, in 1998 Hans Böckler Trade Union Foundation and the KGSt Local Government Research Institute set up pilot programs in six cities. The city of Mönchweiler was one of the first to implement this process, and according to Dr. Anja Röcke, "the focus of this participatory budgeting lay in information about the public budget. Services and investments were also of interest. It was about user feedback, not the strengthening of social justice" (InWEnt gGmbH – Capacity Building International 2010, 17). Analysts in Germany report that these experiences have both strengths and weaknesses. Many have argued that the experiences have led to rapprochement of citizens and state actors. On the other hand, evaluators worry that the process has not been inclusive enough to engage diverse actors. This example shows that new forms of participatory governance are not solely located in developing regions (Allegretti and Herzberg 2007).

may permit the program to produce "quick wins" but as the scope of the problem increases, there is a greater likelihood that participatory governance institutions will face greater challenges in achieving the desired outcomes. Thus, when we seek to evaluate input, we need to start by assessing what the institutional architects intended to accomplish. For policymakers interested in initiating participatory institutions, it makes strategic sense to set very modest goals in countries with weak local states and weak civil societies. By lowering expectations, it becomes more plausible to produce the necessary "empowerment" and positive public policy outcomes needed to gain support from government officials and activists.

4. THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

Who participates? Participatory institutions are open to the general public but it is often a small minority of the population that is willing and able to attend these often long, boring, and frequent meetings. In addition, there is a time cost as well as a financial cost, as many of the participants are very poor. With regard to the nature of participation, three issues merit attention: 1) who convenes participants? 2) who participates? 3) and, what environment is supportive of promoting participation?

Who convenes participants to deliberate and make policy decisions? This question relates directly to the issue of modalities of adoption. In "bottom-up" or "mixed" cases of adoption, local government officials are interested in creating new institutions as a means to address political or policy problems. During the current wave of participatory institutions, it was originally leftist political parties that promoted the use of these institutions as a way to expand their ties to citizens and improve their governing. These experiments became more mainstream and currently centrist politicians promote their adoption as well. Thus, we are now witnessing a broader array of actors calling for increased citizen participation as they emerge in different contexts and countries around the world.

Some of the "top-down" experiences are led by international donors that require governments to adopt participatory institutions to receive aid. The incentives for government officials to set up participatory institutions under these circumstances are quite different than those for government officials who initiate the programs on their own. Within the "top-down" programs, there is often a disconnect between the rules established and the needs of and demands on local government officials. Local leaders may adopt these programs to secure a loan or grant but they do not have sufficiently strong incentives to support the establishment of robust participation.

…we need to start by assessing what the institutional architects intended to accomplish. For policymakers interested in initiating participatory institutions, it makes strategic sense to set very modest goals in countries with weak local states and weak civil societies.

The focus on government officials' incentives is crucial because their commitment is strongly related to program output. Some programs have high levels of support and commitment from government officials, generating enthusiasm among participants, which has a positive effect on the recruitment of other participants. Other programs are implemented and administered in a *pro forma* way, whereby the basic minimal requirements are met but the programs lack any sort of vitality. The *lack* of committed leaders helps explain why these institutions do not work in some environments. In India, as Jennifer Bussell observed, many leaders fear that granting citizens power in decision-making will reduce their own power, therefore they ignore the legal framework that calls for increased participation in urban areas. In other cases, leaders may capture the process for their own political gain.

Given the important role of public officials, we also need to ask how well leaders understand participatory governance and why some leaders embrace these institutions. One of very few studies that explores this is Nabatchi's research on U.S. legislators' understanding and use of public deliberation as a means to engage constituents (Nabatchi and Farrar, 2011). While most of the interviewees did not understand public deliberation, once it was explained to them, they expressed some interest in the concept. However, most of the respondents noted that public deliberation seems logistically complicated, politically unfeasible, and demands more resources than they have.

Next, who participates in these institutions? Do a diverse set of actors come to meetings to discuss programs and policies? Or, are the events captured by a narrow set of actors who promote their own agenda? Related to this, who does *not* participate in meetings, workshops, and planning sessions that ultimately dictate the future of cities and states around the world? Although many participatory institutions have successfully engaged poor residents, it is clear that basic structural and moti-

vational problems continue to constrain participation. Thus, we should avoid seeing these institutions as a panacea that helps us to solve basic participation problems; rather, we should think of them as improving how citizens participate.

Research on Brazil's participatory budgeting shows that a significant percentage of the population does attend participatory budget meetings, and that the poor are relatively well represented (Abers 2000; Wampler and Avritzer 2004). A World Bank (2010) evaluation of the participatory budget experience in Peru deemed that a majority of participants are members of grassroots organizations that promote a pro-poor social agenda.

Although research from Brazil shows that the poor participate, Abers (2000) suggests that the extremely poor do not. Little reliable data are available, but we suspect that indigenous and other ethnic minority groups are less represented as well. Finally, findings are mixed in terms of gender equality. A World Bank (2008) study of Porto Alegre's participatory budgeting finds gender equity in both participants and leaders ten years after it began. On the other hand, in the regional participatory budgeting meetings in Peru from 2008 to 2010, a mere 3 percent of the organizations represented women's groups. Women's organizations have not had the opportunity to promote their projects as often as other kinds of civil society organizations in this particular country.

Thus, it would appear that the most marginalized groups in communities, such as women, extremely poor, and ethnic minorities, are not always well represented in these new kinds of participatory governance programs. This can lead to policies and projects that privilege the groups that do attend, suggesting that participatory governance has only partially overcome the biases associated with representative democracy and participation. Participatory institutions offer some of the steps forward but continued experimentation should be expected.

In some cases of participatory governance, many of the same leaders—the same people—show up at all the events. This can be conceptualized as elite capture, whereby a small group of organized individuals gain control of participatory institutions. Conversely, this can be viewed as network building, whereby community leaders are attempting to occupy multiple participatory venues in order to represent the interests of their community. Further, this might illuminate that poor participants are engaging in behaviors that have long been associated with successful strategies employed by middle and upper income citizens in representative democracy.

A final aspect regarding the nature of participation is the supporting environment. Is there a rights-based political culture? Are organizations willing to work with government officials? When there is a more dynamic and contentious civil society, there is an increased possibility of creating more vibrant institutions. There may be CSOs and other institutions that provide meaningful

support to help citizens organize themselves and work through confusing policymaking processes. For example, when studying co-governance of Brazil's watershed management, Margaret Keck finds that local universities play a key role in providing the technical leadership needed to keep these institutional venues active.

Conversely, citizens may choose not to participate due to low levels of trust. Or citizens may be unable to sustain mobilization due to unfamiliarity with the new process. Other citizens may seek to use their access to government officials to push for clientelistic exchanges. As Rao argued, weak and scattered CSOs may limit participatory governance because government officials and international funding agencies do not have capable partners.

Insights from the workshop focused on areas that structure new forms of participatory governance and affect their potential impact. This brings us to the central questions driving the two-day debate: do participatory institutions matter? If so, how do they matter? What criteria should be employed by scholars and policymakers to assess their overall impact?

NOTE

1. See Law 1551, located at *www.legislacionmunicipal.fam.bo*

Box 5. **Uganda**

After decades of increasingly centralized rule under Idi Amin and Milton Obote's dictatorial regimes, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) implemented a decentralization reform aimed at institutionalizing participatory democracy at the local level. Led by President Museveni, the NRM set up a tiered system moving progressively toward the central government from village councils, parish councils, subcounty councils, county councils, and district councils. When describing this structure, Gina Lambright writes that it is "designed to aggregate, systematize, and present citizen priorities to district councils in order to ensure that all citizen demands are effectively addressed. All persons eighteen years and older residing in a village are automatically members of the village council." This is an example of top-down design emerging after decades of dictatorial and centralized rule (Lambright 2011, 26).

Impact

After more than twenty years of increased implementation of these programs during the "third wave" of democratization, we continue to have only a very preliminary understanding of the range and intensity of their effects. This line of inquiry is of vital importance because billions of dollars are being spent on these projects. People are investing their precious time, energy, and resources in the hopes that participatory institutions will improve the quality of ordinary people's lives.

When thinking about impact, an important place to start is identifying the expectations for what these institutions can accomplish. The hopes of the public are often quite high as new programs are announced, because people assume, quite reasonably, that the implementation of a new program with their participation will lead to improvements. Managing expectations for the outcomes associated with the participatory experiences is crucial. We need to be aware of what expectations exist and what outcomes are reasonable.

We must remember to not hold participatory institutions to a higher standard than we hold representative democratic institutions or non-democratic state reform efforts. Rather, we should recognize that these institutions have the potential to influence a broad range of interactions but they are not some sort of magic bullet that will overcome the limitations of representative democracy. These institutions disrupt the normal, everyday working of the state and representative democracy because they insert citizens directly into state-sanctioned spaces. Citizens are attempting to exercise rights and be involved in ways not possible under authoritarian or exclusionary democratic regimes. These interactive processes generate "new repertoires" of action, not just in civil society but also in how CSOs engage the state.

When assessing impact, there is an inherent normative positioning. After all, we are suggesting that some programs and policies have positive or beneficial outputs whereas other programs have a more limited, or even a negative, impact. We need to carefully think about the meaning of success and failure. How should we handle the fact that many participatory governance programs will produce very

limited results or that they might actually fail? By failure, we mean that they were unable to produce tangible and measurable outputs, over a period of time, which may generate negative political fallout for the programs' advocates. It might be hard for government officials to demonstrate concrete achievements to constituents and funding agencies. However, we need to remember that failure is to be expected and is part of a broader learning process.

An important distinction to be made in terms of impact is that of process and outcome. Some argue that the process itself can lead to important changes. For example, regardless of the outcome, if a person emerges from a participatory forum more interested in politics and confident in his or her opinions, this is an important procedural impact. On the other hand, others might argue that what matters is the outcome as defined by the project's designers, measured by changes in how the government acts. Are better policies and more inclusive democracies emerging as a result of the stress on participation?

Given the complexities and normative minefields inherent in attempting to measure the quality and impact of participatory governance, it is best to start with six key analytical areas:

1) Individual-level capabilities
2) Civil society publics
3) State reform
4) Democracy
    a) Interest mediation
    b) Representation
    c) Deliberation
5) Public policy outcomes
6) Social well-being

Analytically, each area can be studied in a stand-alone fashion but it is more fruitful to understand the interactions across the different sectors. As Stephanie McNulty argues, for example, there is often a virtuous cycle between state activity and civil society engagement within and parallel to participatory institutions that produces a more positive series of outcomes.

1. INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL CAPABILITIES

In the pioneering work of Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, he demonstrates that the capabilities of individuals to engage the market, the state, and society must be part of how we measure development. At the core, Sen was writing about

the empowerment of citizens. As Giovanni Allegretti noted, participatory institutions can produce the types of empowerment that are central to building citizen capabilities. The exchange of information, the public deliberation sessions, and lessons learned about how government works are key components that help citizens develop the necessary skills to expand the opportunities in their lives.

How should we measure individual-level impact? Often, we document the number of participants and other demographic aspects. Yet, Frank Fischer observed that the number of participants matters less than what people are learning in these processes. People gain access to new ways of discussing problems and new ways of thinking about what can and should be done. There is great potential for transformation and empowerment. In some communities, the simple act of participation is crucial because it is empowering. Luis Gilberto Murillo-Urrutia, the former governor of the state of Choco in Colombia, discussed his community's experience, where merely being invited to participate in state–level decisions for the first time had notable ramifications. Individuals who never had any opportunities to participate or engage the state in a public format are given the chance to do so, and become empowered in the process.

2. CIVIL SOCIETY

There are a series of well-documented collective action problems that make it difficult for citizens, especially those living in poor communities, to organize themselves. There is an emerging body of evidence that the presence of participatory institutions has a positive effect on the ability of CSOs to mobilize their community, gain access to "constituency service," develop access to new policy networks, and form alliances with other CSOs.

Participatory institutions build upon and contribute to the growth of existing publics, as well as foster the emergence of new publics. We do not know, for example, if certain aspects of civil societies might lend themselves to specific modalities of adoption (discussed above). Or, conversely, could the modality of adoption induce new types of civil society organizations? We must study further how this might play out in practice.

Between individuals and the state, there is a layer of activists and community organizations that mediates demands and interests. Jonathan Fox argued that we need to be cognizant of the role that community leaders play in linking state and society. These local leaders may not necessarily be involved in social movements but they can provide a crucial link between state and society. This alerts us to the importance of networks that activists and government officials rely upon; it also hints at the informal governing arrangements that are used.

A key point emphasized by Jonathan Fox and Paul Smoke is that the informal processes that are already used in exercising authority will be present in new participatory institutions.

We must also be aware of "civil society failure," as discussed by Vijayendra Rao. The configuration of civil society may be too fragile, thin, and weak to support the development of new participatory institutions. The absence of strong civil society actors, willing to work for their own interests in a public arena but also to work with other CSOs and government officials, may undermine the potential impact of participatory institutions. The state or an international donor may be willing to hand over increased authority but social divisions, conflict, and mistrust may make it difficult for the participatory institutions to gain traction.

3. STATE REFORM

In order for governments to allow citizens to make choices that have a meaningful impact on public policy outcomes, it is necessary for officials to modify the administrative structure of the state. The internal administrative processes that are far from the public eye must be reengineered to provide participants with information, to link policy experts to ordinary citizens as well as to help approved projects work their way through the bureaucratic maze prior to implementation. As Keck noted, states can be activated by new coalitions—civil society activists, citizens, and civil servants may forge alliances that reorient the processes through which state authority is exercised.

Another area of impact that we must explore is change in government effectiveness, especially in municipal and regional level governments. Often these reforms are developed because these governments are not responding to the basic needs of its citizens. This may be due to weak capacity to operate and execute projects, corruption, lack of resources at the local level, and several other challenges. We can gauge the impact of participatory governance reforms by exploring several areas of governmental effectiveness. Robert Putnam (1993) and Merilee Grindle's (2007) works, among others, offer several concrete and instructive indicators of changes in government in dimensions such as efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness.

Resources are a vital factor that condition the extent of reform because they can create the necessary state capacity to administer the participatory institutions and to implement selected public policies, argued Vijayendra Rao and Brian Wampler. Wampler has found that availability of resources to local governments in middle-income countries partially accounts for why these governments are able to deliver goods (Boulding and Wampler 2010). Rao

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added that resources are a necessary component to these programs because states need resources to implement public works.

Finally, local government reforms address low levels of state legitimacy and authority found in many states of the developing world. Growing and expanding state authority and legitimacy can be a positive-sum gain; citizens and government officials learn to trust each other through their repeated interactions, which then increases state legitimacy and trust not just vis-à-vis the participatory institution but also in relationship to other state tasks.

4. DEMOCRACY

At their core, participatory institutions are designed to address basic problems with representative democracies. During the workshop, participants argued that it would be fruitful for scholars to draw on three specific debates within the broader democracy canon—interest mediation, representation, and deliberation. Each of these provides a wealth of insight and draws attention to how citizens' voices are being incorporated into politics.

Interest mediation

Enrique Peruzzotti argued that participatory institutions represent a new form of *interest mediation*, replacing earlier systems of clientelism and corporatism. What makes participatory institutions different from these other systems is that the institutionalization of public venues allows for interests, demands, and needs to be publicly discussed, debated, and negotiated. This, in turn, generates new ideas, coalitions, understandings, and public policies. There is a formal, institutionalized give-and-take process whereby citizens and government officials adapt their attitudes and strategies in order to secure outcomes. In much of the developing world, these citizen-based formal venues provide new ways of connecting state and society.

During the incremental policymaking processes, there is a real possibility of activating publics, which is how new groups and interests are inserted into the public sphere. If we consider that the formation of preferences is driven by context, then these new venues provide the means to form democratic and participatory public values.

Representation

Debates about representation provide another way to examine participatory governance. Enrique Peruzzotti raised the question of whether representation should be the framing principle for the overall debate about participatory governance. Most people attend as members of a group and have leaders who represent their interests; most of the day-to-day activities associated with participatory governance are carried out by community leaders and social movement activists. In some cases, the members that comprise the participatory institutions are a mix between volunteer and elected officials. As Brian Wampler and Jonathan Fox observed, we need to be attentive to the informal networks that surround these institutions.

Encompassing other forms of representation overcomes the narrowness of the debate in political science, which has focused on the vote as the principal instrument used by citizens to exercise voice. By thinking about representation more broadly, and participatory institutions as one venue among many to exercise voice, this debate returns to the classic work of Hanna Pitkin (1967) on representation.

Deliberation

Do these forums expand the public sphere? Do they help citizens understand the demands of others? Archon Fung argued that deliberation should be geared toward finding solutions to problems. When the process is too technical or politicized, there is a decreasing likelihood that the participatory institution will develop the deliberative spaces necessary to improve democratic governance. Frank Fischer argued that what people learn during the deliberative processes can be considered an outcome in its own right. The deliberative process creates the opportunity for citizen engagement and learning.

Deliberation thus contributes to the expansion of political and policy debates as well as that of the broader public sphere. New forms of speaking, listening, and engaging are created, affecting citizens as well as government officials. Rather than having politicians rely on reading the tea leaves of elections, new deliberative formats reorient how citizens and government officials exchange information, learn, and present their arguments in public.

5. PUBLIC POLICY

The impact of participatory institutions can also be measured in the specific public works, social service programs, and public goods produced by governments or funding agencies. What this approach might allow us to do is to see how and if citizens' participation and voice is translated into specific government outputs. These outputs generally fall into several overlapping categories, including educa-

tion, health, transportation and/or communication, and the environment. One criticism of these experiments is that citizens end up using their voice to approve infrastructure or public work projects, like bridges and roads, and not those kinds of policies that are needed to improve the overall quality of life of citizens.

Another important consideration in this area of impact is the way that these policies address equity and distribution issues in the spaces for which they are designed. We might see improved sanitation systems emerge as a policy output from a participatory institution, but we need to delve into this outcome to explore who is receiving the benefits of this system. Where is it located and who will use it? This question is closely linked the following area of potential impact, social well-being.

In the work on participatory budgeting in Brazil, researchers have used mapping software to identify the location of specific public work projects. This is then used with other data to examine whether the programs' outputs are being directed to the intended targets.

6. SOCIAL WELL-BEING

The final area of potential impact is the social well-being of citizens, especially the poor. These individuals are motivated by the belief that their participation will have some sort of tangible impact on their lives. This lends itself to a performance-based evaluation of the participatory institutions. Are people's lives getting better? If so, how would we know?

However, one of the key points raised in the workshop is that it is very difficult to measure the impact of these institutions on social well-being for two basic methodological reasons: establishing causality and establishing an appropriate timeframe. Improvements in social well-being may result directly from participatory governance but other factors such as economic growth, drop in employment, an infusion of federal or international support, make it very difficult to know with certainty. In the short term, researchers might focus their energies on identifying associations between the adoption of participatory institutions and improvements in well-being. With regard to time, improvements in social well-being often take years to identify, frustrating the efforts of many policymakers and scholars to document these outcomes.

When this workshop was proposed, measuring social well-being was conceived as a fundamentally important part of understanding the impact on outcomes. Over the course of the two-day conference, it became clear that this approach may need to be treated as a separate research project given the difficulty in measuring social well-being.

Research Directions and Policy Recommendations

Where do we go from here? To date, there have not been any cross-regional, cross-national studies that include multiple types of participatory governance institutions. This workshop highlighted the need for just such a research project while also illuminating the difficulties in accomplishing this task. The purpose of a more expansive research agenda is to move beyond our reliance on the best cases or variation across similar programs types (e.g. participatory budgeting) to a more comprehensive understanding based on a larger and more diverse set of cases.

In addition to providing a forum for thinking more systematically about impact, the workshop also made clear that we have a wealth of experience that can guide policy experiments and scholarship. Based on already existing research, nine recommendations emerged that should improve current and future efforts to implement forms of participatory governance. While these recommendations are broad, reformers and policymakers should consider and adapt them in light of the specific context in which they are working.

1. Be pragmatic. When thinking about designing a participatory governance program, it is important to lean more towards the pragmatic and less toward the "aspirational." In other words, we should not expect these institutions to rectify all problems facing a country or locality. We should design and adopt these programs when they can solve a concrete problem, such as poor management of programs, lack of transparency, or policy outcomes that do not reflect the needs of traditionally excluded sectors. The rules governing the process should also match the policy problems, which means that policymakers should *adapt* the rules to reflect local demands and needs.

2. When attempting to develop "top-down" or "induced" participatory governance programs, never underestimate the importance of government officials' real commitment (i.e., political will) to these programs. What are the policy and political incentives for government officials to invest their scarce resources and limited authority into these new governing arrangements? A participatory institution that is induced from above will also depend directly on the political will of officials working in lower levels of government to implement and support these institutions on a day-to-day basis.

3. When participatory governance programs emerge from the bottom-up as organic experiences, reformers will need to take into account the issue of sustainability. Generally, these experiences emerge under committed leaders and or political parties. Yet, what happens when these leaders and/or parties are defeated at the polls? One strategy to ensure sustainability is to codify them in law, although there is an enormous problem of the disjuncture between formal law and actual governing practices. Policymakers should think about promoting coalitions of political reformers and civil society activists who share common interests in the mobilization of ordinary citizens. Clear and strong political incentives can motivate government officials to promote vibrant institutions.

4. When designing and analyzing these institutions, always think about the broader environmental factors that affect their implementation. Structural issues such as state formation, the nature of civil society, and the economic environment must be understood so that expectations and rules can be tailored accordingly.

5. Avoid "cutting and pasting" programs. Precisely because each context is unique, it is impossible to import participatory governance design and rules. While we can offer "best guiding principles," we also need to encourage creativity and ingenuity from all actors involved in the experience.

6. Ensure inclusive institutions. To enhance the legitimacy of participatory institutions, it is important to engage a diverse group of organizations as well as participants. Participation must move beyond the small circles of elite organizations (e.g., parties, NGOs) and historically empowered citizens. Governments must reach out to organizations and citizens who are traditionally marginalized from decision-making venues. Issues such as childcare, the time of the day that meetings are held, and location can increase the likelihood that women, the disabled, and youth will attend events.

These programs do not, of course, solve all participation problems or the classical flaws of all kinds of democracies, but they do take initial steps in improving access for some citizens to decision-making venues.

7. Educate all involved. To work, all actors involved must know about and understand why these programs are needed and the way that they function. Many of the processes can be complicated and address complex problems such as budget-making and development planning. Citizens need to gain basic understandings of the policy process as well as the new programs' rules. Bureaucrats and policy experts need to be retrained so that they understand how to work with the public.

8. Take conflict into account. Conflict is always present in participatory governance programs because citizens are helping to determine how scarce resources will be allocated as well as how local state authority is exercised. We should not expect participants to reach consensus, although the rules can be structured to bridge conflicts between organizations. Countries that are facing social unrest, war, or are in a post-conflict situation may look toward these new forms of participatory governance because their representative institutions cannot deal with these problems. In these cases, reformers must think about the role that these existing and potentially new conflicts will play as new institutions are implemented. Understanding the roots of these conflicts will help avoid potential problems down the road. Participatory governance channels demands and manages interests in an institutionalized environment, which has the potential to draw factions into positive-sum rather than zero-sum interactions. Reformers often praise consensus-based models, but they need to find ways to allow for and mitigate the naturally occurring conflicts that emerge during any policy decision-making process.

9. Failure is part of the learning process. Often, when participatory institutions falter or fail to fix the myriad problems facing a political system, we

rush to declare it "failed" and do not think about the implications of this experience. As we experiment and innovate, some programs will clearly not meet our expectations. And yet, there can be residual effects left by the pioneering effort—citizens and policymakers learn about what did and did not work well, which will help them in the future. However, we must keep in mind that poorly performing programs can undercut the legitimacy of the government officials who organized them as well as the community leaders who mobilized their followers to attend meetings.

Participatory governance provides an innovative way to address some of the basic democratic deficits associated with representative democracy, especially those in the developing world. In places as diverse as Brazil, Indonesia, India, and Peru we see participatory institutions that incorporate the poor and other marginalized groups into historically exclusive political systems. These programs do not, of course, solve all participation problems or the classical flaws of all kinds of democracies, but they do take initial steps in improving access for some citizens to decision-making venues. Thus, our careful attention to their potential impact is important for understanding and implementing the varied forms of democracy that now exist around the world.

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