chapter EIGHT

Participation Scenarios and Tactics

In Part Two of this book, we explored what stronger participation infrastructures might look like in education, health, land use, and state and federal government. But while long-term, overarching visions for public participation may be compelling, they are less useful for those who have pressing participation goals and needs. Building a better infrastructure takes time, and some challenges must be dealt with now, not later. The purpose of this chapter is to describe a wide range of participation tactics and to help participation leaders decide how to use those tactics to meet the short-term needs and scenarios they face.

Whether participation leaders are planning for the short or the long term, they must always consider the relationships being built with citizens. Even if the tactic being used is designed to end next week, or next year, the participation experience itself is likely to have long-term effects (good or bad) on how people perceive their community, their government, and each other. To be successful in the short or the long term, public participation must work for both the "engagers" and the "engaged."

This chapter takes stock of those relationships by first taking a closer look at how people typically interact in conventional public meetings. Understanding the assumptions made by public officials, public employees, and citizens in conventional processes can help change the relationship between the engagers and the engaged. We then describe the main strategic questions that must be answered when choosing or designing a participation process. Finally, we examine common participation scenarios, provide a set of participation tactics and suggest strategies to address specific real-world situations.

TRAPPED IN THE FOXHOLE: CONVENTIONAL PARTICIPATION

As we have noted throughout this book, conventional opportunities—including public notice and comment periods, advisory boards, and traditional public meetings—are the most common forms of participation. They also exert a huge influence on the relationship between citizens and institutions, as well as how people perceive the word "participation." This is not just an intellectual point, but an emotional one: people who have been part of conventional processes (whether they are officials, staff, or citizens) often have scars from their experiences, and those past encounters affect their willingness to consider new forms of participation.

Most people in conventional participation feel as if they are trapped in a foxhole. Public officials struggle because the role they have been given is not necessarily the one they envisioned (or wanted). Whether they are elected or appointed, officials come into office with a rush of confidence, trust, and respect--only to find that when the first controversy or key policy decision emerges, the meeting room is full of angry faces. (And if the controversy is being discussed online, the exchange is likely to be even less civil.) Over time, this dynamic becomes entrenched in the thinking of public leaders, and conventional public participation—which, in the minds of most officials, means any kind of public participation—quickly becomes something they dread.

In another part of the meeting room sit the public employees, staffers who have many of the same hurt feelings about the lack of citizen trust and respect. The frustrations of both citizens and officials are often taken out on the relatively defenseless staff. Because they are afraid of these reprisals, and because they feel they are "in this for the long haul," the public employees are usually the silent, stoic characters in the room. They are often just keeping their heads down, trying to ride out the emotional turmoil of the meeting so that everyone will just allow them to go back to work.

This attitude of government staff reflects and reinforces their own blindered set of assumptions about their role: they think of themselves as public problem-solvers. They view the "politics" of public meetings as a side show to their main job, which is to ensure that the streets are cleaned, potholes are filled, buses run on time, criminals are apprehended, and children are educated. All other aspects of public life, especially the ways in which citizens connect with one another, are secondary to the central function of public employees and public institutions. In this way of thinking, citizens are not problem-solvers—and because they have no connection with problem solving, most people are unaware of the dedication and commitment of public employees.

The citizens who attend the meeting are, at least visibly, the most frustrated of all. The opportunity they are given--which in most cases consists of two to three minutes at an open microphone to express themselves to the entire room—reaffirms their role as protesters of public policy, testifying to their complaints about decisions that were made without their knowledge or input. In some public meetings, the officials and staff are barred from responding to anything said by citizens at the microphone (typically this is because open meetings laws prevent discussion by officials of any topic that was not placed on the agenda seventy-two hours before the meeting).

Even the physical setup of the room reinforces the disparity in power and authority: citizens sit in rows, without nametags, with their single microphone in the middle, while the officials loom above them on a raised dais with engraved name plaques and comfortable chairs. The conventional format favors the most confident, educated, and infuriated speakers—and since they seldom feel heard by the officials, it usually leaves them even more frustrated, angry, and distrustful than before.

In almost every case, the vast majority of the people simply stay home. Not showing up to public meetings could be labeled as apathy or ignorance, but in fact, it is a reflection of quite rational thinking on their part: since "getting involved" in this way does not provide them with what they want--problem solving, civility, or community--why should they participate? This same basic parent-child dynamic is prevalent in public meetings at every level of government. But the meetings are only symptomatic of the larger malaise: after they end, everyone goes home and continues working under those same small-minded assumptions about their roles in public life.

How can we get out of these foxholes? Public officials, staff, and citizens have to examine their assumptions about one another and about public participation itself (see Table 2.2 in Chapter 2). From one scenario to the next, they need to think through their participation goals and consider the goals that others bring to the table—this is fundamental to building an adult-adult relationship. Many people, whether they work inside government or not, have the potential to be participation leaders. In the following section, we address four key questions that people should take into account when planning for participation.

PLANNING FOR PARTICIPATION: KEY QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

Throughout this book, we have provided numerous examples of participation tools, techniques, and processes. Here, we want to take a closer look at how these approaches differ. Although participation opportunities vary in a number

of ways (see Box 8.1), we focus on four that are important for both immediate participation needs and building stronger participation infrastructure. These differences are easily understood as strategic questions:

- Who should participate and how will participants be recruited?
- How will participants interact with each other and with decision-makers?
- What information do participants need?
- How will participation impact policy decisions, problem-solving efforts, or other kinds of public action?

Before examining these questions, it is useful to make three points about the overarching context for public participation. First, how participation leaders answer these questions will depend on other factors, such as the goals for participation (why participation is needed and the hoped for accomplishments); timing (how quickly a decision needs to be made or an action taken); mandates, laws, rules, and/or regulations; and system context and organizational conditions (budget, human and other resources, available technologies, and logistical constraints), among other issues (Nabatchi, 2012c).

Second, participation leaders should understand the distinction between positions and interests. *Positions* are what a person or group wants; they represent the demand being made. In contrast, *interests* are the reasons—the needs, values, or concerns—underlying a position; they represent why a person or group wants something. For any given issue, people generally have only one position but many interests, with some interests being more important than others. Moreover, people with conflicting positions often have interests in common. (For more information about positions and interests, see the Participation Skills Module, available at www.wiley.com/go/nabatchi.) When participation focuses on positions, discussions are more likely to become adversarial, with people taking up conflicting one-sided arguments. (If I want a mall to be built and you do not, we do not have much room to do anything but argue.) However, when participation focuses on interests, discussions can become more cooperative, constructive, and productive. (If you and I agree that both green space and economic development are important, then we can have a conversation about how to satisfy both of those interests.) If participation is position-based, people are more likely to stay in the foxhole; but if participation is interest-based, they stand a better chance of getting out (see Nabatchi, 2012c).

Box 8.1. Some Variations in Direct Public Participation

General Purpose and Objectives. Direct participation has many general purposes, for example, gathering or disseminating information, resolving disagreements, fostering collaborative action, making decisions, developing plans.

Size. The number of participants involved can range from a few to hundreds or thousands.

Participant Recruitment. Recruitment strategies may include broadcasting announcements through the media, recruiting proactively through networks, and selecting by random sample.

Participation Tactic. Participation can involve in-person, remote, and/or online tactics. In-person tactics may use a large-group or small-table format and may or may not be facilitated. Remote and online tactics differ in terms of how participants interact with the technology; whether, where, and how participants interact with each other; and whether the interaction is moderated. Some tactics have official names and may even be trademarked, whereas others are not.

Interaction Mode. Direct public participation may involve one-way, two-way, and/or deliberative communication.

Communication Plan. Participation approaches may (or may not) include a strategy to assist with the dissemination of information to the attendees and the broader community about the process, its results, and how and why public input is (or is not) being used in official decision making.

Participant Preparation. Informational and other materials may or may not be used to prepare participants.

Locus of Action. Participation may have intended actions or outcomes at the individual, family, organizational, network, neighborhood, community, municipal, state, national, or even international level.

Specificity of Recommendations. Participation may produce a variety of outcomes, ranging from fairly generic recommendations to highly specific proposals or judgments.

Recurrence and Iteration. Participation may involve a one-time event, a series of single events over the course of time, or a longer-term, ongoing endeavor.

Connection to Policy and Decision Making. Participation may have weak or strong connections to policy and decision-makers, or it may be intended to invoke individual or group action or change.

For more discussion about these and other variations in direct participation, see Nabatchi & Amsler (2014); see also Bingham, Nabatchi, & O'Leary (2005); Bryson, Quick, Slotterback, & Crosby (2013); Fung (2003, 2006); Hoppe (2011); and Nabatchi (2012a, 2012b, 2012c).

Third, it is important to consider the level of concern or controversy surrounding the issues being addressed. Some issues have low stakes, where most people are relatively unconcerned and do not have fixed positions; others have high stakes, where many people are very concerned and hold strong positions;

and still others are of low stakes to some people, and high stakes to others. In general, a high-stakes issue requires more attention to interests than a low-stakes issue does (Fung, 2003; Nabatchi, 2012c; Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014). These points about positions, interests, and stakes become clearer in light of the four strategic questions.

Who Should Participate and How Will Participants Be Recruited?

Who should participate is a central issue in public participation (cf. Bryson, Quick, Slotterback, & Crosby, 2013; Fung, 2003, 2006; Nabatchi, 2012c; Thomas, 1995, 2012). Most agree that getting the "right" people to the table is important, but decisions about who the "right" people are depend not only on what participation leaders are trying to do, but also on how people perceive and are affected by the issue.

A first step in determining who should participate is to examine who is affected by the issue. Some issues may affect the "public" (the broad and general populace) or "citizens" (eligible voters), while others may affect "community members" (those who live in a particular city or town) or "residents" (inhabitants of a particular locale such as a neighborhood, housing subdivision, or building), and still others may affect only a sub-set of people within any of these categories (Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014: 65). A second step is to examine the stakes involved for those who are affected. In general, if an issue deeply affects people, and/or if it is controversial, then it is important to devote significant amounts of time and energy to recruitment.

After deciding who should be involved, participation leaders must determine a recruitment strategy. Here, we identify three primary recruitment strategies, which may be used alone or in combination with one or more of the others: (1) broadcasting announcements through the media; (2) recruiting proactively through networks; and (3) selecting by random sample (Fung, 2003, 2006; Leighninger, 2012; Nabatchi, 2012c; Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014; Ryfe & Stalsburg, 2012). For all of these approaches, it is important for organizers to put themselves in the shoes of potential participants and think about the incentives that might compel them to engage (Will it make an impact on an issue I care about? Will it give me information I need? Will it be fun?) and the barriers that may stand in their way (Will there be child care? Will people speak my language? Will it be easy to get there?). Recruitment skills are described more extensively in the Participation Skills Module.

The most common recruitment strategy, and the default approach for conventional participation, is *broadcasting announcements through the media*. This approach is used most often for public meetings and online opportunities that are open to anyone. It relies on simple advertising—placing notices in newspapers, on the radio, and on websites, and perhaps distributing flyers. This approach is sometimes referred to as "voluntary self-selection" because people who see or hear the advertisements voluntarily decide whether to attend. The benefit of this recruitment strategy is that it is relatively easy and inexpensive. However, this strategy has drawbacks. If the issue has low stakes, then very few people turn out, and those who do tend to be wealthy, older, and white, since this population generally has the resources and time to participate; if the issue is of high stakes, then those who turn out tend to be people who have strong opinions and positions on the issue (Fung, 2003; Nabatchi, 2012c). In either case, this recruitment strategy creates "participation bias," which means that those who attend are not representative of the community in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, political or ideological perspectives, or viewpoints on the issue (Fung, 2003; Nabatchi, 2012c).

Because the success of a participation project often depends on whether it attracts a diverse, critical mass of people, many participation leaders use *proactive, network-based recruitment* strategies. This is sometimes also referred to as "targeted demographic recruitment." The first step is to map community networks; these could be political or advocacy groups, but they could also be networks centered on neighborhoods, schools, faith communities, workplaces, or other shared interests. Participation leaders then capitalize on the relationships they have (or ones they can build) with influential people in those networks. If certain populations seem especially critical—either because they are more likely to be affected by the issue being addressed or because they have traditionally been marginalized and are less likely to participate—then organizers may focus extra attention on building relationships and recruiting proactively within those networks.

Although this recruitment approach still largely relies on voluntary self-selection, it also tends to reduce participation bias. It is also more time- and labor-intensive, mainly because it relies on relationships of trust, which take time and effort to build. The main reason people participate is because someone they already know and trust asks them to do so; the challenge of proactive recruitment is to tap into (or in some cases, to establish) a sufficiently large web of trusting relationships to generate a large and diverse turnout. The advent of the Internet

and the presence of social media have made this challenge a little less daunting because communication is almost instantaneous, and because networks are easier to find. However, recruitment remains one of the most difficult tasks in public participation.

Another method used to overcome participation bias is *random selection*, which essentially means picking participants by lot to produce a microcosm of the larger population. This strategy is much more resource-intensive, since participation leaders must often rely on paid consultants or polling firms who use random-digit dialing or other approaches to select potential participants. More recently, for-profit firms have assembled large panels of people who have agreed up-front to serve as poll and survey respondents on particular issues.

Of course, representativeness is only achieved if those who are selected or recruited choose to participate. Participation leaders using random-sample approaches sometimes offer incentives such as per diem payments, gift cards, or other monetary awards to participants. Organizers using proactive, network-based recruitment are more likely to use nonmonetary incentives (like food or music) that make the participation experience more enjoyable. All recruitment approaches are more effective and equitable when transportation, child care, translation, or other services that help remove the immediate barriers to participation are provided.

How Will Participants Interact with Each Other and with Decision-Makers?

Participation leaders should also consider the interactions, or how people will communicate with each other, within a participation opportunity. In general, there are three interaction or communication modes: one-way, two-way, and deliberative (Nabatchi, 2012c). Each has strengths and weaknesses, and the mode selected should depend on the stakes and what participation leaders are trying to accomplish. We discuss various skills that are useful for fostering productive participant interactions, such as moderation, facilitation, and ground rules, in the Participation Skills Module.

One-way and *two-way communication* are relatively straightforward. One-way communication is the unidirectional flow of information between people, and two-way communication is the reciprocal flow of information. One-way communication is generally fast and easy, but it does not allow for feedback or for negotiation. It is also sometimes hard to know whether the message has reached the intended audience and whether people understand it. Two-way communication does enable

feedback and some negotiation, but it rarely allows for in-depth consideration of perspectives. Perhaps more importantly, both one- and two-way communication encourage position-based, rather than interest-based statements. For these reasons, one- and two-way communication are best used for low-stakes issues.

Other kinds of participation produce multi-way communication, in which citizens, public officials, and public employees can all interact with one another. In the realm of participation, the most important kind of multi-way communication is *deliberative communication*, a specialized mode of discussion that is structured and oriented toward problem solving (Gastil, 2008). Specifically, deliberation requires that a group of participants take part in an open and accessible process in which they "reflect carefully on a matter, [weigh] the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions to a problem [and] aim to arrive at a decision or judgment based on not only facts and data but also values, emotions, and other less technical considerations" (Gastil, 2005: 164). Deliberation also requires that all participants have an adequate opportunity to speak, listen attentively and consider carefully the contributions of other participants, and treat each other with respect (Gastil, 2008: 9–10). Most deliberation occurs in face-to-face settings, although platforms for online deliberation have been developed (see Chapter 2 and the Participation Skills Module).

Deliberation has many benefits: it gives everyone an opportunity to be heard and enables people to focus on interests rather than positions. This can foster cooperation and lead to more productive conflict management. However, deliberation also has drawbacks: it is labor-intensive and time-consuming. Deliberation is useful, and sometimes essential, for high-stakes issues.

What Information Do Participants Need to Be Prepared?

This question goes to the issue of participant preparation (Nabatchi, 2012c). A traditional criticism of participation is that the public is ignorant and rash, and consequently unable to give useful input on important public decisions. But research shows that participant input improves when they are given high-quality information (Delli Carpini, 2000) that provides context and history, is neutral and objective, and includes all perspectives (Lukensmeyer & Brigham, 2002). Deliberative processes require agendas or guides that "frame" the issue by laying out the main views or policy options to be considered. (For more information about how to develop informational materials and frame issues, see the Participation Skills Module.)

Of course, not all participation opportunities require preparatory materials. Whether information is needed, as well as what types of materials are appropriate, depends on the complexity of the issue being examined and the stakes involved. Some simple, low-stakes issues may not require participant preparation. Others may require specific information provided through websites, infographics, newspaper articles, short presentations, or expert or panel discussions. Complex and/or high-stakes issues almost always require informational materials, such as issue guides, online resources, or experts who can answer technical questions.

How Will Participation Impact Policy Decisions, Problem-Solving Efforts, or Other Kinds of Public Action?

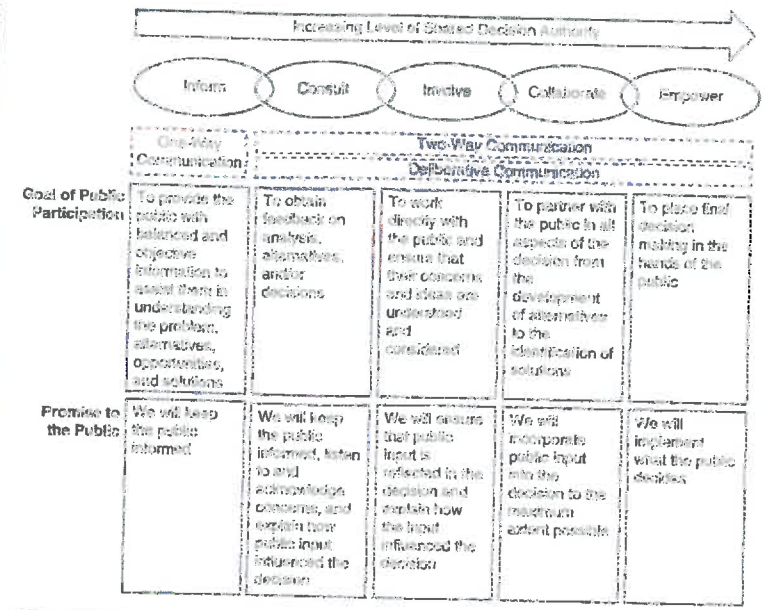
This is usually the most difficult question to answer, in part because impacts are dependent on the recommendations, ideas, and commitment of the participants. Some projects designed to affect policy changes lead instead to a wave of volunteer-driven problem-solving efforts; others that are intended to increase volunteerism instead change policy (Leighninger, 2006). Regardless, participation leaders can determine what kinds of questions and choices will best elicit citizen input for policymaking and can support participants in taking action.

When it comes to policymaking, an essential aspect of this question is how much decision-making authority is being given to participants. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation (IAF2, 2007) provides a useful graphic for thinking about how public input will be used. Figure 8.1 presents an adapted version of the spectrum, including information about the communication modes, goals, and promise made to the public at each point along the continuum (for more about the adapted version of the spectrum, see Nabatchi, 2012b, 2012c).

At the first level of the spectrum are tactics that *inform* the public or "provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions." Informational tactics typically use one-way communication and have no shared decision authority.

At the second level are tactics that *consult* with the public or "obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions." The promise in consultation is to "listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision." They may use one-way or two-way communication, but provide minimal, if any, shared decision authority.

Figure 8.1
Adapted Spectrum of Participation



Adapted from the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (Nabatchi, 2012b, 2012c; see also IAP2, 2007).

At the third level are tactics that *involve* the public, or "work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered." Involvement tactics typically use two-way communication, although a few may use deliberative communication. These participation opportunities promise that public "concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed." They have a low to moderate level of shared decision authority.

At the fourth level are tactics that encourage leaders to *collaborate* with the public, or "partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution."

Collaborative tactics are more likely to employ deliberative communication. These tactics promise that public "advice and recommendations" will be incorporated "into the decisions to the maximum extent possible." They have a moderate to high level of shared decision authority.

At the fifth level are tactics that *empower* the public or "place final decision making in the hands of the public." Empowerment tactics are most likely to use deliberative communication and have the highest level of shared decision authority, because officials are promising to implement what the public decides.

Table 8.1 summarizes how the options for answering these four strategic questions fit with low-stakes or high-stakes public issues. Although these judgments are broad generalizations, they are helpful for considering various participation

Table 8.1
Strategic Questions and Stakes

Question	Options	Low-Stakes Issue	High-Stakes Issue
Recruitment	Broadcasting announcements	X	
	Proactive network recruitment		X
	Selecting by random sample		X
Interaction	One-way	X	
	Two-way	X	X
	Deliberative		X
Participant Preparation	No	X	
	Yes		X
Impact	Supporting ways for citizens to take part in problem solving	X	X
	Showing how input will influence resulting policy decisions		X

scenarios and tactics—some of which have their own built-in assumptions about recruitment, interaction, preparation, and impacts.

PARTICIPATION SCENARIOS: MATCHING THE GOALS OF "ENGAGERS" AND "ENGAGED"

How participation leaders answer the four strategic questions will depend on many factors, not the least of which are the participation scenario they face and the goals they have for engaging the public. In this section, we describe several of the most common scenarios, along with the typical goals that the engagers—and the engaged—bring to those situations.

The need to think through both the goals of participation leaders *and* the goals of the potential participants is perhaps the most complicated aspect of public engagement (see Box 8.2). Like many other aspects of this work, the dual nature of participation goals points up the importance of relationships—both specific personal relationships and broader relationships between individuals and institutions—since it is through these connections that goals are best articulated and negotiated.

The scenarios we describe in this chapter look similar to the six building blocks for participation infrastructure described in Chapters 4 through 7. This makes sense: many of the things we describe in Figures 4.3, 5.3, 6.3, and 7.3 are simply short-term participation activities that can be repeated, supported, and made easier. For example, crowdsourcing exercises and participatory budgeting processes can be organized as one-off projects—or they can be made part of the regular routine on a given issue. However, since meeting immediate participation needs is the focus of this chapter, two of the building blocks are not covered here. The first, discussing and connecting, does not typically come up as a short-term participation priority. (It is, however, still important; even short-term participation efforts rely on relationships, and they are hard to build in the midst of a controversy or a crisis.) The second, enabling student and family decisions (Chapter 4) or patient and family decisions (Chapter 5), does not come up here because these efforts are more likely to be tackled as long-term, highly context-specific priorities.

All four strategic questions are likely to be at least somewhat important in each of the scenarios; however, the discussion below highlights the most critical questions for each scenario. We also provide some general examples of participation tools and techniques in each scenario.

Box 8.2. What's in a Goal?

The goals of participation initiatives are varied and often unclear for several reasons.

First, just as the conveners, organizers, and funders of participation are diverse, so too are their goals diverse (Amsler, 2007; Carcasson, 2009; Leighninger, 2012; NCDD, 2008). Moreover, when participation efforts are initiated by coalitions of leaders, there may be numerous—sometimes unspoken—goals.

Second, participation efforts are often organized quickly, without much planning or forethought, in response to a crisis or a controversial policy decision. In these cases, the goals may not be clear because there was no real goal-setting process, beyond an instinctual urge to "reduce the tension," "break the logjam," or "get people to act."

Third, goal setting may be complicated by the need to be in compliance with law and administrative procedure. The legal framework for participation can limit goals, because it encourages government officials to ignore more innovative forms of participation and adhere to minimal standards (Bingham, 2010; Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014).

Finally, participation leaders are not the only ones with goals that matter: the potential participants have their own reasons for participating, which may or may not match those of the leaders. In fact, the goals of the participants are almost always at least somewhat different from the goals of the sponsors.

Scenario 1: Participation Leaders Want to Inform the Public

This is the most basic and common participation scenario. In fact, informing citizens in some way could be considered part of all these scenarios. Governments, civic organizations, universities, and civil society groups have a great deal of information they want—and need—to share. For example, participation leaders could be trying to inform citizens about the main expenditures in the city budget (Marois & Amsler, 2008), the threat of a flu pandemic (Liburd, Giles, & Jack, 2014), the way in which planning and zoning decisions are made (Amsler, 2008), how policing strategies are changing (Leighninger, 2006), or what to do in the event of a natural disaster (Lukensmeyer, 2013). Sometimes the information is basic and straightforward; other times the information might focus on a new issue or emerging problems, alternatives, opportunities, or solutions.

Participation leaders facing this scenario should ask themselves a basic question: Why do they want people to have this information? There are many possible reasons. Participation leaders may want to:

- Encourage people to change their behavior;
- Help people understand an issue, as well as the tradeoffs and options decision-makers face; and/or
- Help people understand how they can participate in decision making or problem solving on the issue.

Participants have their own goals in these situations, possibly including all of the goals listed above. In addition, participants may want to:

- Share information themselves or suggest new ways for information to be shared;
- Learn how to work with other people and organizations to do something about the issue; and/or
- Participate in decision making (including, in some cases, revoking a decision that has already been made).

The two most important strategic questions leaders should address in this scenario are recruitment and interaction. Recruitment speaks to the issue of who receives the information. In some cases, informational tactics need to reach a broad population (e.g., for flu prevention), whereas in others, they need to reach a specific population (e.g., parents of school-aged children).

Interaction concerns how information is communicated. One-way communication may be appropriate when the information is straightforward and the request being made of citizens does not require significant changes on their part ("to help prevent a flu pandemic, be sure to wash your hands frequently"). If the information is more complex and the request is more significant—or if the information will prompt citizens to become more involved in decision making and problem solving—then tactics that feature two-way or deliberative modes of interaction may be needed. Another way to say this is that simpler information sharing can be done effectively using thin participation tactics, whereas the more complicated situations require thick tactics. In part, this is because most people are visual and experiential learners—they learn better in interactive environments where they can envision how the information will affect their lives and where they can test the strengths and weaknesses of different ideas.

In some situations, the reaction of citizens may suggest a shift in scenarios: what participation leaders thought of as a need to share information is viewed by citizens as something that deserves greater deliberation, collaboration, or shared

decision making. For a variety of reasons, participation leaders may not be able to accommodate these desires—for example, they are local officials bound to the constraints of a state or federal law, or a decision has been made that cannot be revoked. But even in these cases, it is important to be aware that the engagers and the potentially engaged have different perspectives on the nature of the scenario they are facing. Participation leaders should be clear about their expectations and constraints and open-minded about ways to adjust their participation plans.

Scenario 2: Participation Leaders Want to Gather Public Input, Feedback, and Preferences

Participation leaders are often faced with issues for which they want or need to know what citizens think. All kinds of activities, from campaign polls to opinion research, could fall under this very broad category of work. We focus here on efforts to gather feedback on what governments and other institutions are doing, how (and how well) they are doing it, and what they might do next. For example, participation leaders might want to know how parents feel about issues of race and difference at their child's school (Orland, 2007), how residents rank different public transit alternatives (Lazo, 2014), or how to allocate limited flu vaccines in the case of a pandemic (Leighninger, 2006).

Again, it is worth thinking through the potential goals of participation leaders, who may want to:

- Gauge public perceptions of a program or service;
- Hear reactions to different options for improving a service or implementing a plan; and/or
- Get a sense of citizen preferences, priorities, or rankings in the course of decision making.

Citizens, meanwhile, may want to contribute to these goals, and also:

- Suggest new ideas for improving a service or implementing a plan (including options that were discarded by decision-makers or that have not been considered so far);
- Devote some of their own time and energy to implementing those ideas; and/or
- Become more involved with participation leaders and other citizens in making a decision or developing a plan.

An important consideration in this scenario is how to reach and recruit the right group or mix of people. Participation leaders should determine whether they want a demographically representative sample of public opinion, the input of a specific set of people who use a particular service or are more likely to be affected by a certain issue, or just a general sense of what the most active and interested citizens think. Once again, being aware of the match or mismatch between the goals of engagers and engaged is important when thinking through how to describe a participation effort—and whether it needs to be adjusted.

Gathering input, feedback, and preferences lends itself easily to thin forms of participation, including surveys and polls conducted by telephone or online, canvassing door-to-door or at events, reaching out through online networks, using serious games, or aggregating the terms and opinions found in online discussions. If citizens require more information or participation leaders want them to delve more deeply into different options or tradeoffs, then thicker forms of participation may be more appropriate.

Scenario 3: Participation Leaders Want Citizens to Generate New Ideas or New Data

In addition to responding to questions from participation leaders, citizens can provide many other kinds of information, from big, creative ideas to small, but significant details. Many participation efforts tap this reservoir of knowledge, for example, to find "out of the box" thinking about how to improve community schools (Colorado Association of School Boards, 2003) or to uncover data about everyday problems (like potholes, graffiti, school absenteeism, or crime) that public institutions are trying to fix (Ganapati 2010). In some of these situations, citizens are encouraged to spend a great deal of their own time and effort developing their ideas, exploring the feasibility of their proposals, or refining or ranking the ideas contributed by others. In others, citizens are asked for specific pieces of data that help identify, tag, measure, or prioritize public problems.

Through these efforts, participation leaders may be trying to:

- Identify priority problems or issues;
- Gather data that helps employees address situations or meet public needs more effectively;
- Find creative ideas that their institutions can implement; and/or
- Find creative ideas that citizens will work to help implement.

Citizens who take part in these efforts may embrace these goals, and may also want:

- Public institutions to address priority problems, or implement the ideas that have been generated;
- Greater access to public data that will help them develop and refine their ideas; and/or
- Contact with public employees and other problem-solvers so that they can work on the feasibility and implementation of ideas, or find out why certain problems have not been addressed.

Here leaders should consider the strategic questions dealing with recruitment, preparation, and impact. Participation leaders should consider the degree to which representativeness, inclusion, and diversity are important and necessary for the issue and select recruitment strategies accordingly. They should think through what kinds of information, access to expertise, and other resources citizens may need to effectively contribute ideas and data. Finally, they should be sufficiently open-minded about the variety of suggestions they receive and sufficiently flexible to use or respond to them. Clear expectations are critical, particularly about the level of government or organizational resources that are available.

Scenario 4: Participation Leaders Want to Support Volunteerism and Citizen-Driven Problem Solving

In some situations, participation leaders realize that the problem or issue they are trying to address requires individual actions, behavioral changes, small-group efforts, or changes by organizations—or all of the above, on a large scale. Included among many examples are race and diversity issues (Walsh, 2007), crime and policing (Fung & Wright, 2003), childhood obesity (McCarron, Richartz, Brigham, White, Klein, & Kessel, 2010), and the preservation of watersheds and other environmental resources (Sirianni & Friedland, 2000).

Through these projects, participation leaders may be trying to:

- Increase the capacity of the community or society to solve the problem, and/or
- Raise awareness of the work being done by public institutions, civil society organizations, and other groups to solve the problem.

Citizens who participate in these efforts almost always share the first goal, and often the second. In addition, they may want to:

- Find more information about the issue, and
- Influence plans and policy decisions relevant to the issue.

It is relatively easy for citizens to recommend solutions for others to implement, but deciding to take action, even in minor ways, requires a higher degree of commitment. Building public ownership of public problems usually requires connecting people in information-rich environments in which they can decide not only what they want to do, but also how to do it. Accordingly, participation leaders should pay attention to strategic questions of recruitment, preparation, and impact. Recruitment is important in this scenario because higher numbers of volunteers usually means a higher capacity for problem solving. Preparation matters in the sense that citizens who know more about the issue and are better able to coordinate their efforts will be more effective. The question of impact is less tied to policy change and more tied to how citizens will be supported, recognized for their efforts, and asked to report back on accomplishments. This may require continuing opportunities for participation; if future events will feature their efforts, people are more likely to continue working together.

Scenario 5: Participation Leaders Want to Make a Policy Decision

Leaders sometimes use participation to address an immediate political peril, seize the opportunity of a policy window, or manage concerns or frustrations with the policymaking process (Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014). For example, public officials may use participation to generate the public will to help break a legislative deadlock or make a difficult decision on a controversial issue, such as school redistricting and closings (Leighninger, 2006), landfills (McComas, 2001, 2003), zoning for new developments (Gordon, Schirra, & Hollander, 2011), or statewide corrections reform (Leighninger, 2006). Even neighborhood-level concerns like bike lanes, dog parks, and community policing are critical topics for participation in public decision making.

Participation leaders dealing with this scenario typically want to:

- Ensure that citizens understand the basic facts on the issue, especially the tradeoffs among different options;
- Reduce the level of tension surrounding the decision; and/or
- Contain the political fallout from the decision—in other words, make it less likely that decision-makers will be fired or defeated for re-election based on the option they chose.

Citizens may also want to:

- Find more information about the issue;
- Feel that their opinions are valued and that they have a meaningful say in the decision; and/or
- Work in other ways to make an impact on the problem that the decision is trying to address—for example, they may want to help improve the quality of the school system and the education of students, no matter what happens with a school closing decision.

It is very difficult to overcome polarization among different segments of the population without bringing those people together in some kind of structured environment. Even the most carefully constructed compromises may not suffice without substantive public participation: citizens rarely accept compromises if they feel they had no say when the agreements were being negotiated. When people hear firsthand why others hold different opinions, and when people with divergent opinions have a chance to analyze the same information and consider different arguments or policy options, they usually are able to find some common ground.

All four of the key strategic questions—recruitment, interaction, preparation, and impact—are critical in this scenario. In high-profile, high-conflict situations, people pay attention to who is (and is not) in the room. Likewise, one-way and two-way communication are likely to foster a position-based discussion, which creates an adversarial, win-lose situation. Therefore, deliberative communication, where everyone has the opportunity to be heard, will be more effective (Nabatchi, 2012c). Because policy disagreements are often based on (mis)information and varying interpretations about information, participant preparation is critical; people need balanced, neutral, and objective data around which to center their discussions. Finally, participants want to know that their input had an impact on decision-makers. Even if they do not agree with the final decision or outcomes, people often value the participation opportunity when they feel that their contributions were carefully considered.

Scenario 6: Participation Leaders Want to Develop a Plan or a Budget

Developing a plan or a budget is perhaps the broadest participation scenario—in some cases, a planning process incorporates all five of the other scenarios. Because it may encompass all of the other scenarios, participation in planning and budgeting is the most likely to employ a wide range of engagement activities, tools, and processes. Participation has been used to develop plans relating to land use (Wates, 2000), health (Norris, 2014), school redistricting (Frey, 2014), disaster preparedness and recovery (Lukensmeyer, 2013), and many other issues. As we discuss in the next section, participatory budgeting and other engagement tactics centered on budgets have been used to inform or shape the financial decisions of local governments, school systems, housing authorities, and other organizations (Schugurensky, 2014).

In this scenario, participation leaders often have many goals, such as:

- Ensuring that people have a baseline of information about the issue or the community;
- Understanding public values and priorities;
- Encouraging citizens to contribute creative new ideas that could become part of the plan or budget;
- Encouraging citizens to contribute some of their own time and energy to implementing those ideas or other aspects of the plan;
- Establishing a general direction that is broadly supported by the population, so that in the future, people will understand the more specific decisions and actions taken by decision-makers; and/or
- Preparing for or making controversial decisions by framing them in the broader context of public values and what people want for their community.

This list of goals probably applies equally to citizens. The critical thing to discover is whether both the engagers and the engaged are interested in the same goals. This kind of clarification and negotiation is essential to successful planning or budgeting.

Implementation is also critical. Too many participatory processes have produced plans that failed to shape future actions and decisions. There are many reasons for this, but perhaps the most fundamental is that the participation opportunities ended when the plan was released: the engagers and engaged did not build in future meetings, online exchanges, dashboards, or other ways of benchmarking progress and holding one another accountable to commitments.

As with Scenario 5, and for the same basic reasons, all four key strategic questions will be important to answer in Scenario 6. Decisions about recruitment, interaction, preparation, and impact will have a critical impact on the success (or failure) of participatory planning or budgeting.

Table 8.2
Common Participation Scenarios and Strategic Questions

	Design Question			
Scenario	Recruitment	Interaction	Participant Preparation	Impact
Inform the public	X	X		
Gather input, feedback, and preferences	X			
Generate new ideas and information	X		X	X
Support volunteerism and problem solving	X		X	X
Make a policy decision	X	X	X	X
Develop a plan or budget	X	X	X	X

Although other participation scenarios certainly exist, these six arise most frequently. While participation leaders should always consider recruitment, interaction, preparation, and impact, some of these questions are more salient in some scenarios than in others. Table 8.2 summarizes the strategic questions that matter most in each scenario.

PARTICIPATION TACTICS: MATCHING APPROACHES TO SCENARIOS

Faced with these scenarios, and frustrated by the inability of conventional meetings and processes to address them, participation leaders have pioneered a wide range of participatory tactics. Table 8.3 specifies twelve common tactics—roughly organized from thinnest to thickest—and indicates which are most valuable in each scenario. Thinner tactics require simpler, quicker actions, usually by individuals acting alone, whereas thicker tactics require a greater commitment of time and energy from participants, mainly in small-group settings. Some tactics use digital tools, while others rely on face-to-face interactions, but most can be pursued either online or off (or through a combination of both).

Table 8.3
Participation Tactics and Scenarios

Tactic	Scenario 1 Inform the public	Scenario 2 Gather input, feedback, and preferences	Scenario 3 Generate new ideas and info	Scenario 4 Support volunteerism and problem solving	Scenario 5 Make a public decision	Scenario 6 Create a plan or budget
Social Media Aggregation		YES			YES—with other tactics	YES—with other tactics
Surveys and Polls		YES			YES—with other tactics	YES—with other tactics
Focus Groups		YES			YES—with other tactics	YES—with other tactics
Online Problem-Reporting Platforms			YES	YES—with other tactics		YES—with other tactics
Crowdsourcing and Contests			YES	YES		YES—with other tactics
Crowdfunding and Mini-Grants			YES	YES		YES—with other tactics
Serious Games	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES—with other tactics	YES—with other tactics
Wiki-Based Mapping and Writing Platforms	YES		YES	YES	YES—with other tactics	YES—with other tactics
Online Networks	YES	YES	YES—with other tactics	YES	YES—with other tactics	YES—with other tactics
Collaborative Planning Processes			YES	YES		YES
Participatory Budgeting	YES		YES	YES	YES—with other tactics	YES
Public Deliberation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Each tactic has strengths and limitations and, generally speaking, each will be most effective when conducted as part of a comprehensive strategy. In some scenarios—particularly Scenarios 1 and 2—some tactics used alone may be sufficient, whereas in other scenarios, tactics work best when used in combination. While many tactics are promoted as stand-alone models or tools, most experienced participation practitioners and researchers now agree that a multiple-tactic or "multi-channel" approach (Lukensmeyer, 2013; Peixoto & Weber, 2012) works best in most participation scenarios and is probably essential for Scenarios 5 and 6. Many of these tactics rely on skills described in the Participation Skills Module.

It is important to understand that this is not an exhaustive list: for decades, people have applied their creative energies to developing new formats for participation, and the result is a dizzying array of tactics. New innovations, especially tactics that capitalize on social media and other online tools, are emerging faster than ever. We also do not cover the most basic kinds of communication tools, like flyers, mailers, infographics, press releases, and static websites, even though these are common elements of participation projects. Additional resources for finding and understanding participation tactics include:

- Participedia (www.participedia.net)
- *IAP2 Public Participation Toolbox*, International Association for Public Participation (2007)
- *Organizing Community-Wide Dialogue for Action and Change*, Study Circles Resource Center (2001) (now Everyday Democracy)
- *Community Heart and Soul Field Guide*, Orton Family Foundation (2014)
- *Engagement Streams Framework*, National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (2008)
- *Public Pathways: A Guide to Online Engagement Tools for Local Governments*, New America Foundation (2014)
- *Beyond the Ballot: 57 Democratic Innovations from Around the World*, The Power Inquiry (Smith, 2005)
- *Public Engagement: A Primer*, Public Agenda (2008)
- *Organizing for Participatory Budgeting*, Participatory Budgeting Project (www.participatorybudgeting.org/toolkit/)
- *A Refined Typology of Public Engagement Tools and Implements*, PE2020 Project (Mačiukaitė-Žviniené, Tauginienė, Rask, Meijlgaard, Ravn, & d'Andrea, 2014)

The Participation Skills Module also contains a list of organizations that provide public participation resources.

Some of the tactics listed below were described or at least mentioned in Chapters 4 through 7. Many elements of the participation infrastructures described in those chapters may also apply to this one: structures like neighborhood associations, parent groups, advisory committees, and official public meetings might be useful elements of short-term participation projects. (In any case, the need for a comprehensive, multi-channel approach in most scenarios reinforces the importance of a stronger participation infrastructure that can support those kinds of strategies.)

Tactic 1: Social Media Aggregation

Aggregation tools, a relatively new technology, sift through social media networks to find common words and strings of words. They allow participation leaders to "listen in" on existing online discussions of public issues, rather than having to bring citizens to a meeting or a different online space. In fact, social media aggregation is not really a proactive participation tactic, but an approach that capitalizes on the fact that citizens have already participated in their online networks. CitizenScape, Measured Voice, and Cityzen are representative social media aggregation platforms. Another tool, Google Alert, notifies the user when a particular search term is used in social media.

Social media aggregation is useful for gaining a sense of citizen preferences (Scenario 2) and could also be part of a larger strategy for making decisions or developing plans (Scenarios 5 and 6). Participation leaders who aggregate comments on social media sometimes also introduce topics and questions within those setting, a practice that blends Tactic 1 with Tactic 9.

Aggregation is championed by some civic technologists, who characterize it as attending to participation from the "bottom-up," rather than trying to orchestrate it from the "top-down." One civic technologist claimed that "Listening to and participating in online conversations is quickly replacing polling as a way to understand what communities of interest are actually interested *in*" (Drapeau, 2009). "Above all, governments must expect to 'go where people are' when seeking to engage with them, rather than expecting people to come to government," wrote Joanne Caddy (OECD, 2009: 14), who has directed online engagement efforts for the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The more significant challenge with aggregation, however, is figuring out how participation leaders should interpret what they hear. Participant recruitment—or, in this case, selecting and filtering participant comments—is the only one of the strategic questions relevant to aggregation. At this point in their development, it is difficult for these tools to come close to the accuracy of a random-sample poll. Citizens participating in online discussions about policy are not necessarily more representative of the general public (and may in fact be less representative) than the organized lobbying groups—or even the "usual suspects" who show up at conventional public hearings. Furthermore, when political conversations are unstructured and isolated from the policymaking process, there is less incentive for the participants to deliberate, compromise, or even seek to understand each other better.

Tactic 2: Surveys and Polls

Surveys and polls are among the most basic participation tactics. They have traditionally been conducted by phone, by mail, and in person, but in the last ten years, online tools have made it easier to design and disseminate surveys and polls through email, texting, websites, and social media. Another method for surveying citizens is keypad polling, which is usually done in face-to-face meetings. In this method, participants vote on the same question at the same time, using handheld keypads (for tips on using keypad polling, see the Participation Skills Module). This method can be linked to online polls or to live keypad polling being conducted simultaneously in multiple places.

Like social media aggregation, surveys and polls are mainly useful for gathering citizen input, feedback, and preferences (Scenario 2), although they could be part of a larger strategy for one of the other scenarios, especially Scenarios 5 and 6. Many nonprofit and for-profit organizations specialize in polling and surveys. Online survey and polling platforms include SurveyMonkey, SurveyConsole, SurveyGizmo, Codigital, and Poll Everywhere, among others.

Many participation leaders have developed creative ways of gathering input and feedback, often using mobile technology, that push the boundaries of polls and surveys. For example, as part of an effort to create a regional plan for sustainable development in the Buffalo/Niagara Region, the organization Textizen posted questions about regional transit at bus stops, light rail stops, and on buses. People texted their answers, which were tabulated on the Textizen platform and made public as part of the planning process (Jacobs, 2014).

Participation leaders should pay attention to issues about participant selection and recruitment when using surveys and polls. In general, people who respond to surveys and polls tend to be more educated and more active citizens; this means that there can be biased responses. It can be useful to include questions that collect demographic data to provide a better idea of who is responding and how well they represent the broader community. Random sampling can also be used to generate more scientific surveys and polls that are more representative of the broader population; however, random sampling can be costly.

Box 8.3. Deliberative Polling

Deliberative polls have been used in numerous countries around the world. Their purpose is to gauge what citizens will support and why, and thus provide decision-makers with guidelines from which to act.

To conduct a deliberative poll, 200 to 500 people are randomly sampled from the population. Once identified, each participant is polled on a set of questions to establish a baseline about participants' opinions and knowledge. Participants are then paid to attend a summit that typically lasts one to two days. In advance of the summit, participants review information about the issue or decision being addressed. At the summit, participants work in small-group discussions with trained facilitators, punctuated with periodic presentations and briefings by experts. Following the deliberations, participants are polled again. The post-deliberation results are compared to the baseline data to determine any degree of refinement participants have made on their understanding of the issue.

Like other random-sample forms of participation, deliberative polls are seldom sufficient for planning or policymaking, since they do not produce the critical mass of participants or the political will necessary for action (see Chapter 2). However, they can be valuable—but costly—components of a broader strategy.

For more information, see http://cdd.stanford.edu/polls/, see also Fishkin and Farrar, 2005.

Another issue with surveys and polls concerns participant preparation. While survey and poll respondents tend to be more educated, this does not mean that they are more informed about the issue or issues being addressed. The framing, wording, and order of questions affect how people respond. Moreover, the kinds of questions used to gather reactions impacts the quality of the data. Multiple choice and other closed questions generate relatively limited data, whereas open-ended

questions generate deeper data, for example, the interests that underlie positions or the terms people use to describe an issue.

Surveys and polls could perhaps be considered conventional forms of participation; they have certainly been a core feature of our political system for decades. Because the Internet has made surveys faster and easier, more versatile and at least potentially viral, surveys are being used more frequently as a form of "thin" participation. But they should treated as the thinnest of the thin, and usually need to be combined with other tactics. To overcome some of the limitations of traditional surveys and polls, some participation leaders have turned to deliberative polling, citizen's juries, and other methods that survey participants before and after they have had an opportunity to deliberate on an issue (see Box 8.3 and Tactic 12).

Tactic 3: Focus Groups

The use of focus groups is another longstanding participation tactic, with many organizations and consultants specializing in this approach. Focus groups typically involve between six and twelve people, although they may sometimes be larger. During a focus group, a facilitator guides the participants in discussion, usually around a preset list of questions. Sometimes, focus groups are used to better understand and delve more deeply into people's views and perspectives, as well as the values, needs, and concerns that lie behind people's beliefs. (In this way, focus groups can be a useful complement to surveys and polls.) Other times, focus groups are used to test how people's opinions change when presented with different options or pieces of information. Focus groups are essentially a more in-depth approach for Scenario 2, although they may also be incorporated into strategies addressing the other scenarios. (For more information about focus groups, see ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/conduct-focus-groups/main; www.griffith.edu.au/learning-teaching/quality/evaluation/focus-groups/focus-groups-examples; see also Simon, 1999).

Like the first two tactics, leaders of focus groups need to address participant selection and recruitment. The more that representativeness matters, the more important it is to use random sampling to select participants. For example, if participation leaders want to know what the patients think about options to improve a health clinic, they could recruit focus group participants from the people in the waiting room. If they want to get a sense of the options people might want to wrestle with in a large-scale deliberative process on a prominent issue, a more scientific sample may be essential.

Tactic 4: Online Platforms for Reporting Problems and Gathering Data

This tactic essentially automates the process of gathering data about particular problems and conditions. Whenever and wherever they want, citizens can make a record of what they see (and in some cases measure it) in a way that instantly uploads that information into a database that others can use. Most of these systems capitalize on the geographic information system (GIS) technologies that are now ubiquitous in smartphones, laptops, and other electronic devices. These systems sometimes include a process for users to rank or comment on the problems or data they are reporting and a feedback loop that explains whether and when government can fix the problem. This tactic is closer to the thin end of the participation scale, although it can encourage thicker forms of involvement by people who are particularly active users.

These platforms can be applied in many areas, such as crime and safety, land use and public works, education, and health. In these and other issue areas, online platforms make the most sense for generating new ideas and information (Scenario 3), although they may also be useful for supporting volunteerism and problem solving (Scenario 4) or for planning (Scenario 6). Representative tools include Open 311, SeeClickFix, Street Bump, FixMyStreet, Shareabouts, and PublicStuff.

Since these tools thrive when large numbers of people use them, especially those most affected by a particular set of public problems, recruitment is the most important issue to consider for this tactic. Is the tool sufficiently accessible and easy to use? How do people find out about it? Do they believe that if they participate, the data they report will lead to the problem being solved? This last question is important for recruitment, but it also gets to another consideration: whether and how the participation will make an impact. Tangible outcomes are more likely when platforms allow people to rank and comment on the data they have gathered, help people strategize about how to solve problems, and connect to other participation opportunities.

Tactic 5: Crowdsourcing and Contests

Crowdsourcing, or ideation, relies on some of the same thinking and technology that animates Tactic 4, but channels it in more creative, open-ended ways. Participation leaders issue a broad challenge to the public and encourage people to submit their best ideas. Some of these platforms, like the one used for the Knight News Challenge,

allow people to vote for, rank, comment on, or propose collaborations with other participants. Others are framed as contests, with the most popular or useful entries winning prizes, badges, vouchers, or (in the case of Manor, Texas) the chance to be mayor for a day (Chafkin, 2010). There are many crowdsourcing platforms, including those operated by the organizations IdeaScale, Granicus, MindMixer, CrowdBrite, SpigitEngage, Peak Democracy, TownHall Social, and MetroQuest. (For a list of crowdsourcing sites, see www.crowdsourcing.org/directory.)

Crowdsourcing is a logical vehicle for gathering new ideas (Scenario 3) and supporting volunteerism and problem solving (Scenario 4) and could be incorporated into a larger planning strategy (Scenario 6). For the people developing ideas, it can be a very thick, involved form of participation; for others who are simply commenting or ranking, the engagement is thinner.

The strategic questions most relevant to crowdsourcing are similar to the ones for Tactic 4. The main challenge is reaching a sufficient number of citizens, including people who have skills applicable to the challenge. While participants may be motivated by prizes and recognition, they are also more likely to contribute if they think their ideas will make an impact. Participation leaders can build this confidence by committing to implement ideas and/or by helping people find the resources they need to move forward.

Tactic 6: Crowdfunding and Mini-Grants

This tactic is quite compatible with the last one and capitalizes on the same citizen interests. Rather than asking people to identify problems or contribute creative ideas, crowdfunding platforms encourage them to donate money—and in some cases, information, connections, and constructive criticism—to projects and ideas proposed by others. Similarly, mini-grant programs run by local governments, community foundations, and other organizations make small investments that leverage commitments of ingenuity and sweat equity by citizens (Diers, 2008). Whether the participants give the money or receive it, the success of this tactic depends as much on their attachment to the process as on the funding itself. Examples of crowdfunding include platforms and processes organized by Ioby, Indiegogo, Kickstarter, CitizInvestor, neighborly, and Crowdrise, among others (for a list of the top ten crowdfunding sites, see Barnett, 2013).

Some local governments and other institutions have organized crowdfunding exercises to improve public parks and other civic assets. Spark, a foundation based in San Francisco, goes beyond crowdfunding by asking its donors to vote

on the projects it should fund. Then, at large face-to-face meetings, the members analyze project proposals and develop resource plans that may include in-kind assistance and expertise for each project.

Crowdfunding and mini-grants can be helpful for gathering new ideas (Scenario 3) and supporting volunteerism and problem solving (Scenario 4). They could also be incorporated into a larger planning strategy (Scenario 6). As with crowdsourcing, the thickness of the participation depends on the level and nature of citizen involvement. Once again, strategic questions relating to recruitment and impact are the most important to answer.

Tactic 7: Serious Games

Fun has become more than just a frill in public participation: games give citizens a chance to test their knowledge, strengthen their relationships, and come up with their own solutions to public problems. Representing one of the broadest categories of tactics, serious games have been developed in many different situations to achieve many different goals. Serious games can be used in Scenarios 1, 2, 3, and 4, and as part of a broader strategy in responding to Scenarios 5 and 6.

Games for participation come in a variety of forms. In *Making Democracy Fun*, Josh Lerner (2014) identifies five kinds of participation games: animation, team-building, capacity-building, analysis, and decision-making. There are online and face-to-face games in each category. "Theatre of the Oppressed," a face-to-face game first developed in the 1970s, helps people act out and analyze power relationships (Lerner, 2014). "Participatory Chinatown," a role-playing game developed for residents of Boston's Chinatown neighborhood, mixes online and face-to-face activities: the game is played online by residents in the same room, who then talk about the game and the outcomes in small groups (Shuman, 2010).

Some games are among the thinnest forms of participation, while others are thicker because they are more difficult, and potentially more rewarding, to play. Online games have the potential to spread virally if they are cleverly designed and disseminated, while some face-to-face games are so simple, versatile, and easy to set up that they can be used in a wide variety of situations. As a tactic, there is some overlap between games and other kinds of participation. As Lerner (2014: 7) argues, many public processes might be more effective (as well as more enjoyable) if they are designed with the gratification of participants in mind—in other words, if they are designed more like games. "Democracy has become the political version of spinach. Almost everyone says it is good, but few people actually want to eat it."

Depending on these variables, all four of the strategic questions can be relevant to serious games. If the success of the game depends on high numbers of users, recruitment is an important consideration. Deciding how you want people to play involves questions about participant interaction and preparation. The extent to which the game generates policy input or ideas for action raises questions of impact.

Tactic 8: Wiki-Based Platforms for Collaborative Mapping or Writing

Working together on a shared resource or statement is a more complicated endeavor than working separately on ideas that may or may not become part of a larger plan. Wiki-based technologies help surmount this challenge by incorporating individual contributions into a central map, database, or document and by including processes that help people to interact and negotiate in areas where their contributions differ (Mergel, 2011; Noveck, 2010; Scearce, Kasper, & Grant, 2010).

The earliest wikis were designed for shared writing and editing. GoogleDrive and Hackpad are document-focused wiki-based technologies commonly used today. These and other wiki platforms have become widely used in participation efforts; the nation of Iceland even tried using a wiki to allow citizens to help redraft the country's constitution (Landemore, 2014).

More recently, organizations have developed mapping wikis that capitalize on citizens' sense of place. These platforms allow users to map organizations and institutions, such as nonprofits, schools, or congregations, in relationship to needs in the community; overlay community indicators, such as unemployment rates, housing costs, health insurance, income, and poverty; assemble a centralized directory of services and volunteer opportunities; map specific problems like potholes or playgrounds that require maintenance; view publicly available financial information on community organizations; map schools and youth programs; and track quantifiable program outcome indicators, such as graduation rates or the number of families served; and connect with a national clearinghouse of resources. The Community Platform developed by the Urban Institute is one such example; it uses data assembled by the National Center for Charitable Statistics. Local Community Platform sites are now running in Connecticut, Florida, and the District of Columbia (Urban Institute, 2012). LocalWiki is another such resource, with the OaklandWiki in Oakland, California, perhaps the most advanced use of the technology (see Chapter 6). Wikiplanning (wikiplanning.org) helps communities use wikis for urban planning and other projects.

Wiki-based platforms are suitable for Scenarios 1, 3, and 4 and could be part of a larger strategy centered on Scenarios 5 and 6. Recruitment is once again the primary strategic consideration, although preparation and impact also matter. When participants invest significant amounts of time and effort on wiki platforms, it is certainly a thick participation experience; for casual users of the products of these processes, it is a thinner opportunity.

Tactic 9: Using Online Networks to Connect with Others

Because they encourage communication and collaboration within groups, and because participants often invest a great deal of time and energy in them, online networks could be considered thicker forms of participation. Although participation leaders sometimes create thin, temporary online networks—Facebook groups, email lists, blogs, and Twitter accounts that people are encouraged to follow and contribute to—there are also many thicker examples of networks that are set up for the long haul. Some of these networks were conceived in the midst of calamities: in places like Joplin, Missouri, and the Breezy Point neighborhood in Queens, online networks emerged from the efforts of residents to respond during and after natural disasters (Clift, 2014). Perhaps more than any other tactic on the list, online networks bridge short-term participation projects and long-term participation needs.

Because of this versatility, online networks can work well in all six scenarios. They are particularly useful avenues for informing citizens (Scenario 1), gathering input, feedback, and preferences (Scenario 2), and supporting volunteerism and problem solving (Scenario 4). They can also serve as vital recruitment tools for Scenarios 3 and 5, and as arenas where people bring ideas and concerns related to planning, budgeting, and decision making (Scenario 6).

One of the most important considerations participation leaders must make when using online networks is one that also applies offline: recruitment. Steve Clift of e-democracy.org recommends that anyone trying to start an online forum should gather 100 email addresses before launching the network. With that kind of critical mass, a forum can become self-sustaining without a great deal of effort from the moderator. The initial phase of recruiting those 100 participants and ensuring that they have a positive experience is critical. (For more discussion about the skills needed for building and moderating online networks, see the Participation Skills Module.)

Issues relating to interaction are also critical to these networks, because online forums can sometimes encourage more rash and disrespectful communication. This is directly related to the level of anonymity of the participants: some

participation leaders insist that users register using their real names. This guideline is particularly effective in hyperlocal online networks, where participants are more likely to know one another in other settings. (For tips on moderating online networks, see the Participation Skills Module.)

Tactic 10: Collaborative Planning

Some collaborative planning processes bring people together to make determinations about relatively narrow issues, for example, the architecture, design, or layout of buildings or playgrounds, whereas others focus on relatively broader public issues, for example, economic development or transportation systems. Some processes are held in meeting rooms, others take place at the site or building being addressed, and still others are organized exclusively online.

There are dozens, if not hundreds, of methods for collaborative planning (Wates, 2000). Platforms like coUrbanize, EngagingPlans, and PlaceSpeak have been developed to facilitate collaborative planning online or to supplement face-to-face processes. Several of the most common types of face-to-face collaborative planning include:

- Charrettes, which are intensive workshops that involve architects, residents, developers, and other stakeholders (Freedman, 2014; Lennertz & Lutzenhiser, 2006). They typically focus on a building or distinct geographic area, enabling people to get critical design questions or concerns on the table early in the development process.
- Placemaking workshops, which focus primarily on public spaces like parks and plazas; they are intended to influence design, but also to help people plan for how they will use those places and how those places will evolve over time (Project for Public Spaces, 2014).
- Future search conferences, which sometimes focus on geographic places, but also have been used to develop plans that encompass a range of issues and priorities. They bring together sixty to eighty participants in one room, or many more working in parallel (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010).

Collaborative planning tactics, particularly when they occur in face-to-face settings, tend to be thick participation experiences for citizens. They can be quite similar to public deliberation (Tactic 12) in the sense that participants weigh different options or viewpoints about what should be done. The primary difference is that, in at least some collaborative planning processes, there is less emphasis on personal experience and the larger assumptions and conditions that underlie the different options.

Scenario 6 is the obvious use of collaborative planning, although it can also be helpful for generating ideas (Scenario 3) and supporting volunteerism (Scenario 4). Recruitment is a relevant strategic consideration, since the value of and support for the plan will depend in part on how many people helped to develop it and on whether the participants reflected the needs and goals of the population. Participant interaction and preparation are dictated in large part by the format or method chosen. The question of impact—specifically, whether and how plans will be implemented—is also critical.

Tactic 11: Participatory Budgeting

One of the most widespread and fastest-growing forms of participation, participatory budgeting (PB) engages large, diverse numbers of people in deliberative, informed discussions about how to spend public money. Most of these processes begin their annual cycle with neighborhood assemblies during which people talk about and vote on budget priorities. In most American examples of PB (and in other cases around the world), participants are invited to develop specific proposals for how to spend a specific, preset pool of funding. They usually form teams, research their proposals, and work with public employees and other stakeholders to refine their ideas. Many of the proposals promise to leverage citizens' sweat equity and other in-kind resources. At a subsequent large event, project teams advocate for their ideas and answer questions from other residents. The cycle concludes with an election in which residents of the city or ward vote on which of the project ideas should receive funding (for more information, see www.participatorybudgeting.org/).

Some PB processes also feature a set of "thematic" assemblies, at which participants focus on city-wide priorities like education, transportation, or health. In these meetings, citizens elect delegates to represent them at city-wide or regional forums that consider the investment priorities emerging from the assemblies. These delegates then decide how to allocate funding across the city and monitor the implementation of the chosen projects and policies (Baiocchi, Heller, & Silva, 2011; Smith, 2005; Wampler, 2007).

PB has been applied to more than just municipal budgets—it has been used to make budget decisions for schools, universities, housing authorities, workplaces, and nonprofit organizations (Schugurensky, 2014). The Participatory Budgeting

Project, a New York–based nonprofit that supports PB in the United States, even invites its supporters to allocate part of its organizational budget using a PB process. For the people who work on project ideas or serve as budget delegates, PB is one of the thickest participation processes. For residents whose participation is limited to voting on how to allocate the funding, it may not be as involved an experience. Naturally, PB is used most often for Scenario 6, developing a plan or budget, but because it is informative, generates new ideas, and supports volunteerism, it also fits into Scenarios 1, 3, and 4.

Recruitment is a key strategic consideration for PB, since it thrives on a high, diverse turnout. In South American cities where PB has been conducted as an annual process for years or even decades, tens of thousands of people have been involved. Since PB can encompass many kinds of interaction, including online communication as well as face-to-face meetings and assemblies, participation leaders have a number of options when implementing it. Participant preparation is essentially baked into the process, although here, too, there may be a number of ways to give citizens the information they need to participate in a meaningful way. When a separate fund has been set aside for allocation to ideas emerging from a PB process, a certain level of impact (and broad awareness of those impacts) is guaranteed.

Tactic 12: Public Deliberation

In this form of participation, citizens, public officials, public employees, and other stakeholders interact in small-group sessions where they share experiences, consider a range of policy options, and decide together what should be done. This most often occurs in projects that engage hundreds or even thousands of participants meeting simultaneously, but there are some models of deliberation that involve small, randomly selected groups of people. Because of the number of people involved, the amount of time they spend, and the intensity of the experience, public deliberation is probably the thickest form of participation practiced today. It can be used to address all six scenarios, although it is mainly used for Scenarios 5 and 6. Public deliberation is also labor-intensive (although not necessarily expensive), largely because of the time and effort required for recruitment.

Public deliberation can be a confusing category because it goes by many different names and takes several different forms (for some examples, see Box 8.4; for additional examples, see Gastil & Levine, 2005). Some processes and methodologies were named by the people and organizations that support them—such as

National Issues Forums, Dialogue-to-Change programs, and 21st Century Town Meetings. Others have more generic names, such as "community conversations," "study circle programs," "roundtables," or titles that refer to the places or issues on which they focus (e.g., Speak Up Austin and the National Dialogue on Chemical Exposures). Still others use the main principles of public deliberation, but remain nameless (Leighninger, 2012).

Some named public deliberation methods are exclusively small, random-sample processes. Daniel Yankelovich (1991) was one of the first to suggest the combination of random-sample selection and public deliberation in his book, *Coming to Public Judgment*. These methods include citizens juries (Crosby & Nethercut, 2005; see also Chapter 7), citizen assemblies (Warren & Pearce, 2008), consensus conferences (see Box 8.4), and deliberative polls (see Box 8.3). Participants in these processes spend at least a day, and in some cases up to eight days, learning about the issue, hearing from experts and advocates for particular solutions and weighing all the options before issuing their recommendations. Random-sample processes are better suited for narrow or technical issues for which larger-scale recruitment would be difficult. However, the impacts are dependent largely on whether voters (in the case of ballot initiatives) or public officials (in the case of policy decisions) agree with participant recommendations. Therefore, small-scale public deliberation processes are usually best when combined with other participation tactics—particularly those that amplify the findings and recommendations of the deliberation to a much larger number of people.

Some of the primary organizations supporting large-scale public deliberation projects are Everyday Democracy, the Kettering Foundation, Public Agenda, the National Institute for Civil Discourse, and the America*Speaks* Associates Network (see Leighninger, 2012). A number of local centers, some based at universities, have become regional hubs that provide technical assistance to participation leaders convening deliberative processes (Carcasson, 2014). While deliberative processes have relied mainly on face-to-face meetings, there are now a number of online platforms, such as Zilino, Common Ground for Action, E-Deliberation, Ethelo, Engagement HQ, and Loomio (Horose, 2014).

Public deliberation presupposes an intensive, structured form of participant interaction; virtually all of these methods include ways of informing and preparing citizens for the process. However, there are many options for recruitment and impact that leaders ought to consider. As with most participation tactics, the two questions are linked: impacts are more likely to occur when large, diverse numbers of people have been successfully recruited to take part in the effort.

Box 8.4. Some Methods for Public Deliberation

World Cafés. World cafés are used for generating and building consensus around ideas. Tables of four to eight people are set up, and participants rotate every twenty to thirty minutes for a total of at least three conversations. This allows participants to build shared understanding of a problem and develop shared ideas for action around that understanding. A World Café organizer typically sets up the room to mock an intimate cafe feel, sometimes using butcher paper on the tables, with markers to promote creativity (see www.theworldcafe.com/impact.html)

The Right Question Process. This approach to small scale deliberation, developed by Dan Rothstein and Luz Santana of the Right Question Project, is designed to build understanding, creativity, and accountability. Participants are usually convened around a broad and general topic. Participants first review the guidelines for the method and then brainstorm as many questions as they can about the topic. Then, they categorize each question on their list as open-ended or closed-ended, and think through the strengths and weaknesses of each question. They choose three priority questions and discuss why they chose them. Finally, they talk about how to use their questions in other settings and reflect on what they have learned (see www.rightquestion.org).

Appreciative Inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry was developed in the late 1970s at Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. Instead of asking people to identify problems, Appreciative Inquiry focuses on what is working and how to build on those assets. Appreciative Inquiry processes can be held as individual events over four or five hours, but many last for several days (see www.gervasebushe.ca/Foundations_AI.pdf; http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/; http://ncdd.org/rc/item/4856).

Consensus Conferences. Consensus conferences recruit a pool of volunteers from which participants are representatively sampled. Participants spend eight days learning about the issue, hearing from experts, considering opposing views, and developing their recommendations. Consensus conferences have been used extensively by the Danish Board of Technology Foundation, which has played a key role in Denmark's science and technology policymaking process for the last forty years (see www.tekno.dk/subpage.php3?page=forside.php3&language=uk/).

SUMMARY

We opened this chapter by asserting that participation leaders need to consider the relationships they are trying to build with citizens because short-term, mid-range, and long-lasting participation efforts all affect how people perceive and relate to their community, their government, and each other. Specifically, we asserted that participation leaders need to (1) understand the potential goals that participants may bring to the process; (2) think through how participants' input and ideas will affect decisions, policies, and actions; and (3) offer meaningful ways for participants to remain connected to public institutions and to each other.

To illustrate these points, we examined how people typically interact in conventional public meetings. In these proceedings, public officials, staffers, and citizens often feel trapped, in large part because these processes foster a parent-child dynamic and small-minded assumptions about public life. To organize better forms of participation, leaders should consider the potential goals and answer four key strategic questions:

1. Who should participate and how will participants be recruited?
2. How will participants interact with each other and with decision-makers?
3. What information do participants need?
4. How will participation impact policy decisions, problem-solving efforts, or other kinds of public action?

How participation leaders answer these questions depends on the participation scenario they face. To illustrate our points, we discussed six of the most common scenarios:

1. Participation leaders want to inform the public.
2. Participation leaders want to gather public input, feedback, and preferences.
3. Participation leaders want citizens to generate new ideas or new data.
4. Participation leaders want to support volunteerism and citizen-driven problem solving.
5. Participation leaders want to make a policy decision.
6. Participation leaders want to develop a plan or a budget.

For each of these scenarios, we examined the typical goals that the engagers and engaged bring to those situations, as well as the key strategic questions that are likely to be the most critical in each.

Finally, we explored twelve participation tactics—both thin and thick—that participation leaders can use, including social media aggregation; surveys and polls; online problem-reporting platforms; crowdsourcing and contests; crowdfunding and mini-grants; serious games; wiki-based mapping and writing platforms; online networks; collaborative planning processes; participatory budgeting; and public deliberation. We described some of the most common tools and methods for each tactic and explained which tactics work well under which conditions and for which scenarios.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the authors put such a strong emphasis on relationships at the beginning of the chapter? What do participation goals have to do with relationships?
2. The authors assert that most people in conventional participation feel as if they are trapped in a foxhole. Why do they make this analogy? How do you feel about this analogy? What have been your experiences with conventional participation opportunities?
3. The authors identify four strategic questions that participation planners must address. Why are these singled out as being critical? Are there any other variations in direct public participation (see Box 8.1) that you believe are also critical? Why or why not?
4. Select a participation activity that you know about or have participated in. Analyze that activity based on the variations in direct public participation (see Box 8.1), as well as on the four key strategic questions about recruitment, interaction, participant preparation, and impact.
5. Most participation activities center on some issue or set of issues that have either low or high stakes. How does the difference in stakes affect the four strategic questions about recruitment, interaction, participant preparation, and impact? Use Table 8.1 to help explain your answers.
6. Participant recruitment is raised as a crucial issue throughout this book. Why is recruitment so important? Explain each of the recruitment strategies discussed in this chapter. What are the benefits and drawbacks of each?
7. Why do the authors discuss participation in terms of scenarios rather than goals? Do you agree with this approach? Why or why not?
8. How do the twelve tactics addressed in this chapter correspond to the adapted IAP2 Spectrum presented in Figure 8.1?
9. Select a method of public deliberation discussed in Tactic 12 or in Box 8.4. Analyze that tactic according to the four strategic questions and the other variations presented in Box 8.1.
10. Select a public issue—at the local, state, or federal level—that is important to you. If you were a participation leader, under which scenario or scenarios might this fall? Which of the twelve tactics would you use for participation and why?

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chapter NINE

Assembling Participation Infrastructure

In the previous chapter, we examined the scenarios participation leaders commonly face, and described tactics they could use to grapple with those scenarios. For the most part, however, these more productive forms of participation have not been incorporated into the official arenas for participation in education, health, land use, or any other issue. Planners conduct charrettes and then go back to contentious public hearings; healthy communities coalitions advocate healthier lifestyles, even as advisory committees flounder; school districts engage parents on bond issues while PTAs languish.

It is possible to develop a more sustained and productive system for participation on any one of these issues, without thinking of the others—but it would not be wise. Education, health, and land use are inextricably intertwined, and all three issues overlap with and are affected by a host of other issues, such as poverty, environmental protection, public safety, public finance, and economic development, to name but a few.

Citizens care about their children, their health, and their homes—and they care about many other problems and priorities as well. Instead of continuing to view the world through the professionalized, issue-delineated lenses that we first put on in the early 20th Century, we should embrace the holistic, democratic, citizen-centered view that has emerged in the early 21st Century. We can make progress on all these seemingly intractable public issues if we construct, renovate, or knit together a stronger legal, governmental, civic, electoral, and educational infrastructure for participation. This participation infrastructure should sustain and support regular opportunities, activities, and arenas for people to connect with each other, solve problems, make decisions, and celebrate community.

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Building Democracy

chapter TEN

Throughout this book, we have suggested that public participation is more than a set of processes, tactics, and skills. Philosophically and practically, it is the essence of a new political system—of new, more democratic forms of democracy. In this latest phase of a long history, democratic development is being driven by a fundamental shift in citizen capacities and attitudes and the need for public institutions to respond to these changes or perish.

We acknowledged that many readers would be surprised by this argument and used the analogy that they might feel like aspiring mechanics confronted by the need for a new kind of car. But while we empathize with the reader, we make no apologies. History marches on into the future, shaped by forces that are partly—but not completely—beyond our control.

Throughout this book, we have described ways to take control of our democratic future, to seize on the opportunities and minimize the difficulties in new forms of democracy. In Part One, we explained why conventional participation is problematic for public officials, staffers, and citizens and how thin and thick forms of participation could better serve everyone. We provided a brief history of democratic development and the ways in which democratic participation has led repeatedly to republican reforms. In Part Two of the book, we explored the potential of public participation to improve education, health, and land use, as well as governance more broadly at the state and federal levels. Within each of those chapters, we examined three steps to building better participation infrastructures: empowering and activating participation leaders and networks; using the six building blocks of participation activities; and incorporating systemic supports for participation. In the first two chapters of Part Three, we explored participation tactics and discussed how to assemble the pieces of a participation infrastructure.

In this concluding chapter, we locate these ideas and prescriptions in the broader context of political and societal change. We ask where democracy is headed and describe three significant trends affecting its course: the shift in how people consume and interact with information and the media; the role of citizens in decisions on how to spend public resources; and the relationship between citizens across the lines of race, ethnicity, religion, and other differences. Finally, returning to the themes we introduced in Part One, we explain why it is essential for us to adopt a broader, clearer message about public participation, and we make the case for why talking about democracy can make the struggle of public participation easier and clearer.

WHERE IS DEMOCRACY HEADED?

The future course of democratic development will undoubtedly be influenced by many forces, some of which we cannot anticipate. There are, however, three significant trends that are already affecting participation today and that seem likely to remain critical. In fact, it is hard to imagine a future in which these three trends are no longer important: the ways in which people receive information, their appetite for an authoritative role in public spending, and how they relate to one another in our increasingly diverse society.

Trend 1: People and Information

As Leighninger (2014a: 6) reports in *Infogagement: Citizenship and Democracy in the Age of Connection*, many journalists, public officials, and technologists feel that:

> information overload is bringing a kind of mutual, creative destruction to their fields, and that the consequences will be dramatic. People who work in these three fields all seem to feel that, somehow, their worlds are colliding, either with a sudden, thunderous boom or in wrenching super slo-mo. The fusion of these forces could be called "infogagement."

Traditional thinking about the relationship between information and participation puts information first: people need to become informed before they can become politically involved. In this view, the presence of an independent, impartial news media is essential (cf. Lukensmeyer, 2013). It is increasingly clear, however, that people do not just receive information anymore. Instead of a linear progression from education to participation, public life seems to seethe and spark with connections and reactions that are often unexpected and always hard to map. We now live in a hyper-informed, over-stimulated era, bombarded by facts, data, and stories in all their blurring and bewildering forms. The first line of the Pew Research Center's (Anderson & Rainie, 2012) *Future of Big Data* report reads: "We swim in a sea of data . . . and the sea level is rising rapidly." Similarly, Eric Newton of the Knight Foundation says that "Media is becoming increasingly personal, portable, and participatory" (Leighninger, 2014a: 18).

In this explosion of information and information sources, journalists have lost some of their status as trusted correspondents. Just as we have become more skeptical of experts, scientists, elected leaders, and other figures once treated as "truth-tellers," we also have become more skeptical of journalists. Given the competition in information provision and the erosion of their truth-telling status, it is no accident that the institutions of journalism are going through a painful transition period. Over one-fifth of the jobs in the newspaper industry were lost between 2000 and 2010, and the trend seems to have accelerated since then: newspaper revenues have gone down 40 percent in the last three years, according to Michael Maness of the Knight Foundation (Leighninger, 2014a: 13).

However, new collaborative practices, "hyper-local" innovations, and participation activities (including the use of participation as a revenue source) may be signaling the rebirth of journalism. A new category of nonprofit organizations dedicated to investigative reporting has emerged. These groups, which include ProPublica, the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR), Zócalo Public Square, and the Investigative Reporting Workshop, are pioneering a hybrid business model that combines sales of content or advertising, memberships, and grant funding. Some of these new outfits are "hyperlocal" media organizations—the "mom-and-pop" shops of the journalism industry. Most of these hyperlocals focus on a neighborhood, a suburb or town, a school system, or a particular issue within a metro region (for example, Urban Milwaukee covers planning issues in Milwaukee, and PlanPhilly does the same in Philadelphia). New communication "labs" have also been established in universities such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of California-Berkeley, and Emerson College, using the resources of higher education to support innovation in journalism.

Participation is a key part of this transformation of journalism. Media organizations are trying several kinds of engagement that test new possibilities for the way they interact with the truth—and with their audiences. CIR demonstrates

one type by engaging citizens to find out what issues or topics they would like the organization's journalists to cover. CIR "goes into the community before they do the journalism," says John Esterle of the Whitman Institute, a CIR funder. "They want to find out, 'What are the stories that need to be covered?'" (Leighninger, 2014a: 19). A national version of this idea, the Public Insight Network, was created by American Public Media. People sign up for free to offer insights and tips and to answer targeted questions; journalists then use the information to identify and research stories.

Josh Stearns of the media advocacy group Free Press wonders whether newspapers should take this one step further and experiment with converting their editorial boards (which, in many cases, no longer take decisive stands on issues like endorsing political candidates) into engagement boards. "What if editorial boards opened up the meetings in which they debate who they will endorse and turned them into something akin to a town hall? I think we can create a better endorsement, one that more concretely serves the local community and builds engagement and trust amongst readers" (Leighninger, 2014a: 20; for more on the relationship between elections and public deliberation, see Charles, Sokoloff, & Satullo, 2005).

Other media organizations employ a different type of participation: using news stories and opinion pieces to frame an issue, inform participants, and present a range of views. This practice, which is at the heart of what has been called "public journalism" or "civic journalism," was pioneered in the 1990s by newspapers such as the *Wichita Eagle*, *Charlotte Observer*, and *Portland Press Herald* (Rosen, 1999). The support of the *Portsmouth Herald* has been a key element of the award-winning public engagement work of Portsmouth Listens over the last twelve years (Ames, 2012). If the CIR work exemplifies engagement "at the front end" of the journalistic process, as John Esterle puts it, this second practice is engagement "at the back end."

Joe Mathews of Zócalo Public Square argues that this second type of engagement provides a way out of the "objectivity trap." In his view, when journalists help convene events, frame and inform the discussions, and then report on what people said to one another and how leaders responded, they strengthen the reputation of journalists as skillful, trusted arbiters of the truth. "If your game is to piss people off, like Fox or MSNBC, you can't be impartial because you need to get attention," says Mathews. "But if you're a convener, you can live in impartiality. After all, the media you want is a media that forces people to talk to each other, both online and face to face" (Leighninger, 2014a: 20).

But perhaps the most intriguing development is the growing awareness that convening public participation can be profitable. A rising number of traditional media companies and enterprising new startups convene public meetings and hold real-time online discussions as a way to sell advertising dollars, in addition to fulfilling other aspects of their missions. These include the *Texas Tribune*, Zócalo Public Square, and ideastream, a collaboration of public broadcasters in Northeast Ohio. John Esterle predicts that "As journalism reinvents itself, engagement won't just be a good thing to do, it will be an economic necessity" (Leighninger, 2014a: 13).

The shifts in journalism, and in the interactions between information and participation, have provoked a great deal of soul-searching among journalists—but also an opportunity for them to clarify what they want to do. Paula Ellis, a former newspaper editor who served as an executive at Knight-Ridder and the Knight Foundation, reports that "Old-line journalists would always say to me, 'We're in service to democracy'—and then never ever say what that means" (Leighninger 2014a: 21). The shifts in public participation would seem to provide journalists, and everyone else, new opportunities to get in on this conversation. The free exchange of factual information would seem to be the lifeblood of almost any vision of a supportive participation infrastructure.

Trend 2: People and Public Money

Another trend with significant implications for participation is the advance of participatory budgeting (PB) and other formats that give citizens a role in allocating public resources (for more information on PB as a participation tactic, see Chapter Eight). Perhaps the fastest-growing form of public engagement in the world, PB was first developed in thirteen Brazilian cities in the late 1980s, of which Porto Alegre became the most famous example. It has since spread to over 1,500 cities on six continents (Peixoto, 2014). Many of the cities are shown on the map in Figure 10.1.

From the beginning, the PB experiment was an attempt to rectify the relationship between the individual and the institution. It was implemented soon after the end of Brazil's military dictatorship; democratic governance had become possible, but most Brazilians had neither faith in government nor any experience with democracy in practice. The members of the Workers' Party who prevailed in Porto Alegre's 1989 municipal election wanted a tangible way to show citizens that the changes were real—that the new local regime would not just be responsive to their interests, but would also give them a meaningful measure of power and authority (Abers, 1998; Altschuler, 2013; Wampler, 2012).

Figure 10.1
Map of Participatory Budgeting Projects

From GoogleMaps.

The current wave of PB in the United States began in 2009 with Alderman Joe Moore in Chicago's 49th Ward (Schugurensky, 2012). Pioneered and assisted by the Participatory Budgeting Project, this single-councilmember model of PB takes advantage of the unusual budgeting configuration—and political calculus—of large cities like Chicago and New York. In those cities, councilmembers have their own separate city funds to direct. In the United States, PB has spread to five districts in Chicago, twenty-three in New York City (representing over half the city), a city-wide process in Vallejo, California, projects with online elements in Detroit and St. Louis, and a youth-focused process in Boston.

While PB began as a purely face-to-face process, and still usually relies on in-person meetings, many cities have added technology-based elements. One of the first was the Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte, which launched an online budgeting platform in 2006 that allowed participants to discuss and vote on how to spend the equivalent of $11 million (U.S.) in public works funding. Almost 10 percent of the city's population took part (Peixoto, 2008). In a number of cities, citizens can vote by texting with their cellphones. The best PB efforts accommodate a wide range of technologies. PB advocates now champion the use of "multichannel" approaches that encompass a variety of online and offline opportunities (Peixoto & Weber, 2012).

Although PB can be implemented as a one-time-only project, it is often embedded as a regular, annual feature of local democracy. This allows a PB experience to grow over time. In Porto Alegre, for example, participation estimates range from 17,000 to 35,000 people per year, and a World Bank (2008) survey found that almost 20 percent of the population had participated. This scale and staying power may account for some of the more eye-opening characteristics and impacts of PB (Peixoto, 2012):

- Unlike almost every other example of public participation, PB in Brazilian cities has attracted low-income, less-educated people at rates that are equal to, and sometimes even higher than, those of wealthier, better-educated people (Peteman, 2012).
- In cities using PB, public resources are more likely to be spent in low-income neighborhoods with fewer public amenities—and perhaps as a result, PB is "strongly associated with a reduction in extreme poverty and increased access to basic services" (Baiocchi, Heller, Chaudhuri, & Silva, 2006).

- Cities that have used PB for at least eight years have spent more on education and sanitation than other cities and have collectively reduced infant mortality rates by over 20 percent (Touchton & Wampler, 2014).
- When identified through a PB process, government-funded projects are more likely to be completed and efficient, and less likely to run over budget (Schneider & Goldfrank, 2002).
- PB cities have fewer instances of corruption (Touchton & Wampler, 2014; Zamboni, 2007).
- Residents of PB cities are less likely to evade taxes, consequently local tax revenues are higher (Baquero, Schneider, Linhares, Alves, & Pereira, 2005; Cabannes, 2004; Zamboni, 2007).
- Elected officials who support or initiate PB processes are 10 percent more likely to be reelected than local officials who do not (Spada, 2010, 2012).

Despite these benefits, PB does have critics. One of the charges is that citizens are usually not making decisions on the entire city budget—they have a say over only 5 to 20 percent of the municipal budget, even when the process determines 100 percent of all new capital spending. Thus, critics assert that PB is some sort of shell game, where citizens are distracted by one small slice of the public pie while public officials and special interests divvy up the rest. However, there is no reason why PB has to be limited to capital spending. In a number of cases, including the earliest American PB projects conducted in the 1990s in Eugene, Oregon, and Sacramento, California, citizens deliberated on the entire municipal budget (Weeks, 2000). Furthermore, because participating in PB seems to raise citizens' knowledge of government and attentiveness to local politics (which may explain why it tends to reduce corruption), PB seems likely to increase accountability for the entire budget.

Beyond these critiques, there are also examples of poorly implemented PB projects, along with projects that are labeled "participatory budgeting" but that seem to be nothing more than attempts to manipulate citizens. As political theorist Carole Pateman (2012: 10) warns, the PB concept has proliferated and diversified so much that there is a danger we will "drain the term 'participatory budgeting' of meaning." This is a predictable problem in the rapid dissemination of an idea and a challenge for many other participatory tactics as well.

PB is not the only successful process for engaging citizens in budget decisions. Approaches like Priority-Based Budgeting (Kavanagh, Johnson, & Fabian, 2011), online platforms like www.bipart.it in Italy, serious games like the "San Jose Budget Game," and high-profile examples like "Listening to Toronto" have all provided meaningful opportunities for people to have a say in public finance.

The differences between these approaches, and even among the many other processes calling themselves PB, seem to pivot around whether they:

- Give citizens a chance to vote on priorities and projects, or simply to give comments;
- Allow citizens to elect and serve as delegates to play more intensive roles in the process;
- Focus on capital spending, or on a fund set aside for the process, or on the budget as a whole;
- Feature structured meetings and/or online experiences where people deliberate on budget decisions; and
- Use proactive, network-based recruitment to involve large, diverse numbers of people.

Participatory budgeting is more than just a successful participation tactic; its true potential may be as a new feature in the infrastructure for participation. PB came about because of a desire to repair the relationship between individuals and institutions—not only in the shadow of Brazil's military dictatorship, but as a consequence of other governmental transitions, such as the City of Vallejo, California, declaring bankruptcy in 2008 (Altschuler, 2013). Alderman Joe Moore started using PB after he was almost defeated for re-election in 2007; in the following election, he won in a landslide. In 2012, Moore said:

> I take the result of the last election as a sign of popular support for participatory budgeting and any similar initiatives that nurture citizen engagement and promote participatory governance. I take it as a sign that people in the 49th ward want to be active participants in governing rather than being passive observers of government. I also take it as a sign that people are hungry for more open and transparent ways of making decisions that affect them. (Schugurensky, 2013: 170)

As they try to weather the difficult financial conditions affecting state and local governments, officials like Moore are realizing that giving citizens a say in

budgeting may be key to restoring the fiscal stability of government. The most striking example of this may be in Vallejo, California, where four members of the PB steering committee have since been elected to the city council.

The growth of PB, Carole Pateman (2012: 10) argues, "shows how central components of participatory democracy can be institutionalized successfully in what is conventionally seen as an expert, technical area." This institutionalization of PB is not simply a matter of continuing the process year after year. Rather, as Pateman asserts, it is important that "Citizen participation in decisions about the municipal budget is established as a *right* of citizens—a step necessary for democratization." In his research on PB in Italian cities, Stefano Stortone (2010) finds that the processes were more likely to be sustained in places where citizens viewed them as a right rather than a government service.

The institutionalization of PB may also be a consequence of the social appeal of the process. Particularly in the Latin American examples, PB has become a part of the social and cultural fabric of communities. In *Making Democracy Fun*, Josh Lerner (2014) describes how annual PB processes have been peppered with games, festivals, contests, and other celebrations of community.

In a world where people have become accustomed to choice—about where to live, what to buy, how they receive their news—it makes sense that they are compelled by the opportunity to make choices about how public institutions spend tax revenues. This "demand for democracy," as Elena Fagotto and Archon Fung call it (2009: 4), may well get louder, and any attempt to create a stronger participation infrastructure would do well to accommodate it.

Trend 3: People and Cultural Difference

We increasingly live in multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-religious societies where at least some of the residents are people who have recently arrived from other regions or other countries. Although this rich diversity can pose a challenge to participation leaders who are trying to engage a broad cross-section of the population, it can also be a tremendous asset both to participation efforts and to the community as a whole. To sustain successful participation, communities need regular, routine ways for people to address their cultural differences, celebrate their cultures without being isolated from one another, and gauge the impact of participation on social and economic inequities. Simply put, sharing the responsibilities of governance means sharing our differences (Leighninger, 2006).

As we described Chapter 3, the need to address cultural differences has been a key driver of innovation in public participation. The projects that emerged in the 1990s after the Rodney King and O.J. Simpson controversies helped set the template for engagement on all kinds of issues. They confirmed the importance of giving people a chance to share their stories and experiences, reinforced the value of impartial facilitators, demonstrated how network-based recruitment could bring in people from populations that were previously considered "hard to reach," and established that many citizens wanted to plan for action in addition to taking part in dialogue. And while many of these projects were prompted by obvious cases of racism and bias, participants showed an appetite for delving into more complex theories of institutional and structural racism (Leighninger, 2006, 2010; Walsh 2007).

In the 2000s, an increasing number of local leaders recognized the need to strengthen civic engagement among recent immigrant communities. This led to many different kinds of efforts, including some immigration-focused participation projects that used similar tactics as the processes focused on race. Most of these were one-time efforts, but a few, like the Jane Addams School of Democracy in St. Paul, Minnesota (Leighninger, 2006), have become sustained elements of civic infrastructure. This work is sometimes described as immigrant "integration." But advocates of integration often seem to make two dubious assumptions: first, that there is already a robust, participatory, empowering civic culture into which we simply need to integrate "those new people," and second, that the new people bring nothing to the table, other than perhaps some interesting new kinds of food, music, and art.

The political and cultural traditions that newcomers bring with them, or that already exist in marginalized populations, are sometimes more vibrant, participatory, and democratic than the ones we currently have in place. Attempts to strengthen participation infrastructure ought to identify and honor these assets, and above all, people should not feel that they have to give up or turn their backs on their own culture to be counted as members of the larger society (Mann & Leighninger, 2010). The Knight Foundation's *Soul of the Community* research (2010) suggests that the level of "openness" people feel toward their cultural backgrounds has a significant effect on whether they feel attached to that community—which in turn drives economic growth.

One way of assessing our levels of openness and cultural interaction is by mapping how people connect online (Leighninger, 2014a). Of course, this is only one

analytical tool, and it leaves out the face-to-face connections among people who are not Internet users. It can, however, help identify the people and groups that are node connectors (many of whom may serve this role offline as well as online), helping to inform and empower people who traditionally have not been included in public life.

Any understanding of cultural difference ought to include the important, ongoing conversation about the relationship between participation and equity. Many advocates of public participation argue that equitable and just processes will lead to equitable and just outcomes. They feel that participation is an important tool for achieving social justice and racial equity, even if those goals are seldom listed explicitly by the initiators of a project. In fact, many argue that naming equity and justice as explicit goals is counterproductive because it deters the participation of people who are not already committed to those causes. Often, practitioners with a more explicit focus on justice and equity use the term "democracy" to imply equitable outcomes, not just equitable processes. "Democracy is about more than just ensuring that every voice is heard," says Danielle Atkinson, a community organizer in Michigan. "In fact, sometimes participation must be inequitable in order for outcomes to be equitable" (Leighninger, 2010: 11).

In practice, this kind of "inequitable participation" has been carried out in two main ways. First, some practitioners focus on numbers and representation during recruitment and try to ensure that the "marginalized" or "under-represented" members of a community constitute the majority of the voices at the table. The assumption here is that the voices of the powerful, and those who benefit from the status quo, are already well-represented in public life and decision making, and so any attempt at broader engagement should favor populations who have not benefited—typically the poor, people of color, and youth. John Gaventa of the Institute for Development Studies, who has worked extensively on civic engagement efforts in the Global South, argues that much of this work relies on "creating situations where a public official or some other leader is in a room with people who are poor and disadvantaged, and has to listen carefully to what they are saying" (Leighninger, 2010: 11).

Second, some practitioners facilitate the discussions or meetings differently. Facilitators can argue for viewpoints that are under-represented, present information that supports those claims, or lead exercises that prompt participants to think more critically about mainstream views. "Facilitators need to understand power dynamics and structural racism, and have the skills necessary to intervene—which includes questioning stereotypes," says Maggie Potapchuk (Leighninger, 2010: 11). "It also means asking questions about the impact of policy decisions on different groups, having historical knowledge of cumulative and systemic advantages for whites and disadvantages for people of color, and discussing common values to ensure equity for ALL, not some."

There are strong disagreements about these tactics among participation practitioners and facilitators. Some uphold the need to bring a higher percentage of "under-represented" voices to the table and reject the idea of non-neutral facilitation. For example, Atkinson suggests, "If you have the right mix of people in the room, passive facilitation is better" (Leighninger, 2010: 11). However, others support the latter and reject the former. For example, William Burton says, "I hate the idea of just bringing the 'marginalized' together. There has to be a point in time where we can all interact and talk about common aspirations. In fact, the idea that we can't create level playing fields may itself be discriminatory" (Leighninger, 2010: 11).

Fundamentally, these differences relate to how people view their relationship with government. Some community organizers and policy advocates think of their work as taking place outside "the system"—they are mobilizing people to have an impact on the leaders who retain decision-making power. To them, trying to create impartial processes and arenas seems like a distraction at best; at worst, bringing in other viewpoints may weaken the independent voice and power of the base they have built in the community. Other organizers and participation practitioners are not trying to affect the system, but rather are trying to reconstitute the system along more participatory lines. They are not building an independent power base to challenge or negotiate with decision-makers—they are trying to change where and how the decision is made.

People on both sides of this debate agree that adopting better ways of measuring equity—in both process and outcome—is important for understanding how public participation and cultural difference intersect. The Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity argues that participation leaders should use a "racial equity lens" when they are planning, implementing, and evaluating their efforts to engage citizens (GrantCraft, 2007). They describe this lens as having four facets:

1. Analyzing data and information about race and ethnicity;
2. Understanding disparities and learning why they exist;

3. Looking at problems and their root causes from a structural standpoint; and
4. Naming race explicitly when talking about problems and solutions. (GrantCraft, 2007; Potapchuk, 2008)

This multi-faceted lens could be used by participation commissions (see Chapter 9) and other leaders who are trying to understand whether and how their work is affecting issues of equity and cultural difference.

All of these efforts, from candid discussions of difference to ways of measuring equity, could reinforce what seems to be a natural link between public participation and cultural diversity. To bring a diverse array of people to the table, one has to acknowledge the differences between people, affirm that all cultures and groups are valued, and give people a sense that their past experiences with discrimination and bias will be rectified—or at least not repeated. In turn, it is difficult to make progress on issues of discrimination and bias without bringing a diverse array of people to the table. The two enterprises, improving participation infrastructure and increasing intercultural understanding, complement and may even require one another.

WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT PARTICIPATION

"Participation infrastructure" may be helpful as a technical term, but as a banner for advocacy—a declaration of what citizens want—it will never do. People are more likely to care about these improvements in (and to) their communities and be better able to articulate why they matter, if they have better words to use.

Furthermore, "participation" and its civic synonyms, like engagement and involvement, are misleading words because they describe activities: it is often unclear what they are for and who should be participating (Nabatchi, 2014; Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014). This point of confusion is more than just a language problem or a marketing challenge. The real issue, as Leighninger (2014b) argues, is that, although participation leaders may all agree that their work relates somehow to democracy, they have not established—or, at least, have not articulated—a common vision of what that really means.

In fact, when first confronted with the term, most people assume that participation means engaging citizens within the confines of a primarily representative system, in which almost all of the decisions continue to be made by elected officials. But the successes and limitations of public participation point us toward democratic reforms, not republican ones. Successful participation efforts demonstrate that all kinds of people are ready for meaningful opportunities to make public decisions and solve public problems (Hoene, Kingsley, & Leighinger, 2013; Leighninger, 2006). They show us the definition of democracy (see Box 10.1) is a practical one: a political system where the "supreme power is vested in the people," where citizens have both formal and actual equality, where power can be "exercised directly" by "common people." Participation also demonstrates that primarily republican systems of government are largely inadequate for responding to and capitalizing on that new citizen energy.

Box 10.1. de-moc-ra-cy [dih-mok-ruh-see]

noun, plural de-moc-ra-cies.

1. government by the people; a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system.
2. a state having such a form of government.
3. a state of society characterized by formal equality of rights and privileges.
4. political or social equality; democratic spirit.
5. the common people of a community as distinguished from any privileged class; the common people with respect to their political power

(www.dictionary.com)

The lack of a clear vision about the relationship between participation and the political system has dire consequences. It has produced rifts and misunderstandings between academics and practitioners, community organizers and deliberative democrats, civic technologists and dialogue practitioners, policy advocates and consensus-builders (Nabatchi, 2014). It divides people on the left from those on the right, and the supposedly "advanced" countries of the Global North from the more democratically innovative nations of the Global South. It helps perpetuate official processes that claim to uphold democratic governance but in fact hamper and discourage it. Worst of all, the lack of clarity about democracy provides no help

to people who are trying to create sustainable, participatory political systems in Egypt, Thailand, Ukraine, and many other countries (Benhabib, Cameron, Dolidze, Halmai, Hellmann, Pishchikova, & Youngs, 2013; Gaventa & Barrett, 2010).

The confusion about participation is due partly to the fact that participation leaders have so many different starting points. As we have described in this book, people in a wide range of fields and professions have developed successful tactics for helping citizens make decisions, solve problems, and build community.

The result of this mismatch between tactics and system, compounded by our inability to articulate the full meaning of this work, is that public participation is misunderstood even by people who should be allies:

- The "civic technologists" who have pioneered most of the new online forms of thin participation have repeated some of the same mistakes made by the inventors of face-to-face deliberative processes, producing innovative apps and tools that often falter because they are not anchored in a larger plan or infrastructure for participation.
- Some scholars continue to believe that "public deliberation" can happen only in exorbitantly expensive, highly facilitated processes in which a small, scientifically assembled microcosm of the public spends many days deliberating on a policy issue before issuing recommendations to public officials.
- Many people who describe themselves as community organizers see participation as simply an alternative form of advocacy—one that emphasizes friendly, urbane conversations and suppresses questions of power. Ironically, interviews of community organizers often reveal the same frustrations about the limitations of their work, and the same zeal to transform systems, as participation practitioners do (Leighninger, 2010).
- Participation advocates and practitioners in the Global South, who pioneered participatory budgeting and many other forms of participation, do not sense a similarly democratic energy in the North—and many of us in the North do not realize how much we can learn from civic innovations in the South.
- People on the right often see participation processes as stalking horses for a Progressive "big government" agenda; they do not recognize how participation can uphold the problem-solving capacity of citizens. People on the left do not recognize—or are not comfortable with—the fact that participation challenges the expert orientation to governance that took over during the Progressive Era a century ago.

The conversations between these potential allies tend to focus on tactics. They should instead be focusing on strategies and systems—not because we are likely to agree on every aspect of the democracy we want, but because the dialogue is more likely to be clear, constructive, and consequential.

Meanwhile, the most conventional, outdated forms of public participation still predominate at every level of government. For most people, most of the time, the only ways to take part in public decision making are public hearings and public comment periods. Practitioners and public officials often think of conventional participation as a necessary hindrance, and they sometimes organize better meetings and processes as a way to augment or work around the official ones. But as we argued in Chapter 2, conventional participation is far more damaging and costly than we realize. Because it requires time and resources to organize, conventional participation diverts public officials and employees from more productive pursuits. Because it erodes trust and communication, it makes public problem solving more difficult. And because it damages the relationship between citizens and government, it may also have an impact on tax revenues and the financial and political sustainability of public institutions.

Furthermore, because conventional processes are far more common than productive forms of engagement and deliberation, and because in many cases they are required by law or at least entrenched in the way governments function, they dominate people's perceptions of public participation. So as we struggle as a field to describe our work, the continuation of conventional participation makes citizens less receptive to any interaction with public institutions and erodes their faith in democracy—because, ironically, the "democracy" they have experienced is not actually democracy at all (Anderson, 1998; Peixoto, 2014). Similarly, the "democracy" we attempt to export to other countries follows this same, weak, primarily republican formula of elections, hearings, and committees. It does not sustain the participation, enthusiasm, or power of Egyptians, Thais, or Ukrainians any more than it appeals to Americans.

Authoritarian regimes have repeatedly been toppled by the commitment, ingenuity, and self-sacrifice of people who use democratic tactics—both thick and thin—to mobilize their neighbors and fellow citizens. But these democratic movements seldom produce more democratic systems. In most of these new regimes, the main opportunity for participation is at the ballot box. People who had a range of options for deliberation, negotiation, and public work while they were trying to overthrow the government are confined to the conventional formats

once their revolution succeeds. Our romantic view of democratic movements like the Arab Spring is that protesters become citizens; in fact, what happens is that citizens become protesters.

WHAT KIND OF DEMOCRACY DO WE WANT?

In a sense, we have already done the hard part: we have established that large, diverse numbers of people have the capacity and appetite for genuinely democratic experiences. We have a wide variety of successful tactics and a good sense of the essential skills in public participation. From both academic research and anecdotal experience, we know why people will, and will not, participate in public life (Neblo, Esterling, Kennedy, Lazer, & Sokhey, 2010). Returning to Oscar Wilde's formulation, we can clearly differentiate "charming" participation opportunities from those that are "tedious."

Throughout this book we have described potential elements of participation infrastructure. But none of these tactics and assets will be put to their best use if we do not admit, to ourselves and to the world, their true significance. These are not just props for conventional processes, but building blocks for new political systems. We should not just be asking how to help citizens participate in democracy; we should be asking citizens what kind of democracy they want.

We should also be fully prepared for their answers. Once people have had a taste of meaningful, powerful public participation, they sometimes begin to think and talk about it as not just an interesting exercise or a valued opportunity, but as a right. This way of talking can have an impact: several studies of embedded participatory processes argue that those structures are more likely to be sustained when people make these rights-based claims (Fagotto & Fung, 2009; Stortone, 2010). As former Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula (2013) declared in a *New York Times* op-ed:

> People do not simply wish to vote every four years. They want daily interaction with governments both local and national, and to take part in defining public policies, offering opinions on the decisions that affect them each day. In short, they want to be heard. This creates a tremendous challenge for political leaders.

We agree that it is a tremendous challenge, but we also see it as a tremendous opportunity. However we talk about participation, as a right or as a privilege, as a democratic revolution or as an institutional reform, we should embrace the positive possibilities as well as the necessity for difficult change. As Lula himself demonstrated, it is possible to lead and effectively wield power by empowering citizens. It is possible to achieve reasoned, data-driven policies by trusting citizens to learn and deliberate. It is possible to overcome deep tensions and divisions by asking citizens to communicate, negotiate, and empathize. It is possible to build institutions that are both republican and democratic.

We face daunting problems, and we have remarkable capacities. Democracy, our greatest invention and still-unfinished project, is the key to both.

SUMMARY

In this concluding chapter of the book, we asserted that public participation forms the basis of new, more democratic forms of democracy. This wave of innovation is being driven by a fundamental shift in the capacities and attitudes of citizens and by the need for public institutions to respond to those changes. We also asserted that the future of our democracy is being shaped by three significant participatory trends: shifts in how people receive (and process) information, citizens' growing appetite for a meaningful role in public spending, and changes in how people relate to each other across cultural differences in our increasingly diverse society. These three trends seem likely to become even more influential over the coming years.

We then explored the potential (or lack thereof) of terms such as "participation" and "participation infrastructure" for capturing and clarifying what citizens want. These terms may work for practitioners and researchers, but they are not suitable for helping citizens articulate their growing demands for problem solving, civility, and community. This issue with language is more than a simple academic problem; it blurs the relationship between participation and our political system, creates divides among people, perpetuates conventional processes (and their shortcomings), and offers little help to those who are trying to create sustainable, participatory political systems around the world.

The good news is that we know people want democratic experiences, and we know how to use participatory tactics and skills to give them what they want. This knowledge is incredibly powerful: it provides us—empowers all of us—with the tremendous opportunity to harness our growing capacities as citizens, improve problem solving, civility, and community, and advance public participation for 21st Century democracy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree that public participation is more than a set of processes, tactics, and skills? Do you believe that it is the "essence of a new political system" driven by a shift in citizen capacities and attitudes and the need for public institutions to respond to those changes? Why or why not?
2. What is infogagement, and how does it connect to public participation? Why is the connection between people and information so important for public participation and democracy?
3. What is participatory budgeting (PB)? What role do you think average citizens can (and should) play in determining how taxpayer dollars are spent in their communities?
4. Why is it important to think about the role of cultural difference in public participation? What are the potential challenges and benefits of doing so?
5. The authors write that "'Participation infrastructure' may be helpful as a technical term, but as a banner for advocacy—a declaration of what citizens want—it will never do." Why do they make this claim? How would you describe the meaning and importance of "participation infrastructure"?
6. What do the authors mean by participation systems that are small "r" republican and small "d" democratic?
7. Review Box 10.1. Which of the definitions of democracy resonate with you? How would you define democracy, and what is the role of participation within it?
8. Why is there so much confusion about participation? What steps would you recommend to address and ameliorate this confusion?
9. How would you describe participation and democratic innovation to people who are not versed in this field? What terms would you use? What kinds of stories would you tell? Are there other ways you would communicate these ideas?
10. What kind of democracy do you want?

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