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# Participation as social inquiry and social learning *(reviewed paper)*

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*Abstract:* Das Ausmass, in dem aufgeweckte Bürger, organisiert in Gruppen kritischen und verantwortungsvollen Fragens und Denkens, in Mitwirkungsprozessen tatsächlich eine beratende gesellschaftliche Vernehmlassungsfunktion haben, ist ein Gradmesser für das Demokratieverständnis öffentlicher und sozialer Institutionen. In diesem Aufsatz wird untersucht, inwiefern öffentliche Mitwirkung die Voraussetzungen für die Vernehmlassung schafft, wenn ein Gemeinwesen sich selbst definiert, organisiert, die nötigen Informationen für gesellschaftliche Entscheidungen beschafft, seine Zuständigkeit für öffentliche Beurteilungen geltend macht und öffentliche Verantwortung ausübt.

*Abstract:* The extent to which participatory processes are deliberative social inquiry by animated citizens organized in communities of inquiry and engaged in civic science is a measure of the degree to which social institutions reveal a public philosophy of democracy. This paper examines the argument that public participation creates the conditions for social inquiry when a polity defines itself, organizes itself, creates the necessary information for social choices, and exercises its responsibility to make public judgments and exercise public accountability.

## 1. The political theory implicit in our practice

When we look around to see how we make decisions about our common life, shared environment, and the emergent future, we see in our practice the kinds of values we share, ethical commitments we hold dear, and limits of our responsibility to ourselves, others, the future and the natural environment (ANKERSMIT 1996). We are no longer alone and thereby able to choose our actions with little regard for others, because even our smallest choices can have very large implications for others, future generations, and the natural environment (THOMPSON & SCHWARTZ 1990). However, our political institutions are not necessarily well-adapted to the necessity of continuous joint and collective action among people. The most challenging aspect of the emerging new modes of environmental governance is how to bring people together so as to allow for adequate deliberation of their individual and joint actions so as to formulate a collectively-responsive choice based upon shared understanding and common social values (BELLAH *et al.* 1991; STANLEY 1983). In other words, what is the role of civil society in governance and how can we deliberate together as citizens regarding our common welfare?

One answer to this question found largely in economic theory is to assign agency to single actors and create institutions – like the market – that automatically aggregate individual preferences into collective choices. However, as normally constructed, the market shrinks and fragments social capacity for common and integrated choices based upon consideration of other factors beyond personal preferences, interests, and values (BOULDING 1966). Indeed, we can trace the current impulse for expanding the extent of private property ownership to as much of the globe as possible as leading to widespread commodification of natural resources in order to thereby allow individual choices to non-reflexively become social choices. This use of the market as a global governance institution reduces the need for a public space for exercising our responsibilities as citizens to ensure the sustainability of public goods and common resources. While private property and market-based collective choice processes may be very efficient in delivering some goods and services demanded by buyers who are willing to pay for them, these institutions are deficient in terms of providing for common and public goods for which there is no willing buyer (ARROW 1973).

*The essential need, in other words, is the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion. That is the problem of the public.*

JOHN DEWEY 1927

*The main precondition of self-governance (and perhaps global survival) is the simple, fundamental ability to communicate with each other across barriers of individual differences in interests, nationalities, cultures, and frameworks for the purpose of setting common goals and the strategies for achieving them.*

DANIEL YANKOLOVICH 1991

While we tend to look to governments as the instruments for providing public and collective goods, we also often reduce government institutions to the exercise of expert analysis, decision making, and implementation of technically derived decisions (STANLEY 1981). Since governments are seldom single decision makers even if they are single property owners, as in the case of State-ownership of land, some forms of collective decision making are necessary. The difference in types of governments is simply who is involved in making collective choices. Government decisions affect not only its citizens, but also the members of other polities, future generations, and the natural environment upon which all of us are dependent upon for survival. Given this problem, new modes of governance are emerging around the globe that expand the inclusiveness of the social actors engaged in collective decisions and the responsibility of those actors to consider the global public interest not only their multiple individual interests and their national interests.

This paper seeks to expand our understanding of public participation as a public philosophy revealed in our governance institutions and practices (ALEXANDER 1990; ANDERSON 1979). Two key questions are addressed in this paper: How is citizenship exercised in deliberative processes of collective decision making? In what ways, can deliberation foster accountability of governance to the governed? Inherent in these two questions is the recognition that any mode of governance is susceptible to two kinds of risks: the risk of making a decision not collectively supported and the risk of avoiding a decision when it is collectively supported. NONET (1980) used the concept of «type 1 error» – opportunism (accepting the hypoth-

esis when it is false) and «type 2 error» – formalism (rejecting the hypothesis when it is true) – to clarify these risks.

- 1) When decision makers satisfy their own or powerful stakeholder interests, governance risks the error of opportunism when decisions do not follow procedures requiring inclusiveness of all affected actors and consequences to people and the natural environment.
- 2) When procedures limit coordination among institutions of collective choice and exclude interests and information relevant to the decision, then governance risks the error of formalism when rules are followed rather than the conditions and context considered along with pragmatic consequences of alternative choices.

Avoiding opportunism and formalism are challenges for the emerging new modes of governance since there are seldom clear rules and procedures to help avoid opportunism and often actors advocate decision processes that utilize procedures inappropriate to the problem (NONET 1980). This paper argues that the most effective safeguard against these errors is the participation of those affected by the outcomes of the governance process. The clear and obvious challenge is simply how to achieve this goal at different scales and across different kinds of problems, conditions, and contexts. Most importantly, while scientific and technical information may need to be a central contribution to the decision process, effective governance must first create the civic forum for public deliberation and the exercise of the responsibilities of the public: judgment and accountability (BUTTOUD 2000; HAJER & WAGENAAR 2003).

## 2. Public judgment: exercising our citizen responsibilities

*The purpose of public judgment is to achieve knowledge of how people can practice self-governance in a fragmented and unruly world.*  
YANKELOVICH 1991: 222

Citizenship is a responsibility and a duty of the governed. Governance is the exercise of this responsibility. Thus, governance institutions should foster citizenship by creating public spaces for public judgment. And, achieving public judgment requires public deliberation of publicly defined problems within a public space. Clearly, these statements fit most easily with democratically founded governments. Indeed the very purpose of authoritarian governments is to deprive the governed of their citizen responsibility and to either instrumentalize individuals to carry out the interest of the state or to functionalize them as state-controlled actors. While both conditions preclude individuals from exercising many of their citizen responsibilities within a national framework, the new modes of environmental governance also require us to act as members of the global polity for which there is no overarching and controlling government institution. It is on this basis that individuals in authoritarian societies or living under totalitarian governments can exercise their agency as citizens alongside people from democratically governed nations. Some institutions within the emerging modes of environmental governance – for example the proliferation of non-government organizations from the community to the global level – enable people to act within a global polity. Alternatively, one might argue that all people can claim rights as political actors based upon a theory of «natural rights» under which every person has certain inalienable rights which no state can abrogate (LOCKE 1689).

The question, then, is what responsibilities of citizenship do people share and how can governance institutions foster them? Perhaps the most important responsibility is to deliberate with other citizens about the common good (INNES & BOOHER 2003). In this way citizens shape the destiny of the political community and the natural world – the «coming to public judgment» (YANKELOVICH 1991). Since social systems create solidarity through social interaction, when citizens deliberate together they also foster a sense of belonging as members of families, cultures, traditions, and of the natural world (FINGER-STICH 2005). It is this formation of identity and the exercise of citizenship that creates «civic virtue.» Civic virtue cannot exist outside of the practice of deliberation and collective action (HABERMAS 1979; STANLEY 1983). While it is perfectly possible to have collective decisions without civic virtue, it is not possible to have citizenship without civic virtue (STANLEY 1988). Thus, the legitimacy of decisions made without deliberation is always contested (NONET 1980).

There is no doubt that democratic institutions arose from traditional institutions based upon common responsibility for the whole. As modern governments created institutions based upon democratic principles, they responded to the demands of people for citizenship and the voice of active political agents (SANDEL 1996). We can summarize the key principles of requirements of democratic practice as including the following principles:

- Popular sovereignty – active citizens make collective decisions over their common future.
- Transparency of decision making – institutional and procedural mechanisms of decision making provide a clear and open view of the inclusiveness of the process and the open availability of the basis for choice.
- Legislative superiority over functionaries – when experts control the apparatus of government, then technocracy results and so political representative bodies need to exercise control over those who carry out the programs of government.
- Policy discourse – essential to democratic practice is that the reasons used to defend a decision and the rationale for its benefits to society, the future and the natural world are clearly articulated so that public deliberation is fully open and based upon relevant information.
- Representation based upon political equity – there are innumerable ways in which individuals differ from one other, however there is one way in which they are all the same – each has an equal voice and equal responsibility as a political actor and has an equal claim to be treated fairly by collective decisions.
- Legitimacy is supported by both the procedural fairness of the process of making the collective choice and the substantive fairness of the choice to all those affected by its consequences.

Self-governance through democratic institutions is predicated upon the capacity for citizens to jointly create civic virtue through deliberative processes (DRYZEK 1990). This is an essential predicate for commonly shared principles and ethical guidelines to guide collective political choices as well as individual actions. «The main precondition of self-governance (and perhaps global survival) is the simple, fundamental ability to communicate with each other across barriers of individual differences in interests, nationalities, cultures, and frameworks for the purpose of setting common goals and the strategies for achieving them» (YANKELOVICH 1991: 223).

The process of deliberation creates the knowledge necessary to make public judgments as to desirable purposes toward which society should strive, the desirable and ethical

means of achieving them, and public accountability regarding process as well as the actual outcomes. To meet this responsibility, there must be places and processes for public deliberation (STANLEY 1988). This paper will not address the issue of «places» for deliberation as examples are provided by other papers in this volume, but rather questions regarding how deliberative forums arise and work. Here the focus is on the processes of deliberation. At the most general level, the issue of process needs to satisfy several key principles in order to qualify as «deliberation», not just «informing», «consulting», «listening», and other forms of one-way communication. HABERMAS (1973: 18) formulated four crucial tests that a communication process must meet in order to qualify as deliberation:

- 1) The discourse among the actors must create inter-subjective meaning and express shared understanding.
- 2) The discussion must create and authenticate «true» statements of conditions, situations, and desired conditions (i.e., there must be agreement on the facts, their interpretations, and what is important to consider).
- 3) The deliberative process must establish the moral and ethical basis for normative claims of value, priority, and significance (e.g., claims of priority cannot be imposed externally by theory, power, or other claims to superiority).
- 4) The process of participation must ensure the authenticity of the participants.

The implications of these «discourse tests» for designing and evaluating participatory processes is that most types of processes called «public participation» do not meet these basic criteria (SHANNON 1990b, 1992a, 1992b). For example, when local residents are asked simply to review potential project designs prior to implementation, or when residents are asked to list their «concerns» as part of a governmental planning process but are not allowed to participate in designing solutions, or when government agencies give «notice» that they are undertaking a policy planning process and request «comments» on their analysis and choice of a preferred solution. None of these typical modes of public participation entail any kind of deliberation and so may not receive the kind of legitimacy an agency needs in order to spend public funds on public projects. Thus, Habermas' tests of the quality of discourse provide both a critical frame for evaluation and a guide for designing participatory processes that can meet these essential conditions for deliberative discourse.

The reason to rely upon such strong and explicit tests of a communication process is that participatory processes which do not satisfy these four tests do not have the capacity to create civic virtue through deliberation. By this I mean that efforts to mediate competing interests, or allocate resources to competing claims, or satisfy individual preferences seldom meet the tests of deliberative communication. For example, when forest planners seek to provide multiple benefits from forests, they generally characterize these benefits as either «uses» to be allocated to users, like hikers, grazers, or consumers of water, or «functions» reflecting more general public values, like protection from avalanches or production of timber and non-timber resources. This means that most participatory processes established by government agencies are not designed as deliberative, but are aimed toward incorporating stakeholder viewpoints, including new information from different sources, and ensuring that state agencies have consulted with affected persons without requiring any changes in their goals or methods. In other words, the state forest service is concerned with providing timber, recreation, water, and nature protection values and is interested in public input only as to what kinds of recreation uses to provide, how much timber

for what kinds of uses, and so on. The forest service is not interested in questioning its traditional goals or means of achieving them as would occur within a deliberative process. Thus, we have the dilemma that participatory processes ostensibly aimed at incorporating public judgment into the political process are in fact designed to avoid doing so and are carried out for appearances only (CORTNER & SHANNON 1993). The tests of authenticity and transparency listed by Habermas above are inimical to external control over the decision outcome, which is highly desired by most governmental agencies interested in preserving their claim to exclusive competency in a policy sector.

### 3. Public deliberation is social inquiry

When participation is public deliberation, then it is a social inquiry process. Social inquiry occurs when actors self-consciously organize themselves as a learning community (FORESTER 1996; FISHER & FORESTER 1993). In policy contexts, this means that a policy community organizes itself to engage in deliberation and thereby creates the capacity for social learning (KORTEN 1981). Social learning occurs when all actors not only become conscious of their own views and values, but have the opportunity to alter or modify them based upon understanding those of others. For example, in forest policy dialogues actors become aware of how different forest values are related to different social values and are more willing to modify their own demands to meet those of others. It is through social learning that «true» statements of conditions, situations, and desired conditions (i.e., agreement upon the facts, their interpretations, and what is important to consider) are created by the actors. From an epistemological perspective, this means that just as actors are authenticated within the process, so are facts, values, and priorities interrogated within the process in order to establish their «truth» value within and for the deliberative process (MEIDINGER 2006; SHANNON & ANTYPAS 1996).<sup>1</sup> In cases where natural resources are the subject of a deliberative process and thus must also be understood through scientific inquiry, the deliberative process must discuss science claims in the context of other types of truth claims and develop a shared consensus of what information is to be considered in the deliberative process and with what types of priority or importance (CHESS *et al.* 1999). This type of discourse is social inquiry because the participants are collectively interrogating truth claims, establishing common meanings and understandings through discourse, and generating new values, options, choices and desired consequences (FISCHER & FORESTER 1993, 1987).

Social learning occurs when multiple stakeholders bring together their knowledge, experiences, perspectives, values and capacities in a communicative process of critical reflection and civic science as a means of jointly understanding and addressing shared challenges and potential options (KORTEN 1981; SHANNON 1987, 1990a). Just as the scientific method is the basis for creating scientifically valid knowledge, so social inquiry is the method for creating a «civic science» (POSTON 1950; SHANNON & ANTYPAS 1996). «In civic science we do not just possess knowledge of a detached and objectified world, but are involved in the creation of a better, more meaningful

<sup>1</sup> In environmental governance, the evolution of the Forest Stewardship Council is a particularly enlightening example of how a non-state governance institution can create a public space for public deliberation by global civil society resulting in public judgment and accountability. See generally papers by Errol Meidinger at [www.law.buffalo.edu/eemeid](http://www.law.buffalo.edu/eemeid) (October 12, 2006).

and more fulfilling one. Civic science is a catalyst for social learning – learning that leads naturally to action» (SHANNON & ANTYPAS 1996: 67). Thus, neither information nor interests are exogenous to the deliberative process, but rather are created through social inquiry.

Public credibility can only be achieved when the information responds to the problems at issue and embraces the understanding of all actors, not just privileged groups of experts or stakeholders. Engagement in the processes of social inquiry and civic science is one of generative politics (SHANNON 2003a, 2002b). Political legitimacy is created through open and transparent processes of deliberation, where actors are engaged in the information creation as well as the analysis of both goals and means,<sup>2</sup> and where differences of situation are taken into account when creating and implementing new strategies (SHANNON 1990a, 1987).

What are the characteristics of generative politics that distinguish it from other forms of responsive politics (SHANNON 2003b)? First, actors must be animated. Often citizens are treated as merely «consumers» whose preferences must be satisfied or «market players» who are stakeholders in the outcome and thus whose interests must be satisfied (STANLEY 1988; LANDY & PLOTKIN 1982). To exercise citizenship social actors need to be called upon to create civic virtue through deliberation (MANSBRIDGE 1990). In this way, actors are animated, not treated as the passive recipients of benefits from the public trough.

Second, political interests must be created. The purpose of public deliberation is for citizens to come to understand their interests. In other words, deliberative processes are constitutive institutions that create identities and interests (WILDAVSKY 1987). Third, social values must be discovered. Values and priorities emerge as choices are analyzed and debated. Most theories of collective decisions assume that values are pre-determined just like interests and preferences and so decisions simply need to choose among these values by sorting through

means-ends possibilities (LINDBLOM 1959). But constitutive institutions like public deliberation create values through generative politics. By this I mean that values are expressed through the process of public judgment.

Fourth, public issues arise through public debate. JOHN DEWEY (1927) reminded us only through public debate can public problems be defined. SCHATTSCHEIDER (1960) reiterated this point in showing how public mobilization through social conflict is necessary to shift problems out of the insulation as private conflicts and into the public arena as «public problems.» As long as significant political choices can be contained as private choices, the capacity of the public to define and debate is restricted. Thus, it is through public dialogue that private conflicts and choices are pushed into the public arena. Only when public problems are defined through public debate and values and interests are created through deliberation, do actors act in their capacity as citizens (COSER 1956).

From these concepts we can develop a typology of types of deliberation and social learning depending upon the degree of organization in society and the degree to which a public problem is defined through other political processes (SHANNON 2002a). The degree of social organization is combined with the level of knowledge because «organization is the mobilization of bias» (SCHATTSCHEIDER 1960), and therefore social organization creates information and knowledge. Thus, when knowledge is diffuse or unformed, society has not yet developed sufficient organization to define a public problem, and

<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that this is not «muddling through» as conceived by CHARLES LINDBLOM (1959). In muddling through processes, according to Lindblom, actors can never have sufficient information or foresight to consider all possibilities and all strategies simultaneously and so simply chose amongst proximate goals and available means. In civic science, the desired goals are focus of the deliberative process and necessarily include the choice of means as both are the subject of social inquiry processes.

**Table 1: Types of deliberation and social learning.**

	Public Consensus on Social Values and Shared Meaning*	
Level of Social Organization and Knowledge**	HIGH	LOW
Organized groups with high social knowledge	<b>Collaborative Deliberation</b> Social learning through coordination and collaboration among existing social actors and social organizations based on shared knowledge, values and meanings.	<b>Negotiated Deliberation</b> Social learning among all affected and interested social actors to define a public problem through negotiating its meaning based on emergent shared values within a civic forum.
Diffuse social organization and low social knowledge	<b>Civic Science Deliberation</b> Social learning through civic science processes within a self-organizing policy community inclusive of scientists, experts, and citizens.	<b>Generative Deliberation</b> Constitutive institution building generating new values, new meanings, new social actors and social identities creating a social learning process for defining a public problem, activating knowledge making, and coalescing social organizations.

\* Modern societies are characterized by multiple sources of values, competitive public discourse, and continuous struggle for shared meaning and understanding. So I chose the level of social consensus and shared values as a way of reflecting those institutions within which a high degree of common understanding has emerged over time as compared to the institutional building process necessary to constitute social patterns of action. Since this paper is focused on «deliberation,» I suggest an evolutionary dynamic among these different situations such that each may be seen as a «stage» in the organizing process. However, I think from a governance perspective I would argue that constitutive governance requires continuous generative deliberation and only tentatively assumes more regularized structural and organizational forms since maintenance of continuous social learning is its essential characteristic (Shannon in progress).

\*\* It is useful to clarify why I use the term «social knowledge» instead of the more common «science» and «local or traditional» knowledge common today. Social knowledge presumes social organization. Science is the organization of a particular type of knowledge producing organization, just as local or traditional knowledge is embodied within cultures and social structures. Thus, it is the characteristic of organization that is important here and when there is little social organization, then concomitantly, there can only be low knowledge.

thus information has not yet coalesced into a coherent understanding of a public issue. It is this lack of sufficient social organization that signals the need to develop constitutive institutions in order to enable public deliberation (OSTROM 1990; WILDAVSKY 1987). As DEWEY (1927) always reminds us the problem of the public is to define public problems. Public deliberation, thus, is a mode of social organization aimed toward creating political identities, common values, and social interest. Since society is constantly engaged in political life, the greater the level of social organization and the more there exists a coherent body of knowledge related to a public problem, the more the deliberative process can move toward social action (FORESTER 1996; FRIEDMAN 1987; POSTON 1950). So this typology should be viewed as characterizing a dynamic social learning process as new institutions for public deliberation are constructed by new or redefined social actors, new knowledge is created to address newly conceived public problems, and new forms of social organization enable civic capacity for political action (table 1).

When social organization is high, it is possible to engage existing interest groups and political actors in the social learning process (REICH 1985). At the point at which social organization is high, knowledge is high, and sufficient public discourse has occurred to have the possibility of identifying representatives of publicly shared values and engaging them in a deliberative process for decision making – collaborative deliberation. This kind of deliberation is common in debates about forest protection and utilization. Over time the different social interests around these values and uses have become very well organized and typically representatives for different interests know each other well having met in many different settings. The opposite of this situation is when the public has not yet formed through defining a public problem, and thus knowledge has not yet coalesced around a problem and so the first step has to be the self-organization of a policy community before any kind of deliberation can occur (CALHOUN 1991). In this case, the type of deliberation is generative in that it is aimed toward defining a public problem, developing common understanding and shared values regarding this problem, and creating new institutions to enable social action. The debates of the 1990s regarding the importance of deforestation in the tropical forests is an example of how a «public problem» slowly formed and led to the coalescing of a strong public understanding of the problems of forestry in terms of the long term consequences for both nature and society (SHANNON 1991). The concept of «sustainable forest management» was generated through this process of social learning and has led to new government policies, new management paradigms, and new powerful actors, like the Forest Stewardship Council (MEIDINGER 2006).

The mixed types of deliberation begin where capacity is the highest. In the case of civic science deliberation, there can be a consensus within society that something should be a public problem, but there is not yet sufficient social organization to have created social actors, organized social groups, and developed coherent bodies of knowledge. In this situation, the deliberation needs to be aimed toward increasing knowledge – scientific and civic – and creating social organization. By using the term «civic science» it is clear that the main task of the deliberative process is create knowledge through social organization. Study groups may be formed to bring together different viewpoints as well as different types of knowledge (e.g., science, local knowledge, practice and managerial experience; POSTON 1950). The core purpose of the deliberative process is to draw from the general social consensus on the problem and develop the knowledge and organizational capacity to act on it (LAIRD

1993). Many of the science assessments for nature conservation, forest management or global climate change are in essence «study groups.» The implication of the civic science model of deliberation is that scientists need to be engaged with the social community in a social learning process in order for new knowledge to be endogenous to a policy community, and thus available to make political and social changes.

In the case of negotiated deliberation, there is high social organization but the knowledge is contested since there is little social consensus on the meaning of the problem. When there is high social organization, then it is possible to draw from self-identified actors in forming a deliberative process. Since both meaning and understanding must be deliberated, each actor will seek to use knowledge as an instrument of influence and control. Thus, the deliberative process needs to develop a set of procedural rules by which knowledge claims can be evaluated so as to ensure that the emerging common understanding and social values are accountable to the current state of knowledge. Current debates about endangered species protection often take this form partly because of the limited knowledge about many species and the tremendous uncertainty as to whether different protection strategies will actually result in greater likelihood of species survival in the long term.

This typology is not intended to accurately describe an actual situation or to prescribe a specific approach. Rather it is of heuristic value when seeking to understand what kind of public deliberation process fits different circumstances. As noted above, deliberation is a dynamic and evolving process as shared meaning increases, social organization coalesces, knowledge is created, and understanding of the options and implications for action are clarified. This simple typology focuses on the need to construct new institutions by deliberation and for deliberative process to result in shared understanding and the capacity for social learning and social action. It also raises again the issues of public accountability and public judgment by demonstrating that only through democratic deliberation can the public exercise these fundamental citizen responsibilities.

#### 4. Social learning is social action

Deliberative processes create ideas, examine options, debate desired future conditions, worry about unanticipated outcomes, and create a community of inquiry. Social learning transforms deliberation into social action when actors join in constituting new institutions or modifying old ones and in so doing transform the conditions of their own and others behavior (see generally, E.E. Meidinger on the Forest Stewardship Council and Irina Kouplevatskaya on the development of forest policy in Kyrgyzstan). Social learning can be adaptive and/or creative, but it is an absolute requirement for participatory governance.

In order to judge whether a participatory process is indeed deliberative, we need also to consider the expected outcomes of deliberation and social learning. First, through the process of constituting new institutions in order to create the public forum for deliberation, social identities are formed and social relations stabilized. This step is critical for otherwise social actors remain unaware of their civic identity, and thus uninterested in exercising their citizen responsibilities. The process of defining public problems is also the way in which social actors are animated as they recognize their capacity for exercising agency as political actors (GIDDENS 1984, 1991; FINGER-STICH 2005; STANLEY 1983, 1990).

Second, the processes of civic science automatically create public information and transparency of why choices are made, how they are made, and by whom they are made. Third, social learning naturally leads to social action because as individuals realize their social agency, they also recognize the kinds of actions needed to address the public problem under discussion. Thus, it is very important to recognize that deliberative processes are institution building processes, and it is this aspect that allows «political discourse» to naturally lead to «political action» (see generally, POSTON 1950 for a detailed description of how civic science lead to action in the Montana Study). As new institutions are created and elaborated through social learning and social action, civil society creates the conditions for its own existence.

## 5. Participatory governance

From the perspective of this paper, the essential condition for governance is the exercise of citizenship by civil society. We can analyze different modes of governance in terms of the extent to which the participatory processes are deliberative social inquiry by animated citizens organized in communities of inquiry and engaged in civic science. But without deliberative processes for the creation of civic virtue, governance is impossible. This paper has argued why public participation creates the conditions for social inquiry when a polity defines itself, organizes itself, creates the necessary information for social choices, and exercises its responsibility to make public judgments and exercise public accountability.

The strong message of this paper is that governance is by and for civil society. While it may seem teleological to argue that civil society exists only when individuals (including corporations and other forms of social groups) act in their capacity as citizens, this self-reflexive relationship simply reminds us that governance is the exercise of social agency in creating the conditions for our own existence and for future generations. When individuals allow themselves to be instrumentalized as agents of the market, the State, or other dominant institutions, they abrogate their responsibilities as citizens. What is central to the new modes of environmental governance is that they are creating public spaces for public judgment through public deliberation (SHANNON & ANTYPAS 1997). What is less clear is how well these new governance institutions are meeting the demands of public accountability measured as open and transparent decision processes whereby the process and the outcome is legitimated by social consent. Public deliberation is one mode of public accountability. However, when either the error of formalism or the error of opportunism occurs, it is less clear what recourse civil society has in redressing decisions which should not be taken since they are not supportable or should be taken and are avoided due to interests embedded in powerful actors or institutions. Nonetheless, without a participatory process through public deliberation the conditions for public accountability are not created, and the capacity for avoiding the errors of opportunism and formalism is not generated.

Thus, just as «the problem of the public is defining a public problem» (DEWEY 1927), so the problem of new modes of participatory governance is constituting new institutions for public deliberation, accountability and judgment. These new institutions by definition create new social actors, new shared meanings and values, new understandings through both science and civic science, and new social organizations capable of creating new forms of social action. It is this constitutive

process that can only be enabled through public deliberation and judgment. In sharp contrast to traditional theories of politics, the generative political action characteristic of public deliberation is an interest-creating process and can be understood best through sociological theories of social action. While some modes of deliberation – collaborative and negotiated deliberation – fit within the frame of political science, they also assume the creation of interests – not merely their reflection – through the political process.

## Summary

This paper seeks to expand our understanding of public participation as a public philosophy revealed in our governance institutions and practices. Our political institutions are not necessarily well-adapted to the necessity of continuous joint and collective action among people. The clear and obvious challenge is simply how to achieve this goal at different scales and across different kinds of problems, conditions, and contexts. The most challenging aspect of new modes of governance is how to bring people together so as to allow for adequate deliberation of their individual and joint actions so as to formulate a collectively-responsible choice. While scientific and technical information may need to be a central contribution to the decision process, effective governance must first create the civic forum for public deliberation and the exercise of the responsibilities of the public: judgment and accountability. In other words, how can we become citizens in global civil society?

## Résumé

### La participation: un processus d'information et d'apprentissage social

Cet article vise à élargir notre conception de la participation publique, dans le sens d'une philosophie publique, au sein de nos institutions et pratiques gouvernementales. Nos institutions politiques ne sont pas particulièrement bien adaptées pour répondre aux exigences de la communication avec la population. Le défi consiste à savoir comment atteindre cet objectif en fonction des conditions cadres et de la diversité des problèmes et des contextes. La difficulté majeure de la nouvelle manière de gouverner est de trouver la façon de rassembler les gens afin de garantir la pérennité d'une consultation adéquate de leurs actes individuels et communs et de formuler un choix responsable pour la collectivité. Alors que l'information scientifique et technique peut offrir une contribution centrale au processus de décision, le gouvernement, pour être efficace, doit en premier lieu créer le forum civique pour les délibérations publiques et l'exercice des responsabilités de la population : le jugement et la responsabilité. En d'autres termes, comment pouvons-nous devenir citoyens de la société civile globale?

*Traduction:* CLAUDE GASSMANN

## Zusammenfassung

### Partizipation als gesellschaftlicher Prozess der Mitwirkung und des Lernens

Mit diesem Aufsatz soll unser Verständnis von öffentlicher Mitwirkung erweitert werden, und zwar im Sinne eines öffentlichen Philosophierens, deutlich gemacht in der staatlichen Führung von Institutionen und Praxis. Unsere politischen Institutionen sind nicht besonders gut angepasst an die Anforderung kommunikativen Handelns. Die Herausforderung besteht darin, wie dieses Ziel je nach Rahmenbedingungen und Verschiedenheit der Probleme und des Kontextes zu erreichen ist. Die grösste Schwierigkeit der neuen Art von staatlicher

Führung liegt darin, wie Menschen zusammengebracht werden können, damit eine adäquate Beratung ihres individuellen und gemeinsamen Handelns gewährleistet bleibt und eine gemeinsame, verantwortungsvolle Wahl formuliert werden kann. Während wissenschaftliche und technische Information ein zentraler Beitrag zum Entscheidungsprozess sein mag, muss wirkungsvolles Regieren zuerst das bürgerliche Forum für die öffentliche Beratung und die Ausübung der Zuständigkeiten der Öffentlichkeit schaffen: Urteilsvermögen und Verantwortlichkeit. In anderen Worten, wie werden wir Bürger der globalen Zivilgesellschaft?

Übersetzung: MARGRIT IRNIGER

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