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Spatial Democracy, a Capability Approach towards Commensurability.



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There is a lack of democracy assessment of metropolitan governance forms.

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Metropolitanization makes governance more complex.

- Since 1970s, metropolitanization is the upscaling of urban functions and way of life.
- Breaks the possibility of a unique scale of politics and policies.
- Parallel movement of dispersion and concentration. [Castells, 2008].
- Make more complex the articulation of distance management modes: co-presence, mobility, telecommunication [Lévy, 2003; Litman, 2003].
- Governance models: metropolitan reform, rational choice, new regionalism.

Democracy is to be the main criteria of evaluation of governance.

- What criteria to evaluate governance forms?
 - Efficiency (satisfaction towards the service)
 - Democracy (satisfaction towards the organization)
- Satisfaction towards the service and satisfaction towards the governance form are two distinct things.
- Satisfaction towards the service is not affected by the governance form [Kübler 2005].
- Improving governance is not the same thing as increasing service coverage and efficiency.

Theories of democracy provide norms but no tools.

- Democracy is an essentially contested concept [Connolly 1983].
- Democracy theories are diverse and irreconcilable [Rosanvallon 2012].
- Numerous typologies have been proposed: liberal, pluralist, participative, marxist...
- Proposed governance models are looking to optimize efficiency of service and/or improve democratic accountability by pre-defining what democracy ought to be.

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Space offers a way of comparison and common measurement for democracy assessment.

- Space is a social dimension.
- The spatial turn [Soja 1989], shifting the focus from areas to networks, has little influence on political sciences.
- A space is a social object defined by its spatial dimension [Lévy 2003]:
 - Attributes: metric, scale, substance.
 - Type: area, place, network.
 - Inter-spatialities: co-spatiality, interface, inclusion.
 - Distance mode: co-presence, mobility, telecommunication.
- We have to find an inductive way, from the individual perspective.

Spatial capabilities offer a way to an inductive approach.

- Capabilities were introduced in the field of development studies [Sen 1983, Nussbaum 2000] in a normative sense.
- They describe what an individual is actually able to achieve in a given context considering what he values (his functionings).
- They can be use as a descriptive framework, without ascribing values to increase and decrease in specific capabilities.
- A spatial capability is a capability to set one's choosen distance and distance mode (co-presence, mobility, telecommunication) between two realities.

Hypothesis: spatial capabilities are correlated to the way people evaluate governance as democratic.

- Specific studies have been conducted but can not be generalized.
 - E.g. Nall 2013 on the effect of the Interstate network on political preferences.
- They show that how people use space is related to their political preferences.
- It has never been systematically demonstrated.

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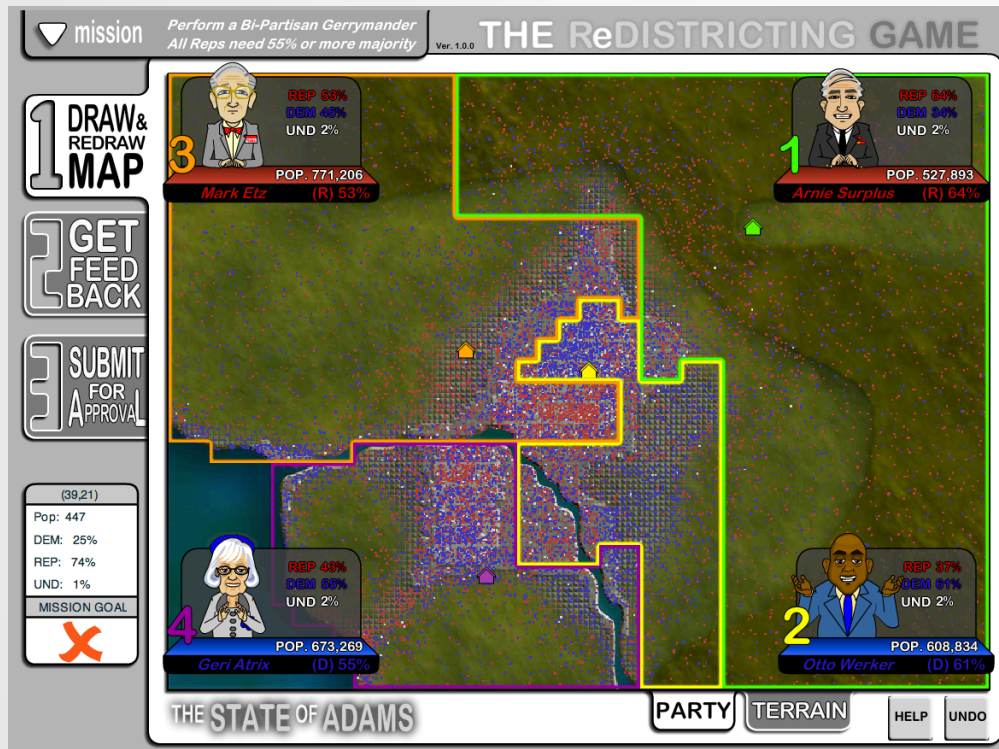
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An experiment can be designed based on a direct democracy analogy to link spatial capabilities to governance preferences.

- Qualitative phase: identify and find logical correlations between spatial capabilities and governance preferences.
- Two bodies of data:
 - Spatial capabilities can be derived from their practices, survey-based.
 - Governance preferences are too abstract to be asked in a survey.
- Experimental simulation to put the interviewee in situation of making governance decisions and express choices.

Governances preferences are gathered through a simulation game.



- Give graspability, time and feedback to the interviewees.
- Gather log data that can be used to refine analysis.
- Isolate governance preferences from service preferences.

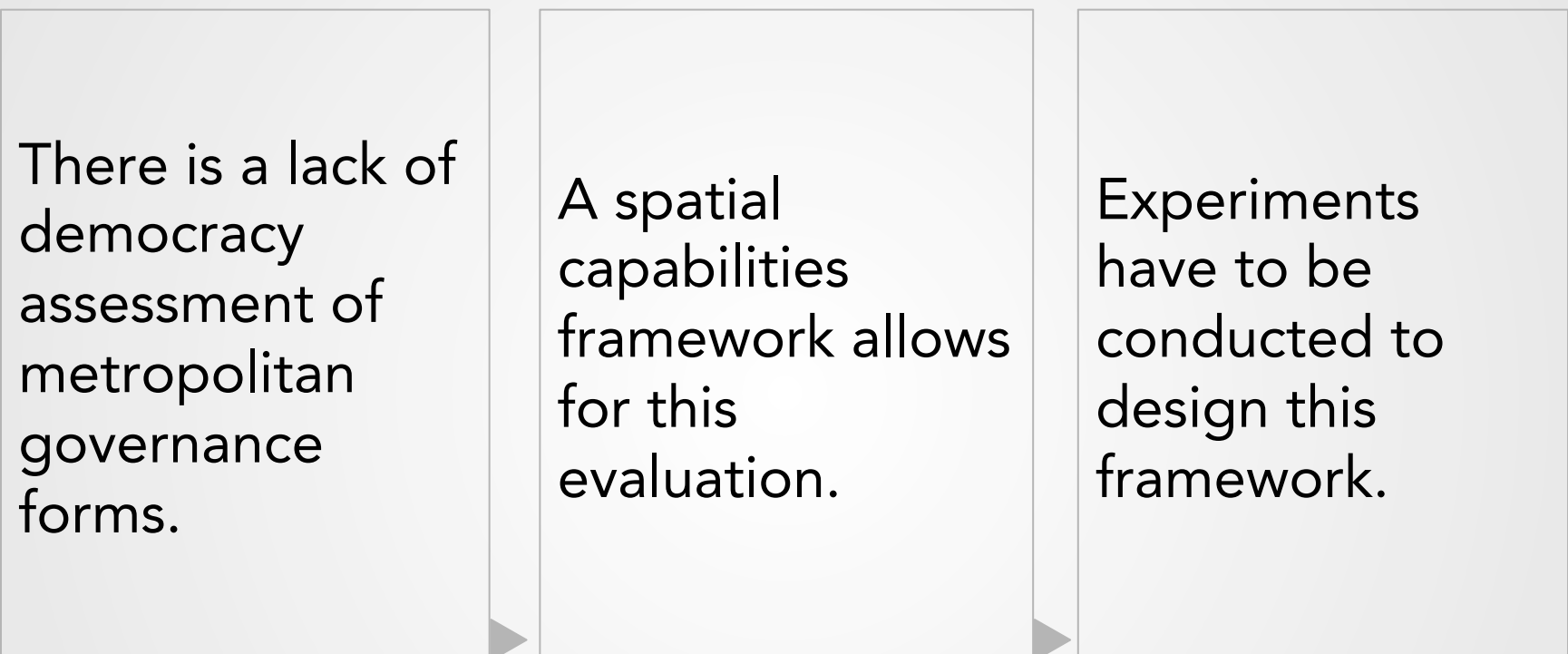
Generalization requires a comparative case study.

- Methodology focused on identifying paths for generalization of field research findings.
- Generalization by the similarities identified in comparable cases and identify local biases.
- Identify the local parameters of correlation
- Metropolitan areas of Zürich and the San Francisco Bay Area:
 - Multipolar
 - Fragmented, governance without government
 - Extensive implementation and use of semi-direct democracy at the scale of metropolitan policies

Produce a model whose degree of generality is high enough to be useful in an evaluative process.

- Build a framework to understand democracy in an inductive way, bottom-up.
- Give a way to conduct a democracy assessment that is not tied to a specific understanding of what democracy ought to be.
- Tool to understand how space related policies are influencing the democratic functioning of metropolitan areas.

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