Politics, participation and urban planning

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Outline

1. Characteristics and forms of participatory urban planning
2. Factors shaping the processes and their outcomes
3. Innovative approaches at local and city levels
4. Towards more participatory governance and planning: key factors and pitfalls to avoid
5. Conditions for and characteristics of effective and inclusive participation
6. Conclusion

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1. Characteristics and forms of participatory urban planning

□ Voice, transparency and accountability

□ Underpinnings: theories of democracy and planning

□ Active citizenship

– provides an education in democratic practice

– fosters a sense of belonging,

– leads to acceptance of collective decisions

– encourages bureaucratic responsiveness and accountability

– brings collective knowledge and new ideas to bear on decision-making.

The form, purpose & meaning of participation

Form	Purpose	Meaning to implement-ing agency	Meaning for those involved	Potential approaches
Nominal	Display, manipulation	Legitimation	Hope for improvement	Token rep-resentation
Consultative	Assembling information	Better information	More approp-riate plans	Information collection
Instrumental	Improving effectiveness	Improved efficiency	Access to benefits	Contributions to costs
Represent-ative	Providing a say in decision making	Means of identifying views, sust-ainable system	Direct or indirect influence	Represent-ative political system
Transform-ative	A means and an end	Partnership, collaboration	Control over decisions	Devolution, partnerships, contracts

□ Forms of participation in planning
- occurs at different levels
- can be initiated by different actors
- occurs at different stages in the planning process
- relates to a variety of planning and decision-making processes
- varies depending on stakeholders' capacities

2. Factors shaping the processes and outcomes of participatory urban planning

- Characteristics of the political system
- Legal basis for urban governance and planning
- Historical evolution of planning
- Allocation of responsibilities for planning, implementation and development regulation
- Government capacity
- Citizens' awareness of their entitlements
- The scale and scope of planning

3. Innovative approaches to participatory urban planning

3.1 Participation in local planning

- *Participatory urban appraisal*
  - Means of collecting community level data & preliminary needs assessment
- *Community action planning*
  - Issues related to community organisation
  - Outcomes affected by: source of initiative, relationships community/NGOs/admin & political system
  - Role for NGOs?
  - Elite capture or community empowerment?
  - Resources and links

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3.2 Participation in city level and strategic decision making

☐ *Participatory budgeting*

- – 170 Brazilian cities by 2005
- – Conditions for success
    - ☐ strong civic associations
    - ☐ tradition of participation
    - ☐ meaningful resources available
    - ☐ unified, committed governing coalition
- – Local political system crucial (e.g. Buenos Aires)
- – Problematic links with long-term/citywide planning
- – By 2006/7 1000+ Latin American municipalities + 100+ European cities – variety of arrangements and outcomes

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□ *City Development Strategies*

   – Participation in problem identification, prioritisation, visioning, development planning >

      □ Agreed vision, goals, priorities

      □ Set of strategies & action plans that can be resourced

      □ Mechanisms for implementation, M & E

   – Limited evaluations show

      □ Positive outcomes of participatory element

      □ Improved coordination and ownership

      □ Stronger participatory mechanisms

      □ Needs & priorities of voiceless recognised

      □ Broader range of solutions than conventional spatial plans

- Challenges
  - Developing new approaches & building consensus takes time & may not be possible
  - Effectiveness of participatory approaches rarely assessed, often not institutionalised
  - May be resistance to lengthy/costly participatory processes
  - Participation may not tackle inequalities, especially if wider political decision making sidelined
  - May not be able to resolve tensions between economic development, service provision & environmental sustainability
  - More than one level of governance: implications for participation?

4. Towards more participatory governance and planning?

□ Lessons from experience
  – factors to be considered: vary so approaches need to be context specific
  – pitfalls to be avoided

4.1 The political context and system

Political systems & the scope for participation

Modes of urban politics & governance	Nom-inal	Con-sult-ative	Instru-mental	Rep-resent-ative	Trans-form-ative
Inclusive democratic		X	X	X	X
Corporatist (politicians, civic leaders, elites)	X	X	X	X	
Managerialist (politicians, appointed officials)	X	X	X	X	
Pluralist (politics as bargaining between organised interests)	X	X	X	X	
Populist (politician(s) mobilising popular support)	X	X	X		
Oligarchical (elite + popular support)	X	X	X		
Clientelist (relationships politicians, bureaucrats, citizens)	X		X		
Authoritarian (non-democratic)	X		X		

4.2 The legal basis for planning & participation

4.3 The pitfalls of participatory approaches

- Voice without redistribution > disillusion

- Invited participation may bias outcomes

- Some stakeholders abstain or are excluded > need for

  - Building knowledge & capacity

  - Designing appropriate process e.g. women

    - Gender disaggregation of data

    - Gender budgeting

    - Women's hearings

    - Women's audits

    - Training for leaders & councillors

    - Facilitating networking

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- Outcomes unpredictable – even instrumental participation may yield benefits

4.4 The resources needed to support participatory processes

- Political and official commitment
- Adequate financial resources
- Appropriately trained facilitators & planners
- A match between participatory mechanisms and the scale and purpose of planning
- Scales & levels of decision making
  - Short-term vs long-term
  - Issues vs comprehensive
  - Periodic vs regular
  - Land use vs multi-sectoral planning

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5. Successful participation: conditions and characteristics

i. Committed leadership
ii. Supportive national government, policy, legal framework
iii. Suitable city-level political arrangements
iv. Broad and inclusive participation
v. Timeliness (in relation to decisions)
vi. High likelihood of outcomes being adopted
vii. Open, fair and accountable processes
viii. Skilled, independent & flexible facilitation

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- Distinction short & long term objectives, with some short term action + proposals linked to financial allocations
- Willingness to seek consensus + mechanisms for conflict resolution
- Collaboration with CSOs and CBO
- Appropriate tools
- M & E, including supervision of implementation
- Provision of long term support to cities + knowledge sharing among them
- Closer legal and practical links between land use and multi-sectoral planning

6. Conclusion

- The prospects for participatory approaches to governance and planning?
  - Promising, based on replicating and scaling up positive approaches and experiences
  - Doubtful, based on
    - Our lack of realism about and understanding of urban politics
    - Reservations about value and transferability of models promoted by international agencies
    - Local government generally continues to be weak & at loggerheads with central government
    - The many conditions for successful particip-ation are unlikely to be satisfied.

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