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INTRODUCTION

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Two logics of participation in policy design

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ABSTRACT

The formalization of citizen participation in public policy processes is now widespread. Despite its popularity, just how to design these initiatives to simultaneously create legitimate arenas for deliberation on the one hand, and substantive problem solving on the other hand, remains hotly contested. This Special Issue on Participatory Policy Design contributes to these questions by empirically cataloguing a range of practices aimed at engaging stakeholders in public policy creation and decisions making. The cases, which span a range of countries and local contexts, provide several insights for overcoming the limits, and maximizing the potential, of participatory policy design initiatives. Specifically, they help unpack, and better understand: the logic of *participation for design* which is targeted by those who are concerned with drawing on inclusionary processes to improve outcomes; and the logic of *design for participation:* which is championed by those who seek to empower the participants and democratic legitimacy. We argue the integration of these disparate logics hold the key for fostering transformative collaborative mechanisms.

KEYWORDS

Policy design; citizen participation; public policy

1. Introduction

One of the most nagging problems confronting students and practitioners of public policy today is to better craft appropriate and adaptive solutions to increasingly complex policy problems in an unpredictable policy environment. Recognition of this confronts the orthodox 'science of design' approach (Simon 1969) that seeks to identify the most suitable policy mix through a systematic technical analysis of alternative policy instruments (Linder and Peters 1984; Howlett 2010). However, as this Special Issue illustrates, an array of policy problems do not easily lend themselves to these "rationalist" problem-solving methods. From intractable social inequalities to global climate change to recent trade wars to the COVID-19 pandemic, the evidence is clear

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that the most thorny problems are not well-suited to ahistorical, "after the fact" approaches that seeks to compare alternatives and choose the 'best' solution (Head 2008; Cairney 2012). Yet many of today's policy making deliberations—often dominated by those trained in technical sciences such as engineering, economics and the physical/biological sciences—continue to champion elusive efforts to realize Simon's rationalist "satisficing" approach through increasingly sophisticated "data-driven" analyses, to find, and advocate for, "optimal" outcomes.

Yet these approaches continue to vex policy makers at multiple levels, challenging pre-conceived notions of "what works"—all of which combine to undermine the ability to engage in forward looking policy design aimed at addressing complex socio-economic problems. To be sure, a wide range of social science communities studying policy design now recognize the limitations (Howlett and Lejano 2013; Kimbell 2016) for managing these "wicked" (Rittel and Webber 1973) and "super wicked" problems (Levin et al. 2012).

It is in part owing to the recognition of the inability to engage in purely ahistorical predictive analyses that led to the "participatory turn" in policy design as a corrective to the rationalist approach to policy analysis and design. This turn recognizes that policy design is inherently political and deliberative (Dryzek and Ripley 1988) that is not captured by rational-technical policy processes, nor by those advocating for authoritative "top down" governance to address societal challenges.

At the same time, less attention has been applied to disentangling two potentially countervailing reasons for engaging in participatory analysis. One rationale, conforming to "logic of consequences" is instrumental: that is, citizens bring tacit knowledge that improve, rather than counteract, the rationality of policy interventions (Fischer 1993). This vision views stakeholder engagement as an instrumental way to generate relevant knowledge for making sound decisions. A second rationale fits within March and Olsen's (1998) conception of a "logic of appropriateness" in that focus attention to generating legitimacy for the policy and/or the authoritative arena charged with developing, and implementing, a policy mix by focusing on some type of policy problem. Even here there are two distinct perspectives. One approach to "appropriateness" is causal, highlighted by Rittel and Weber (1973), advances a causal argument that deliberations shape how problems are conceived and adjudicated and how legitimacy is enhanced through an argumentative process (see also Risse 2000). Another is normative, that is, citizens—regardless of the effects – must be included in the processes that significantly affect their lives (DeLeon 1995; Schneider and Ingram 1997).

Participatory policy design lies at the center of this consequentialist-appropriateness distinctions to policy design. Yet for the most part both camps reject the other by treating them as diametrically opposite. This has been reinforced, as Howlett and Lejano (2013, 13) lamented, the current state of policy design studies as "characterized by misinformation, ideological predilection, and unnecessarily polarized positions." As a corrective, a range of policy design scholars are increasingly theorizing, and practically showing, the benefits of "co-existence" depending on the specific design circumstance (Dorst and Dijkhuis 1995). This can be advanced, some argue, by differentiating those processes in which the problem is understood at the outset, from those in which problem articulation lends itself to a specific kind of design method (Kimbell 2009). Rather

than seeing these approaches as challenges of each other's ontological position or undermining each other, some argue they might be combined in a mutually reinforcing fashion (Considine 2012; Kimbell 2016).

This emphasis on integration of literatures to improve, in some way, policy outcomes and procedures (Scharpf, 2000) has also been matched by the recognition that participatory policy design is not a panacea. Meaningfully engaging citizens and other non-state actors in complex technical processes such as budgeting exacts production costs in designing and organizing efficient solutions (Cooper 1979; Wang and Bryer 2013). As a result, governments sometimes end up turning to participation as a token empowerment tool that does not, in any meaningful way, advance democratic principles of inclusion and deliberation (Arnstein 1969). This, in turn, can hinder, rather than help, efforts to build legitimacy and authority. Similarly, despite the lofty ambitions of policy design for democracy, participatory processes often deliver mixed results (Mansuri and Rao 2004). While evidence exists that the design of participatory processes can deliver equitable outcomes, scholars have found that participation often contend with long-standing political structures that privilege elites more than the citizens it seek to serve (Park and Wang 2010; Saguin 2018). As a result, how participatory processes can be designed to promote democratic and instrumental rationality still remains poorly understood.

This special issue begins to fill this gap by bringing together a collection of empirically grounded scholarly pieces on participatory policy design. To do so we distinguish different approaches to understanding and advocating for participation—"*design for participation*" and "*participation for design.*" These not only help disentangle different prescriptive and empirical projects, but also permit us to explore the conditions through their designs might reinforce, or undermine, the other. We argue that for students and practitioners of participatory policy design to advance theory and methods, these two logics —and whether they are reinforcing or undermining— must be anchored in analysis that is contingent on the key features of the policy problem in question.

2. Design for participation or participation for design?

In the past 30 years, citizen participation in governmental policy processes have become widespread across transnational, national and local arenas (Michels and De Graaf 2010; Bryson et al. 2013; Cashore et al. 2019). Individual citizens and civil society organizations now participate alongside historically entrenched roles of business and, to a lesser degree, labor organizations (Bherer, Dufour, and Montambeault 2016). Multi-stakeholder bodies are now deeply involved in the programmatic allocation of resources, and more recently, in designing how policies are to be implemented through collaborative mechanisms aimed at "co-creation," "co-production" and "co-design" of policy tools and interventions. Participatory policy design is particularly popular within municipal and town planning as a way to foster more effective and legitimate inclusion of communities in decisions making that directly affects their lives.

The attractiveness of participatory policy design lies in its ability to simultaneously pursue rationality, a value thought to be quintessential in modern governments, and democracy but often ignored when privileging expertise and scientific information

(Dryzek 1989). Participatory policy design hence requires integrating instrumentalist consequences (i.e. identifying the best means for the right goals) with appropriateness orientations (i.e. collective and deliberate generation of normative judgements) by fostering a deliberative method of problem and solution articulation (Mudacumura 2004).

Doing so will help foster problem focused theories about the types of policy design efforts that, through "the process of inventing, developing and fine-tuning a course of action" (Dryzek 1983, 346) are capable of, through mutual learning, incorporating the values and preferences of stakeholders and participants into goals and solutions (Schon 1984). This, in turn, will target participatory design techniques in ways that are expected to improve policy designer's understanding of the "realities of the users' situation" while the "users" are able to "articulate their desired aims and learn appropriate technological means to obtain them" (Robertson and Simonsen 2012, 2). Thus, effective participatory policy design both expands the set of available information into the policy process and folds into the process participants who are often overlooked or neglected (DeLeon 1990).

Hence, we argue that students of contemporary participatory policy design should be acquainted with the two inter-related logics when deciding how to approach, understand, and draw conclusions from, empirical cases of efforts to include stakeholders in policy design exercises. First, the logic of *participation for design* assesses participation as an instrument for policy design. This project identifies different design techniques for including diverse set of interests that might generate new and relevant knowledge generated outside of expert-driven processes. Second, the logic of *design for participation* assesses how stakeholder engagement might improve legitimacy. Disentangling, but also integrating, these two logics results in insights for how argumentation and deliberation might improve problem amelioration.

2.1. Participation for design

The designer's role under the logic of *participation for design* is to "define the full set of contending instruments" and facilitate the selection of the best solution to address a particular problem (Linder and Peters 1991, 127). The collective concern is to promote instrumental rationality with participation being treated, as DeLeon (1990) argues, as "distinct from 'empowerment', or the immediate and direct involvement of the citizenry in policymaking or political decision-making" as such processes like participatory policy analysis seek "to inform and advise the decisionmaker, rather than making the actual decision." Participatory mechanisms form part of the designer's toolkit not only to legitimize actions but also to gather information collectively through argumentation, discussion and exchange of ideas (Howlett 2009; Lewis, McGann, and Blomkamp 2020).

This logic privileges breadth in participation and thus, falls short of participatory democracy that "emphasizes debate and reasoning about and toward public interests and actions in political communities of citizens who govern themselves" (Dryzek 1989, 110). By treating participation instrumentally, participatory processes following this logic tend to only form a small part of the policy design process, leaving design to the discretion of professionals and experts. The emphasis for a rational policy design

derived through some form of citizen participation can be credulous of power dynamics that naturally operate in government-citizen interactions. Processes can in fact be disempowering, counteracting the exact purpose of the introduction of participation.

2.2. Design for participation

The more recent efforts within design studies to engage with public policy have been concerned with examining how participatory processes can be better designed to empower the participants, and foster creativity and innovation. The principal concern is more on the unraveling of the *how* of designing, driven by the "the need for providing means for people to be able to be involved, the need for respect for different voices, the engagement of modes other than the technical or verbal" (Bannon and Ehn 2012, 41). Following this logic, the role of the designer is to create and sustain "conditions and institutions for strong democratic discourse" (Dryzek 1989, 113). The recent trend of incorporating design thinking into policy studies is driven by the desire to infuse creativity and playfulness into the problem and solution search process to challenge the overemphasis given to rationality (Considine 2012). In contrast to rationality-oriented participatory processes, design thinking values creativity "over technical expertise and democratic principles, and imagination over evidence and discussion" (Lewis, McGann, and Blomkamp 2020, 117). And it does so by involving citizens much earlier on in the process during problem definition and mechanism design through participant observation, mapping, sensemaking, games and environmental scanning (Mintrom and Luetjens 2016). In other words, mastering the methodological procedure or the form of participation is crucial in reinforcing the logic of appropriateness in shaping how participants see the procedure as legitimate and meaningful.

When the primary goal of participatory policy design is to attaining depth in participation through deliberative arenas that promote curiosity and empathy, there is often less attention to whether this procedure translates into a specific outcome. Hence, the design for participation logic tends to treat participation as the goal in itself, hardly going beyond understanding the effectiveness of the procedure at the cost of relating to broader institutional implications. Such logic falls into the trap of not only failing to question but also perpetuating "dominant power patterns" (Beck, 2002: 82). Ironically, design that follows this logic can de-politicize policy design (Huybrechts, Benesch, and Geib, 2017a) and design thinking in particular suffers from "its naïve blindness to the politics of the policy process (Clarke and Craft 2019, 14). As a result, "design thinking fails to reference wider theories of the social and misses opportunities to illuminate the context into which the designer is intervening" (Kimbell 2011, 295). Systems design or the design of complex macro-systems, such as urban planning and policy design, cannot be divorced from the broader set of 'wicked problems' it is trying to address (Buchanan 1992). By privileging the micro-political level of the individuals and groups, design for participation can fail "to look at the construction of the problem as being the political core of legitimacy within design participation" (Opazo, Wolff, and Araya 2017, 74). Design research has advanced toward a recognition that "participants endeavor to enact desired futures and prompt change" (Dantec and DiSalvo 2013, 242) with the introduction of concepts like "infrastructuring" (Ehn 2008) and

"institutioning" (Huybrechts, Benesch and Geib 2017b). The application of design thinking in policy studies is similarly being nudged to extend beyond its emphasis on the form to think about its systemic consequences (Clarke and Craft 2019; Howlett 2020).

3. The articles in this special issue

The articles in this Special Issue on Participatory Policy Design elaborates on these two logics of participatory policy design. Some of the articles document existing empirical cases that sought to improve how policy designers conduct participatory processes while others situate participation as part of a complex system of public actions dedicated to address the inherent uncertainties and ambiguities in policymaking. These paint a comprehensive account of participatory experiments across different policy contexts, suggesting the universal interest for problem-oriented participation of non-state actors in policy-making.

They advance a view that policy design is essentially a systemic process in which participation must be governed by norms and standards of practice that will not only allow for meaningful participation of stakeholders but also relate to the broader issues of anticipating and designing policy futures. For example, Blomkamp (2021) develops an authoritative practice framework for practitioners of participatory approaches to systemic design. This framework deepens the logic of design for participation by suggesting norms comprised of five core elements—principles, places, process, people and practice that seek to facilitate how governments and design professionals can jumpstart collaborative problem-solving. Blomkamp provides insights on the dynamics of solving wicked problems that requires reframing the parameters of the problems and solutions being deliberated.

Participatory processes can also, through prototyping, challenge embedded techno-rational norms that allows for identification of solutions better suited to cope with multiple ambiguities of the future. For instance, Nogueira and Schimdt (2021) demonstrate how shifting the focus toward designing *for* policy (rather than designing *of* policy), can generate increased understanding of the structure the problems which can, in turn, lead to interventions that are causally linked to transformative impacts. For example, Noguiera and Schimdt's analysis of bottom-up innovations in structuring the food waste problems combines systems and behavioral design frameworks to show the power of prototyping for structuring meaningful interactions. This, in turn, elicited new questions that technocratic approaches had failed to uncover, let alone address. For these reasons Nogueira and Schimdt argue that transformative solutions require simultaneous attention to problem framing and participation.

Similarly, Smedt and Borch (2021) find that a collaborative, participatory policy design approach to sustainability transitions can generate the necessary knowledge to adequately respond to complex technological changes. They do this by offering a novel synthetic framework for integrating narrative accounts into policy design that locates the contrasting logics of participation within a design spectrum. The focus of the reflexive game in iterative proto-typing improves the understanding of the problem that is often, at the outset, either incomplete and under-specified

Smedt and Borsh conclude that students of participatory policy design who seek to eschew the logic of participation for design must situate the participatory process in the broader political context. In so doing, they view the combination of various participatory instruments with traditional decision-making devices as an inherent component of effective design. Hence, they recognized the need to focus on political outcomes rather than implementing participatory processes alone. Gouache (2021) advances questions about outcomes and participation through the case of participatory foresight and policy design experiment in Marcoussis, France to stress the need for creative methods to bring out more unusual suspects to engage in such processes. By offering 'enjoyable' experiences to participants, Gouache's study showed how locating participatory experiments within the larger decision-making systems appears to generate interest among otherwise left-out citizens to be involved in participation.

Lanng, Laursen, and Borg (2021) contribute to novel ideas for inclusion by situating participatory design methods in the deliberation and articulation of the future of a rural village. They turn to a case in Denmark in which village decision-making and participatory techniques were confronted by the broader power dynamics among various actors, which worked to constrain the ability of the participatory process to translate to realize desired outcomes. Their study reinforced the need to constantly integrate politics into problematizing the future, and to, as a result, foster participatory design approaches that are expected to mobilize the public to sustain the process of problem amelioration.

In this regard, Perez, Ng, and Tiglao's (2021) work on employing design thinking in transportation planning demonstrates the instrumental purpose of participation. Inputs to better management of bus transit in Pasig City, Philippines were generated by engaging a diverse of participants to include not only the citizens but also the bus conductors and drivers. This study generates not only political capacity through the legitimacy the design thinking workshop but, given the city government was better able to structure the problem, the important role of organizational analytical capacity.

4. Moving participatory policy design forward: Prospects and challenges

A crucial component to integrating these two logics is to deepen its engagement with policy studies literature. Policy studies tells us that the very act of arguing and engaging over specific courses of action may generate norms that cut across organizational interests, that can, and do, draw on appropriateness motivations to shift consequentialist expectations (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1994). This can occur through the emergence of advocacy coalitions that tend to focus on broad based policy challenges, such as environmental degradation, but it can also occur through the generation of scientific knowledge about the nature of particular problems that then leads to causal norms about the appropriates of different policy tools for addressing the problem at hand (Haas 1992). As a result, theories of participatory policy design must reflect on empirical examples for managing both types of consequentialist motivations such that legitimacy and outcomes can be simultaneously championed. This requires integrating, rather than treating as separate, Cox's (1996) distinction between critical and problem-solving scholarship.

Further nuancing participatory innovation's role in the policy process is important because most studies of both liberal-democracies and more authoritarian regimes show that over time, a government's ability to solve problems in ways that are durable, rather than temporary, require earning support from both stakeholders and broader civil society. Failure to tend to either task can either lead to problem solving approaches that are usually short-lived, because stakeholder and civil society perceives them as illegitimate; or in which legitimate processes lead to exacerbating the problem at hand. For example, participatory stakeholder engagement to address overharvesting of Newfoundland's cod fishery, resulted in a catch limit higher than what scientists projected was required. The result was the collapse of the cod fishery (Cashore and Bernstein 2020). This task is highly challenging because emergent policy interventions often follow non-linear "U-curve" trajectories in which building systems, such as global supply chain tracking of eco-labeled products, have been projected to be effective in the long run only by carefully managing a shift from a logic of consequences to a logic of appropriateness. In some instances, these processes, in turn, may require emphasizing modest environmental standards in order to generate broad support of global tracking systems that reward, rather than punish, early supporters—which only then might pave the way for higher standards once the system is fully routinized (Bernstein and Cashore 2007; Cashore, et al. 2007; Cashore and Stone 2014). This, in turn, requires that those leading planning processes have necessarily political and policy capacity expertise with which to identify distinct managerial capacities that will depend on the nature of the policy tool at hand (Howlett and Ramesh 2016; Cashore 2019; Kekez, Howlett, & Ramesh, 2019).

What we do know, as highlighted by the contributions to these special issues, is that finding a way to integrate the benefits of design for participation, and participation for design, is essentially for uncovering innovative design strategies that can simultaneously advance processes that are deemed legitimacy and appropriate, while meaningfully addressing the problem at hand.

To do so, it is clear from the articles to follow that policy designers must be guided by the logic of *participation for design* as the meaningful involvement of non-state actors not only for legitimizing decisions under conditions of contested authority but it also for enabling the expansion of problem structuring beyond the expert-led framework of traditional bureaucracies. Key conclusions emerge for designing effective participatory processes including: not being haphazardly designed; allowing for creativity; avoiding tokenistic gestures.

We argue that the key insights that that emerges from this special issue—curated during the on-going COVID19 pandemic that posed so many challenges to effectiveness and legitimacy—is that building better theories of transformative policy decisions requires integration of insights for fostering participating for design with those focused on designing for participation.

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