Oxford Handbooks Online

Abstract and Keywords

This article discusses the theory and practice of so-called participatory governance. It explains that participatory governance is a variant or subset of governance theory which puts emphasis on democratic engagement, in particular through deliberative practices. Participatory governance seeks to deepen citizen participation in the governmental process by examining the assumptions and practices of the traditional view that generally hinders the realization of a genuine participatory democracy. The article also addresses the interrelated questions of citizen competence, empowerment, and capacity building as they relate to participatory governance, and evaluates the impact of participatory governance on service delivery, social equity, and political representation.

Keywords: participatory governance, governance theory, democratic engagement, citizen participation, participatory democracy, empowerment, service delivery, social equity, political representation

PARTICIPATORY governance is a variant or subset of governance theory that puts emphasis on democratic engagement, in particular through deliberative practices. In academic circles, the concerns of participatory governance have rapidly become important topics in social and policy sciences. Moreover, during the past several decades participatory governance has made its way into the political practices of a significant spectrum of political organizations, both national and international. Generally advanced as a response to a "democratic deficit" characteristic of contemporary political systems, participatory governance has been embraced by major organizations such as the World Bank, the US Agency for International Development, UN Habitat, and the European Union (EU); all have put money and effort into the development of participatory processes. Many of these initiatives have drawn their inspiration from the progressive projects of political parties in India, Brazil, Spain, Mexico, and the UK. To this list one can add civil society organizations, such as Oxfam, Action Aid, and the International Budget project, actively disseminating information and promoting participatory practices.

Both theory and empirical experience with governance demonstrates that there are numerous patterns of participation and non-participation, from non-democratic elitist top-down forms of interaction to radically democratic models from the bottom up. Governance, as such, tends to refer to a new space for decision-making, but does not, in and of itself, indicate the kinds of politics that take place within these spaces. Participatory governance, grounded in the theory of participatory democracy more generally, offers a theory and practices of public engagement through deliberative processes. It focuses, in this regard, on the deliberative empowerment of citizens and aligns itself in varying degrees to work on deliberative democracy in political theory and deliberative (p. 458) experimentation in policy-related fields of contemporary political and social research, as well as political activism on the part of various public organizations and foundations. Participatory governance thus includes, but moves beyond, the citizen's role as voter or watchdog to include practices of direct deliberative engagement with the pressing issues of the time.

Whereas citizen participation in the governmental process has traditionally focused on measures designed to support and facilitate increased public access to information about governmental activities, efforts to extend the rights of the citizens to be consulted on public issues which affect them, and to see that the broad citizenry will be heard through fair and equitable representative political systems, participatory governance seeks to deepen this participation by examining the assumptions and practices of the traditional view that generally hinders the realization of a genuine participatory democracy (Gaventa 2002). It reflects a growing recognition that citizen participation needs to be based on more elaborate and diverse principles, institutions and methods. Essential are a more equal distribution of political power, a fairer distribution of resources, the decentralization of decision-making processes, the development of a wide and transparent exchange of knowledge and information, the establishment of collaborative partnerships, an emphasis on inter-institutional dialogue, and greater accountability. All these measures seek to create relationships based as much or more on trust and reciprocity than advocacy, strategic behavior, and deceit. Participatory governance involves as well the provision of means to engage individuals and organizations outside government through political networks and institutional arrangements that facilitate supportive collaborative-based discursive relationships among public and private sectors.

Emerging as a result of a multiplication of existing kinds of participatory arrangements in the 1990s, participatory governance has established new spaces and given rise to different types of civil society actors to inhabit them. In both the developed and developing countries, these have involved a number of important shifts in problem-solving and service delivery, including more equitable forms of support for economic and social development. Along the way it has often meant a transition from professionally

dominated to more citizen—or citizen-based—activities, frequently taking place within the new civic society organizations.

The following discussion proceeds in six parts. It first takes up the interrelated questions of citizen competence, empowerment, and capacity-building as they relate to participatory governance, and then turns to its impact on service delivery, social equity, and political representation, including the distribution of power. These implications are seen to depend in significant part on participatory designs. The discussion thus presents the prominent theory of "empowered participatory governance," which offers principles for design. These points are further illustrated by pointing to several experiences with participatory governance, in particular the cases participatory budgeting in Brazil and the people's planning project in Kerala, India. Before concluding, the chapter also raises the question of the relation of citizens and experts in participatory governance and the possibility of new forms of collaborative expertise.

(p. 459) Citizen Competence, Empowerment, and Capacity-building

Democratic participation is generally considered a political virtue unto itself. But participatory governance claims to offer even more; it is seen to contribute to the development of communicative skills, citizen empowerment, and community capacity-building. First, with regard to citizen competence and empowerment, the practices of participatory governance are put forth as a specific case of the broader view that participation contributes to human development generally, both intellectual and emotional. Empowerment through participation has, as such, been part of the progressive educational curriculum and numerous citizen-based deliberative projects bear out its influence on personal development (Joss 1995; Dryzek 2008).

Many NGOs engaged with the practices of participatory governance, in particular in the developing world, speak of "people's self-development" and empowerment as primary goals, emphasizing, political rights, social recognition, and economic redistribution in the development of participatory approaches (Rahman 1995). Rather than merely speaking for the poor or marginalized citizens' interests and issues, they have labored to assist people develop their own abilities to negotiate with public policy-makers. Beyond institutionalizing new bodies of client or user groups, they have created new opportunities for dialogue and the kinds of citizen education that it can facilitate, especially communicative skills.

The issue is critical for *participatory* governance as it has little or no meaning if citizens are neither capable nor empowered to participate. Studies show that many people in the

middle rungs of society can competently deal with policy discussions (Fishkin 2009; Delli Carpini, Lomax Cook, and Jacobs 2004). Research finds, for example, that lay panelists on citizen juries increase their knowledge of the subject under discussion and often gain a new confidence in their ability to deal with complex policy issues generally (Joss 1995). Many participants tend to describe such participatory experiences as having had a stimulating impact on their personal lives, often leading to further involvement in public affairs.

Much more challenging, however, is the situation for marginalized members of society, those who might benefit from participatory governance the most. But here too there are positive signs. The participatory projects in Porto Alegre and Kerala, taken up below, as well as other experiences in developing and underdeveloped countries, show that citizens with less formal education can also, under the right conditions, participate with surprisingly high levels of competence. In the case of Kerala, most of the members of the local deliberative councils would be described as simple farmers. Nonetheless, they participated impressively in planning projects, the likes of which one very seldom finds in the advanced industrial world.

Participation, it also needs to be noted, is more than a matter of competence. Competent people may not perceive an incentive to participate. Thus, getting them to do (p. 460) so is another important issue. Engagement in the public realm is not without its costs, and most people have little interest in participating unless the costs of engagement are outweighed by the possibility of benefits from it (Osmani 2007). Local people, including competent citizens, may themselves be highly skeptical about the worth of investing their time and energy in participatory activities. In some situations, participation will lack immediate relevance; it may carry more significance for outsiders than it does for those in the relevant communities. Moreover, not everyone within the communities will be able or motivated to participate. Even when there is sufficient interest in participation there may be time barriers. Sometimes decisions have to be taken before deliberative projects can be set up and carried out.

Finally, questions of participation and competence also bear directly on the issue of capacity-building. Capacity-building, as the development of a community's ability to deal collectively with the problems that it confronts, can contribute to a sense of social togetherness. Rather than the relative passive role of the individual associated with traditional conceptions of citizen participation, participatory governance helps to connect and enable competent individuals in local communities build together the kinds of "social capital" needed for joint problem-solving (Putnam 2000). It does this in part by building social trust and the kinds of mutual understanding that it can facilitate.

Basic to the development of building capacity is a devolution of power and resources from central managerial control and toward local democratic institutions and practices, including street-level administrators willing and able to assist community members in taking charge of their own issues. Whereas community members under conventional forms of representative government are more often than not relegated to a vicarious role in politics, under participatory governance they move to a more direct involvement in the political process, as illustrated below by citizen panels but even more importantly participatory budgeting in Brazil.

Service delivery and equity

For many, the underlying goal of building capacity for action is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the provision and management of public services. For others concerned with participatory governance, as Ron has explained, a primary goal of capacity-building "is to provide citizens with the tools that are needed to reflect on the normative principles that underlie the provision of public services."[1] That is, the goal is to provide citizens with opportunities to critically reflect on the norms and values justifying the equity of the outcomes.

A range of experiences shows that community participation can improve the efficiency of programs (in terms of uses of resources) and effective projects (that achieve their intended outcomes) in the provision and delivery of services, in both the developed and developing worlds. In fields such as education, health care, environmental protection, forestry, and irrigation, it is seen to lead to quicker responses to emerging issues (p. 461) and problems, more effective development and design of solutions appropriate to local resources, higher levels of commitment and motivation in program implementation, and greater overall satisfaction with policies and programs (Ojha 2006). Furthermore, an emphasis on efficiency typically leads to improved monitoring processes and verification of results.

While there is no shortage of illustrations to suggest the validity of the claim, there is a methodological issue that can make it difficult to establish such outcomes (Osmani 2007). When local participatory governance is found to contribute to efficiency, firmly establishing the cause–effect relationships can be problematic. It is always possible that a positive association between efficiency and participation may only reflect a process of reverse causation—that is, community members had already chosen to participate in those projects which promised to be efficient. To know if participation has in fact contributed to efficient outcomes, investigators have to discern if such extraneous factors

are at work. Although this is theoretically possible, it is a difficult technical requirement. Such information is often unavailable or difficult to come by.

Participation also has the potential to combine efficiency with equity. Research shows that decisions made through the participation of community members rather than by traditional elites or unaccountable administrators offers less powerful groups in the community better chances of influencing the distribution of resources (Heller 2001; Fischer 2000). This view is founded on the presumption that through critical reflection in participatory processes disadvantaged citizens have improved chances of expressing their preferences in ways that can make them count.

But this is not always the case. Empirical investigation tends to be mixed on this issue (Papadopoulus and Warin 2007). Many studies suggest that participatory approaches in local arenas can be of assistance to the poor and disadvantaged members of the community, but other research fails to clearly confirm this. Overall, investigation shows that community participation can lead to more equitable outcomes, but it is particularly difficult to achieve such results in inequitable social contexts. Equitable outcomes more commonly occur in combination with other factors, such as those related to the distribution of power, motivation levels of the participants, and the presence of groups that can facilitate the process. One of the difficulties in assessing the impact of such participation is that there is often no reliable information about the distribution of benefits and costs to households, thus making it difficult to render comparative assessments (Osmani 2007).

Some also argue that by diffusing authority and control over management, decentralized participation can also weaken efficiency (Khwaja 2004). But, depending on the design, this need not be the case. And others argue that it can lead to resource allocations that violate the true preferences of community members, as some may withhold or distort information about their preferences and choices. This problem is perhaps most acute in developing countries, in which community participation is related to external donor-funded projects. All too often in these cases, such participation can intentionally advance preferences that are seen to be more in line with the interests of the donors than local interests. The participants simply try to increase their chances of obtaining available resources by telling the donors what they want to hear (Platteau 2007).

(p. 462) In short, while participation can lead to important payoffs, there are no guarantees. It cannot be said without qualifications that decentralized participation leads to greater efficiency and/or equity. What the experiences suggest is that the conditions of success depends on conscientious effort and design, both of which depend heavily on the ability of the participants to effectively present their views. This depends, in turn, on the degree of political representation and the distribution of power that it reflects.

Political Representation and the Distribution of Power

The theory and practice upon which such efforts rest are based on a number of varied sources, including academic theorizing, political activists, social movements, NGOs, and governmental practitioners. On the theoretical front, many of these projects have been influenced by work on deliberative democracy in political theory, an influential orientation designed to revitalize a stronger conception of democracy and the public interest based on citizen participation through public deliberation (on the forms of democratic governance, see Ron, Chapter 33, this volume). It focuses on promoting "debate and discussion aimed at producing reasonable, well-informed opinion in which participants are willing to revise preferences in light of discussion, new information, and claims made by fellow participants" (Chambers 2003: 309). It is grounded in the idea that "deliberate approaches to collective decisions under conditions of conflict produce better decisions than those resulting from alternative means of conducting politics: Coercion, traditional deference, or markets." Thus, "decisions resulting from deliberation are likely to be more legitimate, more reasonable, more informed, more effective and more politically viable" (Warren 2007: 272). [2]

A critical issue is the relationship of such participation to the larger representative structure of society. Because participatory governance is largely introduced to compensate for the failures of representative government to adequately connect citizens to their elected representatives, the ability to bring these two political models together is important (Wampler 2009). Examples of how this can be done are introduced in the next section presenting the experiences from Porto Algre and Kerala.

Closely related to representation is the question of power, or what Osmani (2007) calls the "power gap." A function of the asymmetrical power relations inherent to modern societies, especially those created by the inequalities of rich and poor, this poses a difficult barrier to meaningful participation. When inequalities are embedded in powerful patriarchies such projects are prone to be captured and manipulated by elites, whether they be political leaders and their patronage networks or those providing development assistance from the outside. Again, we can gain insights into this process in the following discussion of Porto Algre and Kerala.

In many ways, participatory governance is a response to this power problem, as it seeks to give a voice to those without power. But one has to be careful in assessing the (p. 463) degree to which it can generate unmanipulated participation. At the current state of development, participatory governance itself often exists as much or more as a strategy for struggling against political imbalances rather than for counterbalancing them outright.

A manifestation of this struggle is the problem of co-optation, which makes it difficult to judge the significance of participation in successful projects. All too often they are in jeopardy of being co-opted (Malena 2009). Experience shows that success is frequently rewarded by governmental institutionalization, at which point they are often manipulated to serve purposes other than those intended. The World Bank, for example, has deftly co-opted various participatory projects and their methods to generate support for their own agendas. Having discovered of the relevance of local involvement and participation from many of its Third World investment failures, the Bank took an interest in the advantages and institutionalized a participatory program designed to facilitate direct local contact with the communities it seeks to assist (World Bank, 1994). Not only have senior bank staff members been directed to get to know a particular region better through personal participation in programs and projects in its villages or slums, the bank has pioneered a technique called participatory poverty assessment designed "to enable the poor people to express their realities themselves" (Chambers 1997: xvi). It has been adapted from participatory research experiences in more than thirty countries around the world (Norton and Stephens 1995).

Such instrumentalization of participation can be seen as a "political technology" introduced to control processes and projects, hindering the possibilities of popular engagement. Bourdieu (1977) refers to these as "officializing strategies" that domesticate participation, direction attention to less active forms of political engagement. Given the widespread manipulation of participatory techniques, Cooke and Kothari (2001) are led to describe participation as "the new ideology."

As is the case with service delivery and equity, there is nothing simple or straightforward about either political representation and equitable power arrangements in participatory projects. Indeed, there is no shortage of things that can block effective political participation. It is a question that again raises the issue of participatory design and brings us to a discussion of "empowered participatory governance" which has sought to set out principles for design.

Empowered Participatory Governance

Examining a range of cases designed to promote active political involvement of the citizenry, Fung and Wright (2003) have labored to sort out what works. Acknowledging that complexity makes it difficult for anyone to participate in policy decision-making, they speculate that "the problem may have more to do with the specific design of our institutions than with the task they face." Toward this end, they have examined a range of experiences in the participatory redesign of democratic institutions (including Porto

Alegre (p. 464) and Kerala), innovations that elicit the social energy and political influence of citizens—especially those from the lowest strata of society—in pursuit of solutions to problems that plague them.

Even though these reforms vary in their organizational designs, the policy issues to be deliberated, and scope of activities, they all seek to deepen the abilities of ordinary citizens to effectively participate in the shaping of programs and policies relevant to their own lives. From their common features they isolate a set of characteristics that Fung and Wright define as "empowered participatory governance." The principles they draw from these cases are designed to enable the progressive "colonization of the state" and its agencies. Relying on the participatory capabilities of empowered citizens to engage in reason-based action-oriented decision-making, the strategy and its principles are offered as a radical political step toward a more democratic society.

As a product of this work, they isolate three political principles, their design characteristics, and one primary background condition. The background enabling condition states that there should be rough equality of power among the participants. The political principles refer to (1) need of such experiments to address a particular practical problem; (2) a requirement that deliberation rely upon the empowered involvement of ordinary citizens and the relevant; and (3) that each experiment employs reasoned deliberation in the effort to solve the problems under consideration. The institutional design characteristics specify (1) the devolution of decision-making and the powers of implementation power to local action-oriented units; (2) that these local units be connected to one another and to the appropriate levels of state responsible for supervision, resource allocation, innovation, and problem-solving; and (3) that the experimental projects can "colonize and transform" state institutions in ways that lead to the restructuring of the administrative agencies responsible for dealing with these problems.

While this work is an important step forward, a theory of the design of deliberative empowerment still requires greater attention to the cultural politics of deliberative space (Fischer 2006). Beyond formal principles concerned with structural arrangements, we need as well research on the ways the social valorization of a participatory space influences basic discursive processes such as who speaks, how knowledge is constituted, what can be said, and who decides. From this perspective, decentralized design principles are necessary but insufficient requirements for deliberative participation. We need to examine more carefully how political-cultural and pedagogical strategies can facilitate the deliberative empowerment in participatory governance.

Projects and practices: citizens' panels, participatory budgeting, and people's planning

Of particular significance on the practical front have been experimental projects in participatory governance, all designed to bring citizens' reasoned preferences to bear on the (p. 465) policy process (Gastil and Levine 2005). Most of these projects are dedicated to goals closely related to those spelled out by the theory of deliberative democracy, although many do not emerge from it per se. Some scholars, though, have argued that deliberative democratic theory should strive to be a "working theory" for the deliberative experiments of participatory governance (Chambers 2003). There are now some prominent examples of such interaction, in particular on the part of scholars such as Fishkin (2009), Warren and Pearce (2008), and Dryzek (2008). They clearly illustrate constructive "communication between the theorists of deliberative democracy and empirical research on deliberation" (Fischer 2009: 87).

The projects in participatory governance are to be found across the globe, from Europe and the US to the developing and underdeveloped world. In Europe and the US numerous projects have focused on efforts to develop fora through which citizens' views on complex economic and social issues can be brought to bear directly on policy decisions. Some of these have been organized from the bottom, whereas others have emerged from the top down. Such research has ranged from investigations of the traditional citizen survey and public meetings to innovative techniques such as deliberative polling, televoting, focus groups, national issue conventions, and study circles on to more sophisticated citizen juries, scenario workshops, planning cells, consensus conferences, and citizens' assemblies (Gastil and Levine 2005; Fishkin 2009; Joss 1995). These experiences offer important insights as to how to bring citizens into a closer participatory relationship with public decision-makers.

Most important among these efforts have been the citizen jury and the consensus conference. Developed in Northern Europe and the United States before spreading to a range of countries around the world, these two deliberative processes permit a high degree of citizen deliberation on important matters of public policy. They provide citizens with an opportunity to deliberate in considerable detail among themselves before coming to judgment or decision on questions they are charged to answer. During the process, they hear from experts and pose their own questions to them, before deliberating among themselves. But citizens' panels are largely advisory in nature; they supply additional information that can be useful to politicians and the public. Given the limited amount of space available here, the present discussion will focus more specifically on those deliberative arrangements built into the governmental structure itself.

The most progressive projects have developed in the developing world, especially in Brazil and India. These innovations include deliberative processes analogous to citizen juries but have more formally integrated them into the policy processes of established governmental institutions. Of particular importance are the practices of public budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil and people's development planning in Kerala, India. These innovations have been influenced by both social movements, NGOs, and left-oriented political parties, both theoretically and practically. Turning first to participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, by all standards one of the most innovative practices in participatory governance, it has becomes a model widely emulated around the world.

(p. 466) Under public budgeting in Porto Alegre significant parts of local budgets are determined by citizens through deliberative fora (Baiocchi 2003; Wampler 2009). In a city of 1.3 million inhabitants, long governed by a clientelistic pattern of political patronage, a left coalition led by the Workers' Party took office in 1989 and introduced a publicly accountable, bottom-up system of budgetary deliberations geared to the needs of local residences. Involving a multi-level deliberative system, the city of Porto Alegre has been divided into regions with a Regional Plenary Assembly that meets twice a year to decide budgetary issues. City administrators, representatives of community groups, and any other interested citizens attend these assemblies, jointly coordinated by the municipal government and community delegates. With information about the previous year's budget made available by representatives of the municipal government, delegates are elected to work out the region's spending priorities. These are then discussed and ratified at a second plenary assembly. Representatives then put these forward at a city-wide participatory budgeting assembly which meets to formulate the city-wide budget from these regional agendas. After deliberations, the council submits the budget to the mayor, who can either accept the budget or send it back to the council for revisions. The Council then responds by either amending the budget or overriding the mayor's veto through a vote of two-thirds of the council representatives.

The second case, that of Kerala, has involved a full-fledged process of people's resource planning (Issac and Heller 2003; Fischer 2000). Located in the southwestern corner of the country, Kerala has gained attention in the development community for its impressive economic and social distributional activities in the 1980s. In the mid-1990s, a coalition of left parties led by the Communist Marxist/Party of India decided to extend these activities to include a state-wide, bottom-up system of participatory planning, the goal of which was to develop the Kerala Five-Year Plan to be delivered to the central government in New Delhi.

Pursuing a devolutionary program of village-level participatory planning as a strategy to both strengthen its electoral base and improve governmental effectiveness, the government decided that approximately 40 percent of the state's budget would be

redirected from the administrative line departments and sent to newly established district planning councils, about 900 in number. Each village, supported by the Science for the People social movement and the Center for Earth Sciences, formulated a specific development plan that spelled out local needs, development assessment reports, specific projects to be advanced, financing requirements, procedures for deciding plan beneficiaries, and a system of monitoring the outcomes. These developments were then accepted or rejected by vote in village assemblies. The final plans were send to the State Planning Board and incorporated into the state's Five-Year Plan, sent to New Dehli for inclusion in the overall development plan of the national government.

As a consequence of these activities, from citizen juries to People's Planning, participation has gained a place across the political spectrum in the 1990s as a central feature of "good governance." Promoting decentralization, good governance practices have added an additional layer of local participatory institutions to an increasingly complex (p. 467) institutional landscape that in some cases has given rise to transfers of both resources and decision-making powers.

Returning to the question of political representation, in the case of the citizen jury and the consensus conference, the outcomes are merely advisory. They offer politicians and decision-makers a different kind of knowledge to consider in their deliberations, a form of understanding often more closely akin to the types of thinking they themselves engage in (as opposed to complex technical reports). But in Kerala and Porto Algre, by contrast, deliberation was integrated into the policy decision process. In Kerala, local discussions were hierarchically channeled up to the State Planning Board for inclusion in the official planning document. In Porto Algre they were linked into the official governmental budget-making process; the outcomes of the deliberations determined an important portion of the budget. Success, in both cases, is seen to depend as much on support from political parties at the top as it does from grass-roots movements from below. The top and the bottom of the power structure must work together (Fischer 2009). Given that the dramatic successes of these two experiences are exceptions to the rule, we need much more investigation into this process.

Participatory expertise: a new type of expert?

Of particular significance in these projects is a breed of NGOs working to represent and serve the needs of marginalized or excluded groups. In many of the newly created participatory spaces activists have assisted excluded peoples—such as the poor, women, AIDS victims, and the disabled—in developing a collective presence that has permitted them to speak for themselves. Through such efforts activists and their citizen groups have in many cases succeeded in influencing the policies of mainstream institutions. In

some cases, these activities have given rise to a new breed of public servant—frequently schooled in NGOs—devoted to offering assistance to these groups. As government officials or independent consultants to parallel institutions—they have often played an essential role in the development and spread of participatory approaches to governance (Fischer 2009).

The result of these participatory activities has also given rise to a new kind of professional orientation, one that challenges the standard techno-bureaucratic approaches of the modern state (Fischer 2009). These professionals, along with their respective theoreticians, have sought to reconceptualize the role of the public servant as facilitator of public engagement. Feldman and Khademian (2007), for example, have reconceptualized the role of the public manager as that of creating "communities of participation." In their view, the challenge confronting those working in the public sector is to interactively combine knowledge and perspectives from three separate domains of knowing—the technical, political and local/experiential domains. Bringing about more inclusive practices of governance involves inventing participatory contexts in which the representatives of these forms of knowing can discursively share their perspectives in the common pursuit of problem-solving. Beyond merely identifying and disseminating information (p. 468) from these various ways of understanding and analyzing policy problems, such work involves translating ideas in ways that facilitate mutual understanding and deliberation among the participants and discursively promotes a synthesis of perspectives that helps to stimulate different ways of knowing relevant to the problem at hand.

In many cases participatory expertise involves the development of citizen–expert alliances and the use of practices such as community-based participatory research and participatory action research, as was the case in Kerala (Fischer 2000). These methods involve professional experts in the process of helping lay participants conduct their own research on problems of concern to local residents. While there have been important efforts to facilitate deliberation between citizens and experts, there are a number of problems that still need to be dealt with (Fischer 2009). Perhaps most important, professionals are not trained to facilitate participation and many—maybe most—do not believe there is any point in engaging citizens in such issues. The successful efforts, more often than not, are the result of activities engaged in by professionals involved in progressive social movements of one sort or another (Fischer 2009). In addition, they raise difficult but important epistemological questions related to the nature of such knowledge. Does it just involve a division of labor organized around the traditional separation of empirical and normative issues? Or does it require a new hybrid form of knowledge, involving a fusion of the empirical and the normative and perhaps a special role for local lay knowledge? Included in this question is the need to explore the

relationship of reason to emotion. Although everybody in politics knows that emotion and passion are basic to the politics of governance, this topic has yet to receive the attention it deserves in the literature on democratic governance and policy.

Concluding Perspective

Many of these participatory activities have offered significant new insights into questions that have long been ignored in traditional political analysis and in democratic theory in particular. Four of these new perspectives stand out especially. The first concerns the need to fill the "institutional void" that the theory of representative government fails to address. The second involves the degree to which citizens are able to participate meaningfully in the complex decision processes that define contemporary policy-oriented politics. The third is the ability to improve service delivery and social equity. And fourth, we have also noted the implications of participatory governance for the nature of professional practices.

Beyond the theoretical realm, however, it should be clear from the foregoing discussion that much of the practical work on governance involves a collection of separate experiments and projects that have common threads but often offer somewhat limited outcomes, projects in Porto Alegre and Kerala being important exceptions. In this regard, it is essential to recognize that the experiences with these efforts have by no means been all positive. It is a story of mixed outcomes, with the experiences ranging (p. 469) across the spectrum from very impressive to disappointing. Indeed, the failures far outnumber the successes. The successful cases, moreover, offer few uniformities.

The task of sorting out the positive and negative elements contributing to the success and failure of such participatory projects thus takes on particular importance. Given that there is no shortage of factors that come into play, such an assessment is challenging. What can be said is that, independent of a good deal of the rhetoric associated with discussions about participation, the evidence about new forms of participatory governance illustrates that participation poses difficult issues with no simple solutions. A closer look reveals that while citizens can participate and that participatory governance can improve both democratic decision-making and efficient service delivery, participation has to be carefully organized, facilitated—even cultivated and nurtured.

Given the difficulties involved in designing and managing participatory processes, it comes as no surprise to learn that citizen participation schemes rarely follow smooth pathways. In the absence of serious attention to the quality and viability of citizen participation, it is usually better to forgo such projects. Participatory governance, despite

its promise, is a complicated and uncertain business that needs to be carefully thought out in advance (Fischer 2000). This should be the first priority of those engaged in both the theory and methods of the practice.

References

Baiocchi, G. 2003. Participation, activism, and politics: The Porto Alegre experiment. In A. Fung and E. O. Wright (eds.) *Deepening Democracy*. New York: Verso, 77–102.

Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chambers, R. 1997. *Who Reality Counts? Putting the First Last*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Chambers, S. 2003. Deliberative democratic theory. *Annual Review of Political Science* 6: 307–326.

Cooke, B. and Kothari, U. 2001. *Participation: The New Tyranny?* London: Zed Books.

Delli Carpini, M. X., Lomax Cook, F., and Jacobs, L. R. 2004. Public deliberation, discursive participation, and citizen engagement: A review of empirical literature. *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 315–344.

Dryzek, J. 2009. The Australian citizens' parliament: A world first. *Journal of Public Deliberation* 5: 1–9.

Feldman, M. S. and Khademian, A. M. 2007. The role of the public manager in inclusion: Creating communities of participation. *Governance* 20: 305–324.

Fischer, F. 2000. *Citizens, Experts, and the Environment: The Politics of Local Knowledge*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Fischer, F. 2006. Participatory governance as deliberative empowerment: The cultural politics of discursive space. *The American Review of Public Administration* 36: 19–40.

Fischer, F. 2009. *Democracy and Expertise: Reorienting Policy Inquiry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fishkin, J. S. 2009. *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Fung, A. and Wright, E. O. 2003. *Deeping Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*. New York: Verso.

Gastil, J. and Levine, P. (eds.) 2005. *The Deliberative Democracy Handbook: Strategies for Effective Civic Engagement in the 21st Century*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gaventa, J. 2002. Towards participatory governance. *Currents* 29: 29–35.

Heinelt, H. 2010. *Governing Modern Societies: Towards Participatory Governance*. London: Routledge.

Isaac, T. H. and Franke, R. 2000. *Local Democracy and Development: People's Campaign for Decentralized Planning in India*. New Dehli: Left World Press.

Isaac, T. H. and Heller, P. 2003. Democracy and development: Decentralized planning in Kerala. In A. Fung and E. O. Wright (eds.) *Deepening Democracy*. New York: Verso, 77–102.

Joss, S. 1995. Evaluating consensus conferences: Necessity or luxury. In S. Joss and J. Durant (eds.) *Public Participation in Science: The Role of Consensus Conferences in Europe*. London: Science Museum, 89–108.

Khwaja, A. I. 2004. Is increasing community participation always a good thing? *Journal of European Economic Association* 2: 2–3.

Malena. C. (ed.) 2009. *From Political Won't to Political Will: Building Support for Participatory Governance*. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press.

Misar, D. 2005. *Participatory Governance Through NGOs.* Jaipur: Aalekh Publishers.

Ojha, H. 2006. Techno-bureaucratic doxa and challenges for deliberative governance: The case of community forestry policy and practice in Nepal. *Policy and Society* 25: 11–176.

Ojha, H. N., Timsina, N. P., Chhetri, R. B., and Paudal, K. P. 2008. Knowledge systems and deliberative interface in natural resource governance. In H. N. Ojha, N. P. Timsina, R. B. Chhetri, and K. P. Paudal (eds.) *Knowledge Systems and Natural Resources: Management Policy and Institutions in Nepal*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1–22.

Osmani, S. R. 2007. Participatory governance: An overview of the issues and evidence. In *Participatory Governance and the Millennium Development Goals*. New York: United Nations, 1–48.

Papadopoulus, Y. and Warin, P., 2007. Are innovative, participatory and deliberative procedures in policy making democratic and effective? *European Journal of Political Research* 46: 445–472.

Putnam, R. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of the American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Rahman, M. D. A. 1995. *People's Self-Development*. London: Zed Books.

Norton, A. and Stephens, T. 1995. *Participation in Poverty Assessment*. Environmental Department Papers Participation Series, Social Policy and Resettlement Division, World Bank, Washington, June.

Platteau, J. 2007. Pitfalls of participatory development. In *Participatory Governance and the Millennium Development Goals.* New York: United Nations, 127–162.

Rowe, G. and Frewer, L. J. 2004. Evaluating public participation exercises: A research agenda. *Science, Technology and Human Values* 29: 512–557.

Wampler, B. 2009. *Participatory Budgeting in Brazil*. University Park: Penn State.

Warren, M. E. 2007. Institutionalizing deliberative democracy. In S. Rosenberg (ed.) *Deliberation, Participation and Democracy: Can the People Govern?* London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 272–288.

Warren, M. E. and Pearce, H. (eds.) 2008. *Designing Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens Assembly*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

World Bank 1994. *The World Bank and Participation*. Washington, DC: Operations Policy Department.

Notes:

(1.) The observation is drawn from Amit Ron's helpful comments on this chapter.

(2.) While the theory of deliberative democracy has had the most influence on these projects, the theory of agonistic democracy can also support the theory and practices of participatory governance.

Frank Fischer

Frank Fischer is Professor of Politics and Global Affairs at Rutgers University in the USA and Senior Faculty Fellow at the University of Kassel in Germany.

Subscriber: null; date: 15 June 2016