

# Democratic Imperatives: Innovations in Rights, Participation, and Economic Citizenship



*Report of the Task Force on  
Democracy, Economic Security, and  
Social Justice in a Volatile World*





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# Task Force on Democracy, Economic Security, and Social Justice in a Volatile World

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The opinions expressed in the report are solely those of the Task Force speaking collectively. No opinions, statements of fact, or conclusions in the report should be attributed to the American Political Science Association, the University of Pittsburgh, or any individual Task Force member.

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## Preparation of the Report

This report is a joint effort of the members of the Task Force. Michael Goodhart, as Task Force chair, served as coordinator and lead author. The report draws heavily from and expands on the background papers written by Task Force members for a conference held in Pittsburgh in April 2011. We have decided not to cite those papers in this text, as doing so would have been cumbersome. Readers interested in knowing more about particular concepts or data in this report should consult the Task Force website or contact the Chair at [goodhart@pitt.edu](mailto:goodhart@pitt.edu). Additional information on the background papers, including publication information, is also available on the Task Force website.

## Background Papers

*A Preface to Pragmatic Democracy: Toward Continuous Innovation in Governance*, Archon Fung, (John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University)

*Rights-Based Approaches to Development: Concepts, Evidence, and Policy*, Varun Gauri (World Bank) and Siri Gloppen (CMI/University of Bergen)

*Democracy, Public Finance and Property Rights in Stability*, Louise Haagh (University of York)

*Participation, Democracy and Development: Some Comparative Lessons from Brazil, India and South Africa*, Patrick Heller (Brown University)

*Beyond Polyarchy? Debates on Participatory Governance in Latin America*, Enrique Peruzzotti (Universidad Torcuato Di Tella – CONICET)

*Rights-Based Approaches in Practice: Local Mobilization and Evidence-Based Advocacy*, Hans Peter Schmitz (Syracuse University)

*The Precariat: From Denizens to Citizens?*, Guy Standing (University of Bath)

*Transforming Representation and Enhancing Social Justice through Participatory Governance*, Brian Wampler (Boise State University)

*Rights-Based Development Approaches and Legal Reform in Africa*, Susanna D. Wing (Haverford College)

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## Executive Summary

This report seizes the present moment of social, economic, and political crisis to question and challenge some of the dominant narratives that shape current thinking about politics. Specifically, it focuses on promising democratic innovations in three arenas:

- human rights–based approaches to democratization, welfare, and development;
- participatory governance; and
- economic citizenship.

We focus on developments in these fields to stress their shared objectives. Together, they offer a robust and compelling account of democracy. There is significant normative and conceptual overlap among these three areas of innovation, and significant potential for them to be mutually supportive and enhancing.

- Human rights–based approaches conceive of rights as tools for achieving important goals of development, welfare, and democratization and as important democratic aims in themselves. Such approaches seek to secure a just infrastructure for democracy.
- Participatory governance is a process through which rights are exercised and citizenship and political agency enacted. It can help bring traditionally marginalized groups into politics and can enhance accountability, responsiveness, and social justice. Participation is a vital element of rights-based approaches, and rights facilitate political participation.
- Economic citizenship refers to the substantive aim of making economic security and social justice entitlements of democratic citizenship. It is, in a sense, the objective of human rights–based approaches, and it, in turn, enables meaningful political agency.

One of our key findings is that innovations in these three fields share crucial objectives in common:

- deepening democracy;
- enhancing collective and individual agency;
- reducing poverty;
- achieving greater equality of wealth, power, respect, legal status, or opportunity; and
- cultivating solidarity in democratic communities.

We view these as *imperatives* for revitalizing democracy in a volatile world, and the innovations we highlight throughout have been selected to illustrate how this revitalization might take place.

Human rights-based approaches (HRBA) are a family of approaches for achieving human welfare and promoting human development and democratization through the realization of human rights. Some of the distinctive features of these approaches are:

- a shared normative and conceptual anchor in human rights and a commitment to human rights principles in the development process; and
- a distinctive analysis and critique of power that focuses on the underlying causes of poverty, inequality, and disenfranchisement.

HRBA are utilized—and have proven effective—in developing and developed countries and in old and new democracies. We propose a comprehensive analytic framework for understanding HRBA that highlights four main approaches:

- global compliance and accountability,
- programs and policies,
- discourse, and
- constitutional litigation and mobilization.

We specify the various targets, drivers, goals, and strategies connected to these approaches, illustrating them with numerous examples drawn from contemporary practice. We emphasize that context and the pathways of change through which HRBA work are key variables in their study and implementation.

This section concludes that innovations in HRBA raise four significant challenges for our understanding of politics:

1. HRBA present an alternative to traditional needs-based and market-oriented approaches that concentrate on aggregate growth while too often ignoring rights and capabilities.
2. HRBA reject the technocratic, top-down style of administration and implementation often relied on by traditional development approaches.
3. HRBA focus our attention on the structural sources of poverty and provide normative and conceptual links between poverty reduction and social and political empowerment.
4. HRBA suggest an understanding of democratization and democratic deepening that demonstrates the strong connection between economic and political rights and their centrality in mobilization for change.

Participatory Governance (PG) offers a pragmatic response to democratic deficits. It complements familiar representative democratic arrangements, helping to enrich the institutional landscape of democracy in ways that empower citizens. It deepens democracy by addressing democratic deficits in legitimacy, accountability, and responsiveness. There is a wide diversity of existing PG mechanisms, many of which originated in and are proliferating throughout the global south, including:

- participatory budgeting,
- citizen councils,
- oversight boards,

- participatory urban planning,
- neighborhood committees, and
- policy councils and conferences.

PG makes democracy more responsive and accountable, and it provides citizens with more opportunities for participation in decision-making. We focus on three key, inter-related concepts central to understanding PG:

- Democratic deepening: PG helps counteract deficits by expanding opportunities for involvement for all citizens; it empowers people to be effective citizens. PG is primarily about institutionalizing opportunities for involvement, about enabling citizens to take a greater role in governing themselves.
- Effective citizenship: In many countries, citizens may lack the capacity to utilize or exercise their citizenship in meaningful ways. Enabling citizens to participate effectively is thus both a means and an end. As a means, advocates of PG hope that it will increase the probability of fairer, more efficient, more legitimate, and more just outcomes. As an end, participation fulfills an important democratic right and affirms the equality of all citizens.
- Expanding the surface area of the state: Increasing the points of contact and information exchange between government and citizens is a key objective of PG. PG complements representative democracy; many of the most effective mechanisms for PG involve what is sometimes called *co-governance*, in which citizens and state officials cooperate, deliberate, and decide on policy issues in forums created explicitly for this purpose.

We outline a pragmatic justification for PG that stresses the ways in which it supplements representative democracy. This justification emphasizes that participation is not a cure-all to be applied indiscriminately but rather an important facet of democratic deepening.

The report discusses some mechanisms of PG and analyzes the political opportunity structure in which they are most often successful. There are two key findings. First, PG succeeds where state and political actors (civil society) can mold institutional design to participatory dynamics. Second, PG can promote social justice, but usually only if it has been specifically designed for this purpose. Such a design for social justice includes a pro-poor and inclusive bias; more specifically, we identify five design principles for PG that promote social justice:

- decentralize city-level government,
- reward mobilization,
- expand deliberative forums,
- promote new networks and alliances, and
- engage in oversight.

PG challenges individuals to move beyond thin conceptions of democracy as electoralism and rethink the assumption that mobilization generates instability. It also raises the challenge to better understand how democratic deepening can take place within the

parameters of representative democratic arrangements, enriching the institutional landscape of democracy in ways that help make citizens more effective. Finally, it pushes us to revisit the important normative and empirical connections among democracy, participation, and social justice.

Economic citizenship is the name we give to a framework for addressing important innovations in the arena of what has traditionally been called the welfare state. Economic citizenship stresses that economic security and social justice are essential entitlements of democracy. Examples of policies that promote economic citizenship include employment, income support, social insurance, and public goods provision.

We identify four key elements of economic citizenship:

- equality,
- inclusiveness,
- security, and
- participation.

Economic citizenship provides a useful conceptual framework for issues of economic security and social justice because it recognizes the interdependence of these four dimensions and emphasizes their centrality to full democratic citizenship.

Economic citizenship and political citizenship are mutually reinforcing: effective political rights are instrumental in realizing democratically just social and economic policy; just social and economic policy, including secure social and economic rights, bolsters political rights and equality by enabling more citizens to participate effectively in self-government.

This report reviews traditional welfare state arrangements in more- and less-developed countries as a prelude to a discussion of the importance of economic citizenship in both. One key finding that holds across all states is that the more egalitarian and democratic the state, the better its overall economic performance.

We emphasize two mechanisms for achieving economic citizenship:

1. macro policies: progressive public finance.
2. micro policies: income support, basic income, cash transfer, and pension schemes.

We define “progressive public finance” as a regime of taxation and expenditure that promotes the aims of economic citizenship: equality, inclusivity, security, and participation. Public spending on education and health care are good examples. We call spending in these areas *progressive* when it is oriented toward reducing inequality and poverty and enhancing freedom through economic security.

Income support and cash transfer schemes directly impact citizens’ social incomes, or the measure of their combined sources of income, benefits, and support. Social incomes must be adequate to enable people to function as effective citizens in society; programs like a basic income guarantee or cash transfer programs like Brazil’s Bolsa Família (BF) help achieve these aims. Such programs are most effective when they explicitly seek to limit inequality, when

they permit and encourage participation in their design and administration, and when they are implemented within a context of progressive public finance.

Among the key substantive conclusions of this report is that innovative strategies to improve democracy, economic security, and social justice are closely intertwined in theory and practice. Democracy requires effective citizenship, which is built on the twin pillars of economic and political citizenship. Economic citizenship entails a regime that guarantees economic rights, provides universal public services as a matter of right, and maintains a regime of public finance to support these aims and to reduce and limit poverty and inequality. Political citizenship entails not only the franchise and the familiar civil and political rights but also active participation in governance to secure legitimacy, accountability, and responsiveness. The protection of rights is thus central to both pillars of democracy, and participation in defining and securing rights is itself part of the democratic promise.

At a time of great global volatility, we believe that a better understanding of innovations like those discussed here, and of the interconnections and complementarities among them, is imperative for ensuring the future of democracy. This report points to several areas in which further research is needed:

- Rights and participation are in many ways two sides of the same coin. More research is needed into how rights promote and secure effective citizenship as well as what kinds of participation are most effective in securing rights. Such research will aid in strengthening our understanding of how rights-based mobilization and participation can work as forms of power in promoting and sustaining democracy.
- Our investigations suggest that democratic justice comprises human rights, social justice, economic citizenship, and enhanced participation for effective citizenship. It is important to develop a better normative grasp of how these concepts relate to one another as well as a better empirical understanding about how to arrange social and political institutions to advance them jointly.
- HRBA and economic citizenship are closely linked conceptually, but there remains much research to be done on how economic and political development work together through rights and how different forms of economic citizenship enable participation.

In addition to these substantive findings, this report makes three suggestions for broadening the discipline of political science in light of our work:

- Paying more attention to innovations and counter-narratives can open new possibilities for valuable political science research and improve our ability to understand and anticipate political change.
- Engaging in two-way learning can bring greater attention to the many important democratic innovations originating in the global south and enrich the study of politics.
- Bridging the gap between normative and empirical research might allow scholars interested in theoretical, conceptual, and practical questions to make significant progress in defining democratic outcomes and devising measures and methodologies with which to study democratic deepening.

## Introduction

### *A Volatile World*

The Task Force on Democracy, Economic Security, and Social Justice in a Volatile World was convened amidst the ongoing convulsions triggered by the global economic and financial crisis of 2008. The tumult had already spread far beyond the economy, with bank bailouts sparking popular outrage that shook democratically elected governments in many countries. Since then, austerity measures have been implemented to combat indebtedness — first in the Euro zone, then in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (U.S.) — in stark contrast with the government largesse showered upon the financial industry. Fears of a second global recession and financial meltdown remain; debt and default threaten the jobs, pensions, economic security, and life chances of millions. Social tensions run high.

This crisis has had significant effects on the developing world as well. Aid and development budgets are shrinking at a time when mounting evidence has questioned the value and effectiveness of traditional assistance programs.<sup>1</sup> Economists are warning that some of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will go unmet, notably in sub-Saharan Africa. Wildly fluctuating food and commodity prices are compounding economic insecurity, even as efforts to reform the global trade regime to benefit poorer countries remain stalled. Meanwhile, famine and civil war in Somalia and elsewhere are again demonstrating the close relationship between political and economic insecurity.

The global economy is hardly the only source of volatility in the world today, however. The upheavals of the Arab Spring of 2011 — and the harsh reprisals that have followed across the region and beyond — have thrust democratization, with all its promise and perils, back to the center of the global stage. Meanwhile, protest movements like Occupy are spreading within established democracies. This time, both the immediate outcomes and the longer-term impact seem much less certain. The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, in a context of growing war weariness and lingering security concerns, has led to renewed questioning of the costs, wisdom, and future of the so-called War on Terror. Climate change poses growing and diverse threats that politicians and policymakers have failed to meet — inaction that will only exacerbate social and political tensions as severe weather, water shortages, aridification, and the inundation of coastal areas and islands increase.

Crises are moments of great intellectual opportunity: they unsettle conventional wisdom, disrupt political complacency, offer unexpected insights, and pose difficult and uncomfortable questions in urgent ways. The present crisis provides an opening for scholars, activists, practitioners, and citizens to question and challenge some of the dominant narratives that have shaped recent thinking and debate about politics.

Recent events call for urgent reexamination of the central tenets of neoliberal economic orthodoxy, including the faith in the wisdom and virtue of a “self-regulating” market. They

have eroded the legitimacy of many democratic governments by exhibiting these governments' subservience to financial capital and demonstrating the seeming incapacity of representative institutions to address systemic challenges. They also have directly challenged the political and economic foundations of traditional social welfare programs.

At the same time, the crisis has created an opening for consideration of new ideas and innovative models to advance democratization, development, and social justice. Events in the Middle East and North Africa vivify the continuing appeal of democracy and human rights and sharply challenge conventional thinking about the stability of authoritarian rule and the "dangers" of popular mobilization, and innovations in participatory governance highlight exciting new democratic possibilities. New approaches to development and democratization anchored in human rights point toward hopeful, if so far rarely realized, possibilities. New ideas about economic security and social justice offer a clear alternative to the politics of stagnation and retrenchment.

### *Aims and Scope*

This Task Force is not concerned with analyzing the causes or extent of the global economic and financial crisis or other developments mentioned here. Rather, we treat the volatility and uncertainty stemming from these events as an opportunity (quoting from the Task Force's charge) to "rethink some of the familiar assumptions" about and to "refresh and reinvigorate debates on the articulation between democracy, economic security, and social justice in developed and developing countries."

We have chosen to focus on three arenas in which promising democratic innovations are emerging: human rights-based approaches to democratization, welfare, and development; participatory governance; and economic citizenship. One of our main aims is to draw attention to some crucial themes and objectives these three areas share: deepening democracy; enhancing collective and individual agency; reducing poverty; achieving greater equality of wealth, income, power, respect, influence, legal status, or opportunity; and cultivating solidarity in democratic communities. We view these as *imperatives* for revitalizing democracy in a volatile world, and the innovations we highlight throughout have been selected to illustrate how this revitalization might take place.

We selected these three areas both because of their shared objectives and because of the way they jointly constitute a robust and compelling account of democracy. Human rights-based approaches conceive of rights as tools for achieving important goals of development, welfare, and democratization and as important democratic aims in themselves. Such approaches seek to secure the basic infrastructure of democracy. Participatory governance is a process through which rights are exercised and citizenship and political agency enacted. It can help bring traditionally marginalized groups into politics and can enhance accountability, responsiveness, and social justice. Participation is a vital element of rights-based approaches, and rights facilitate political participation. Economic citizenship refers to the substantive aim of making economic security and social justice entitlements of democratic citizenship. It is, in a sense, the objective of human rights-based approaches, and it, in turn, enables meaningful political agency. In short, there is significant normative and conceptual overlap among these three areas of innovation, and significant potential for them to be mutually supportive and enhancing.

We do not attempt to provide an exhaustive catalogue of the innovations underway in these areas, nor do we imagine that these are the only arenas where interesting and important innovation is taking place. We have chosen to emphasize normatively appealing innovations that work. By “normatively appealing,” we simply mean innovations that advance the objectives just identified: they deepen democracy, enhance agency, reduce poverty, promote equality, or cultivate solidarity. By “innovations that work,” we mean policies and institutional designs that have demonstrated their capacity to translate these objectives into practice.

We focus on innovations because while many activists, donors, and policymakers invest their hopes and resources in them, innovations receive insufficient attention in mainstream political science. We need better and more systematic analysis of innovations and the counter-narratives they represent. Such an analysis will both facilitate much-needed reform and help reinvigorate the study of political science at a time when traditional narratives and approaches are losing traction on—even losing sight of—the fundamental challenges facing democracy.

By focusing on human rights, participatory governance, and economic citizenship, we have kept one proverbial foot planted in the mainstream of the discipline. Participation, democratic institutions, and social mobilization are bread-and-butter topics for students of politics. While the term “economic citizenship” might be unfamiliar, political scientists have long scrutinized the social and political implications of poverty and inequality — as evidenced in the work of two previous Task Forces<sup>2</sup> — and the conditions of effective citizenship. Rights have also been a perennial concern of the discipline; their centrality to democratic politics and citizenship is well established. The theme of the 2011 APSA annual meeting—the politics of rights—recognizes the continuing and growing interest in this topic.

As the terminology of innovation and counter-narrative suggests, however, our other foot is stepping in a new direction. Too often the debate within political science has focused on highly idealized alternatives to representative government. From a policy perspective, these debates lack relevance: there are few substitutes for representation when it comes to giving citizens a voice in public affairs in diverse mass societies. Representative government is the *minimum* requirement for democratic participation based on an ideal of citizenship, however, and the limits of representative government in creating accountability and delivering social justice are well known.<sup>3</sup> In focusing on innovations in participatory governance, we are interested not in alternatives to representative democracy, but rather in complements to it. There has been too little research into the ways that participatory governance might supplement, support, and expand democracy. Rather than assume that our options are limited to tweaking and refining mass electoral systems or turning our gaze to castles in the sky, we look at innovations that thicken and deepen democracy within its existing parameters—that change the bathwater without losing the baby.

Our discussion of economic citizenship builds on traditional concerns about poverty and inequality. In choosing this term we want to emphasize the importance of security not just to social well-being but also to democratic citizenship. We concentrate on innovations that increase economic security by reducing poverty and the threat of poverty while providing economic opportunity and enhancing agency. These ideas recall older conceptions of citizenship that tie it to economic well-being and stress the connections between political and economic security.<sup>4</sup> Highlighting human rights-based approaches to democratization,

welfare, and development also lets us draw connections between the political and economic aspects of citizenship, development, and security. Rights-based approaches downplay the classic political economy emphasis on aggregate growth and instead emphasize individual empowerment and the centrality of human rights to welfare and development. They upend the overly institutional view of democratization as a process of transition and consolidation, showing how rights can be used to mobilize support for political reform and democratic deepening, even in long-established democracies.

There is an additional way in which this report steps in a new direction. Our work reflects an attempt to broaden the study of politics in several important respects. First, we strongly challenge the implicit assumption shared by many in the social sciences that successful ideas and institutions originate in the core and are transmitted to the periphery by example or through scholarship. Our findings show that many appealing and effective innovations come from the developing world and that such innovations often bypass the global north in their diffusion. This report thus calls for and exemplifies a model of “two-way learning” between developed and developing countries that we hope can expand and replace the myopic “export” model. We do not imagine that the same solutions can work everywhere; indeed, especially because we recognize that similar challenges often require different responses in different contexts, we think it is essential to know much more about the diverse political experiments underway across the world and the conditions for their success.

A second, related way in which we hope to broaden the field is by emphasizing the value and importance of studying innovations and counter-narratives. Obviously, one of the aims of political scientists is to accurately understand the surrounding world. Too often, however, the pursuit of this goal induces political scientists to take the dominant narratives for granted, inadvertently reinforcing them. Likewise, the frequent neglect of ideas that can easily appear marginal delegitimizes alternatives and their study. These tendencies narrow the scope of what qualifies as “mainstream” political science and make it rather conservative — not in an ideological sense so much as in an emphasis on stability and refinements to the familiar models and narratives.

Finally, we hope that our investigations broaden contemporary political science by demonstrating one way in which the artificial and counter-productive gulf separating empirical and normative research on politics can be bridged. Normative and empirical work can and should mutually inform and benefit one another. This report shows how crucial and widely shared normative concerns can guide empirical research without compromising scientific objectivity. There is no impartial way to determine what is important to study; normative concerns can (and already unconsciously do) orient thinking about what issues, institutions, and policy ideas deserve attention. Normative theory can also supply analytically clear and rigorous criteria for evaluating political phenomena. The flip side of the coin is that normative theory that hopes to be policy-relevant needs to pay more and better attention to feasibility. This empirical grounding need not be unduly limiting, however, if we expand the universe of cases we explore — hence, once again, the importance of innovations and counter-narratives. Empirical political science can properly be prescriptive when it is explicit about its normative orientation and remains rigorous in its methods; normative political science can be robust and relevant when it is empirically grounded and problem-based.

We happily acknowledge that we are not the first ones to make any of these points. Many scholars have been doing the kind of work we are recommending for a long time. We do hope, however, that by addressing this research and the issues it addresses through the vehicle of an APSA Task Force report, we can help publicize and legitimize the research while building on the outstanding traditions of scholarship in our discipline. We hope to inspire younger scholars, especially, to pursue this kind of research, and to encourage the discipline to reward it.

### ***Structure of the Report***

The remainder of this report is divided into four sections. Each of the next three sections is devoted to a discussion of innovations in one of our areas of focus: human rights-based approaches, participatory governance, and economic citizenship. Again, we do not attempt a comprehensive survey of developments in these areas; rather, we highlight appealing ideas that work in an effort to isolate and amplify important themes and trends that warrant further study.

The narrative in these sections is complemented by short discussions of particular projects presented as boxed features in the text. These boxes contain a great deal of rich empirical detail about particular innovations, and we strongly encourage readers to pay special attention to them.

The conclusion focuses on suggestive areas of overlap among innovations in the three arenas we study. It revisits and amplifies the themes of this introduction and makes suggestions for future research. It also underscores the urgency of exploring these and other innovations for revitalizing democracy in a volatile world.

## Human Rights–based Approaches

### *Introduction*

Human rights–based approaches (HRBA) are a family of approaches for achieving human welfare and promoting human development and democratization through the exercise and realization of human rights.<sup>5</sup> As this characterization implies, both the goals pursued through HRBA and the tools and tactics used in achieving them are varied: social movement campaigns around human rights, NGO-led development programs, community mobilization, and constitutional litigation are only some examples of rights-based approaches. It makes sense to talk about them as a family of approaches because they share a normative and conceptual anchor in human rights and a commitment to human rights principles.<sup>6</sup> Human rights emerged as a global discourse and practice following the Second World War, but quickly became mired in Cold War politics. The development enterprise came into its own in the 1960s, just as de-colonization was accelerating. Development “rapidly surpassed the human rights world in resources and attention, the main reason being that ‘development’ became a widely shared goal, technical in nature ... while human rights, given their deeply political nature, remained contested and marginalized.”<sup>7</sup>

After the Cold War, human rights and development found renewed prominence and financing. Moreover, they were increasingly understood in conjunction with one another, given their similar objectives and complementary strengths: development has been long on strategy but relatively short on theory, whereas human rights are theoretically well articulated but weak on implementation.<sup>8</sup> HRBA emerged in the 1990s, partly in reaction to the failure of traditional needs-based approaches to address poverty sustainably, and partly in reaction against the macro-level focus of neoliberal conditionality and structural adjustment programs.<sup>9</sup> HRBA represented a turn, or return, to a human-centered concept of development, one that puts human development and equality at the center of economic growth strategies. HRBA also provide a new way of conceptualizing the long history of rights-based mobilization for political and economic change as being closely related to these more recent concerns. In all of their forms, HRBA emphasize human rights outcomes and the processes through which those outcomes are achieved, favoring participatory (bottom-up) measures rather than donor- or government-directed (top-down) projects. While we focus on HRBA in the development field, many of the insights here also apply to democratization.

HRBA are distinctive in their analysis and critique of power. In thinking about development, HRBA target the underlying causes of poverty, inequality, and disenfranchisement, emphasizing structural change, rather than simply service and resource delivery, as essential to securing welfare and promoting development.<sup>10</sup> From a rights-based perspective, poverty and lack of development are political issues, driven primarily by unequal power relations and structural injustices. Poverty is reconceived in terms of human rights as a multidimensional problem that involves deprivation (of income, access to services, etc.), vulnerability (insecurity of rights),

lack of voice (limited democracy and accountability), and lack of power.<sup>11</sup> This reframing of poverty leads to a profound shift, in which poor “is not what [people] are, but what they have been made.”<sup>12</sup> While traditional needs-based approaches seek to expand the resources available for development, typically by involving external actors, HRBA focus on the equal distribution of existing resources.<sup>13</sup> In short, HRBA shift the emphasis of development to social justice.

The human development approach informs HRBA as we understand them: having rights is both an important part of what social justice means and requires and an essential tool for realizing rights. Another way of putting this is that rights provide the legal and political foundation on which effective human agency rests. Economic, social, and cultural rights and civil and political rights are thus equally important for development.

The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people’s choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and can change over time. People often value achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately, in income or growth figures: greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and sense of participation in community activities. The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives (Mahbub ul Huq, Founder, Human Development Report).<sup>14</sup>

A similar critique of power animates HRBA in more developed countries. The focus on human rights helps to vivify structures of exclusion within these societies and focus attention on how power symmetries distort the political system in ways that translate directly into social and economic marginalization and political disenfranchisement. In such contexts human rights provide a powerful tool of analysis and critique precisely because they are widely accepted, at least in principle; the gap between principle and practice is a productive site of scholarly analysis and a potent motivator of social change.

Political science was long wary of human rights,<sup>15</sup> but in recent years scholars from all corners of the discipline have embraced the concept as an important object of study. Scholars have learned a great deal about how rights work in national and international settings, about the moral and conceptual interdependence of rights and social justice, and about the challenges of achieving universal rights in a highly pluralistic world. More specifically, the capabilities approach (as developed by Martha C. Nussbaum and Amartya Sen) clearly and powerfully demonstrates the connections among rights, justice, and development.<sup>16</sup> This “human development” approach, reflected in the UN Development Programme’s Human Development Reports, conceives development in terms of the freedoms and capabilities people enjoy and the range of options available to them. The capabilities approach offers a concrete way of mobilizing abstract rights to end deep-seated discrimination and abject poverty.

Despite almost 20 years of experimentation and evolution in HRBA, however, there is still little systematic evidence regarding their effectiveness,<sup>17</sup> and even proponents remain unsure how to characterize their impact on poverty, inequality, and social justice and the value they have added to development thinking and practice.<sup>18</sup> Analytic and empirical difficulties contribute to this confusion. Scholars and practitioners have been unable to agree on a precise definition of HRBA, and there is a lack of comparable data on their effectiveness.

While there have been numerous calls for better data and more research on HRBA, most of the evidence on them remains anecdotal and focused on single cases, and much of it is reported by practitioners whose stake in demonstrating success to donors raises obvious conflicts. It is difficult at present to say more than that HRBA are normatively appealing and have the potential to contribute significantly to human development.

We join the call for more thorough study of HRBA in hopes of clarifying their appeal and potential. In the following pages we present an analytic framework for understanding HRBA that synthesizes and builds on current research into rights-based approaches and the pathways of change through which they work. Along the way, we cite numerous examples of successful HRBA and also highlight important potential pitfalls. Next, we turn to questions of implementation and effectiveness. Finally, we map out a pragmatic approach to the study of HRBA that emphasizes context and pathways of change.

### **An Analytic Framework**

We identify four distinct approaches within HRBA: global compliance, policies and programs, discourse, and constitutional mobilization and litigation. These approaches can be implemented simultaneously, and the conceptual boundaries between them are fluid (see Box 1). Again, they are united by their shared normative and conceptual foundation in rights and by their commitment to respect for rights in the process of development. A distinctive feature of rights-based approaches is that they regard the process through which development aims are realized as being as important as the aims themselves.

#### **Box 1**

##### **Women's Rights and Family Law**

International and domestic actors are involved in rights-based approaches to development, and their efforts are frequently intertwined. The reform or implementation of those government policies that promote rights often relies on support from national and local government officials as well as civil society organizations. The distinction between discursive approaches and policies and programs is blurred when governments, international NGOs, and bilateral donors support civil society organizations that promote HRBA. For example, in 2004 Benin passed a new Family Law. While the law was passed, its successful implementation remains dependent on countrywide awareness campaigns, since many citizens—including those within the legal sector—were initially unaware of the legislation. The Women's Legal Rights Initiative, funded by USAID, developed training for paralegals, lawyers, judges, and magistrates, as well as public awareness campaigns for women's legal rights. The government relied on civil society for expanding knowledge of the new family code, not only with respect to the public at large but also with respect to government justice sector employees. In Mali, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Family worked directly with local NGOs (CAFO and CCA-ONG) to promote dialogue in regional forums on the reform of family law. In this case the government was actively involved in pursuing a discursive approach to reform. As a result of ongoing dialogues, Mali has yet to adopt a Family Code to replace the widely contested 1962 *Code du mariage et de la tutelle*.

— Source: Susanna D. Wing

Our analytic framework emphasizes the targets of HRBA, the actors driving them, and the pathways through which change occurs in connection with each approach. There is significant overlap among these categories. Our point is not to insist on the details of this categorization, but rather to highlight common and significant configurations of HRBA in hopes of rendering them more amenable to study and successful implementation. HRBA share many goals in common, and they employ a variety of tactics in pursuing those goals

Figure 1: HRBA Goals and Tactics



(see Figure 1). The utility of different tactics for realizing particular goals will depend heavily on context – specifically, on how key actors read the context and the opportunities afforded in light of the resources available. (We return to this theme below.)

### Four Human Rights–based Approaches

*Global compliance* approaches use the target’s acknowledged human rights obligations and commitments to advocate for compliance and rights fulfillment. Drivers of global

compliance efforts can include international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), such as Oxfam; social movement organizations (SMOs) and networks, such as the International Campaign to Ban Landmines; and international treaty bodies, such as the European Court of Human Rights. The role of transnational social movement activism in promoting compliance and accountability has become a notable focus of scholarly attention in recent years.<sup>19</sup> State governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and multinational corporations (MNCs) are the most frequent targets of global compliance approaches. Some familiar historical examples of states being targeted include the global anti-Apartheid campaign—in which SMOs were important drivers—and the “Helsinki Effect,” when local dissident groups used the Warsaw Pact’s recommitment to international human rights norms under the 1975 Helsinki Accords as the basis for demanding accountability from their governments.<sup>20</sup> Numerous Helsinki watch groups grew out of this movement, forming the basis of Human Rights Watch. A similar process played out during the 1980s in Latin America, as networks of SMOs used international norms and evidence of atrocities to pressure authoritarian regimes to reform,<sup>21</sup> a strategy explained in the so-called spiral model of ratcheting international pressure.<sup>22</sup> The three primary international financial institutions – the IMF, the WTO, and the World Bank – have been frequent targets of such strategies,<sup>23</sup> as have MNCs – perhaps most famously the campaigns against Nike’s use of sweatshop labor and Royal Dutch Shell by the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People.

## Box 2

### Plan International

Many non-governmental organizations active in the development field have adopted distinct human rights–based frameworks (HRBA) and advocacy efforts to strengthen their impact and increase the urgency of addressing abject conditions of poverty and discrimination. Development NGOs experimenting with HRBA have frequently opted for evidence-based, but not necessarily contentious, advocacy efforts. For example, Plan International, an organization focused primarily on children, has found significant success in using such strategies over the past five years in sustainably improving health conditions in rural communities. In Bolivia, Plan has worked since 2000 with the Bolivian Ministry of Health in the roll-out of Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI), a strategy developed during the 1990s by the World Health Organization (WHO). Early on, Plan staff realized that the program was not as effective in reducing preventable deaths of children, primarily because it lacked a strong community-based component and because government health providers were reluctant to come out to the communities. In cooperation with the Ministry, Plan designed a quasi-experimental pilot that compared communities exposed to HRBA-inspired capacity-building efforts with control communities in which only clinical-level IMCI had been implemented. After the pilot showed a significant reduction in preventable deaths as a result of community-level interventions supplementing expanded health services, the Ministry officially adopted Plan’s version of IMCI as its nationwide policy in 2003.

The scale-up of the community component of IMCI made community outreach by health providers mandatory and added a critical accountability component to the provision of health services. Plan continued to engage in the program by promoting a participatory monitoring and planning mechanism through the strengthening of so-called administrative information committees (CAIs). These CAIs bring together community volunteers and leaders, local government, and representatives of the health system in a continuous dialogue. The strengthening of CAIs and more frequent local visits by Ministry personnel helped create and sustain a new relationship between communities and the state by uncovering and addressing problems with service quality and engaging in joint planning and evaluation processes. Plan’s HRBA efforts were based on a combination of evidence-based advocacy, a pre-existing constitutional guarantee of the right to health, and ongoing decentralization policies that gave greater autonomy to district level authorities.

— *Source: Hans Peter Schmitz*

The pathways of change most common in global compliance approaches are legal and institutional reform, movement building (as in the anti-Apartheid campaign), and the emergence of new narratives that reflect evolving understanding of human rights obligations. Legal and institutional reform can include anything from regime change, in the case of oppressive governments, to the adoption of new policies and procedures by governments or international organization (IOs), or even the creation of new international regimes like the International Criminal Court – which came to fruition in part through the efforts of SMOs and INGOs<sup>24</sup> – and the adoption of corporate codes of conduct by MNCs.<sup>25</sup> This last example is also illustrative of an emerging narrative regarding corporate responsibility, one articulated in former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s Global Compact. These new narratives can

help to “steer” global governance by reshaping the contours of normative discourse about politics.<sup>26</sup>

*Policies and programs* refer to a broad category of approaches in which rights are treated as high-priority goals integrated into the policies and programming decisions of governments, NGOs, or aid donors. Such efforts are sometimes tied to specific development interventions, especially those undertaken by governments and NGOs. Examples include programs to raise awareness of human rights, create strategic partnerships, or expand community participation; the Women’s Legal Rights Initiative of USAID or the African Women’s Development Fund, for instance, educate women about their rights and expand their access to the judicial system (see again Box 1).

### Box 3

#### Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)

Successful plans to fight poverty require country ownership and broad-based support from the public in order to succeed. A PRSP contains an assessment of poverty and describes the macro-economic, structural, and social policies and programs that a country will pursue over several years to promote growth and reduce poverty, as well as external financing needs and the associated sources of financing. PRSPs are prepared by governments in low-income countries through a participatory process involving domestic stakeholders and external development partners, including the IMF and the World Bank.

#### Country leadership in setting priorities key to reducing poverty

The PRSP approach, initiated by the IMF and the World Bank in 1999, results in a comprehensive country-based strategy for poverty reduction. The introduction of PRSPs was a recognition by the IMF and the World Bank of the importance of country ownership of reform programs as well as the need for a greater focus on poverty reduction. PRSPs aim to provide the crucial link between national public actions, donor support, and the development outcomes needed to meet the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are centered on halving poverty between 1990 and 2015. PRSPs help guide policies associated with Fund and Bank concessional lending as well as debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. They are made available on the IMF and World Bank websites by agreement with the member country.

#### Core principles of the PRSP approach

Five core principles underlie the PRSP approach. Poverty reduction strategies should be:

- **country-driven**, promoting national ownership of strategies through broad-based participation of civil society;
- **result-oriented** and focused on outcomes that will benefit the poor;
- **comprehensive** in recognizing the multidimensional nature of poverty;
- **partnership-oriented**, involving coordinated participation of development partners (government, domestic stakeholders, and external donors); and
- based on a **long-term perspective** for poverty reduction.

— Source: Excerpted from the IMF’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers Factsheet <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/prsp.htm>

#### Box 4

### ActionAid Pakistan's Campaign for Home-based Women Workers

In 2005, ActionAid Pakistan began a campaign designed to improve the working conditions of more than 20 million marginalized home-based women workers. In a first step, ActionAid started pilot programs that organized women into small collectives to expose them to training and raise rights awareness as means for successfully demanding better working conditions and wages from the buyers of their products. After some success in strengthening the capacity of women to organize collectively, ActionAid added national and international levels to its home-work campaign. To scale up and sustain the limited local gains, ActionAid and the International Labor Organization (ILO) agreed in October 2007 to collaborate in pressuring the government into signing the Home Work Convention C-177 (adopted by the ILO in 1996), a crucial legal step in establishing a nationwide social protection bill for the informal sector.

As part of the national campaign, ActionAid researched social protection laws in other nations, supported the creation of the first nationwide union of female home workers (in 2009), and collaborated with others in drafting a social protection bill. Since 2007, ActionAid Pakistan has organized several consultations that brought together government representatives, political parties, and NGOs to lobby for the signature and ratification of C-177 and the adoption of concurrent domestic legislation. ActionAid also used media campaigns to raise awareness among the public for the issue and has worked with parts of the government, including the Ministry of Women Development and the Commission on the Status of Women, to gain broader support among government leaders. While the government of Pakistan has yet to ratify the convention C-177, this campaign exhibits crucial elements of successful HRBA work, including (1) working simultaneously across international, national, and local levels, (2) involving rights-holders in the planning and implementation of the campaign, and (3) using research and in-depth analysis to build effective alliances for long-term social and political change.

— Source: Excerpted from Hargreaves, Samantha, ed. 2010. "Action on Rights," in Human Rights-Based Approach (HHRBA) Resource Book. Johannesburg: ActionAid, 123–129

Rights-based policies and programs are quite diverse; this is the broadest of the strategies, and it comprises much of what many scholars, development workers, and practitioners typically think of when they think of HRBA. Many programs run by INGOs like Oxfam and CARE reflect the rights-based approach. Governments obviously play a crucial role in setting national policies on rights and development, and they frequently partner with NGOs and aid agencies in initiating or implementing rights-based programs.

Targets of rights-based policies and programs include governments as well as civil society, corporations, and individuals and communities. Many programs target multiple actors simultaneously; for instance, the work of Plan International on the management and reduction of childhood illness in Bolivia targeted the state's Ministry of Health, to increase capacity and prompt policy reform; civil society leaders and volunteers, as part of an ongoing dialogue about monitoring and planning, and individuals and communities, to improve health (see Box 2).

Drivers of these policies and programs include IOs—for example, the World Bank, without using the term, has *de facto* embraced many aspects of HRBA; NGOs and INGOs like

## Box 5

### **Economic Literacy & Budget Accountability for Governance**

Economic Literacy & Budget Accountability for Governance (ELBAG) is currently used by citizen groups and social movements across 22 nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Its aim is to foster citizens' ability to monitor government budgets, economic policies, and decision-making for democratic governance. Its methodologies are transferable across national contexts, making them also attractive for adoption in the developed world. ELBAG relies on a combination of popular mobilization on economic justice, detailed analyses of local and national economies, and campaigns for access to information about key decision-making of governments and intergovernmental organizations at the national and international levels.

In Uganda, ELBAG-inspired programs have been used effectively to challenge corruption in service delivery at the local level as well as to strengthen citizens' voices for pro-poor budget policies at the national level. This process began with training community budget monitors in several districts to track the allocation of funds provided by intergovernmental donors as well as the central government in Kampala. During the 2000s, many cases of missing or misappropriated funds were discovered by relying on community-based organizations. At the national level, these community-based monitoring groups work together with other civil society groups for the Civil Society Budget Accountability Group (CSBAG), lobbying both the Ministry of Finance and parliament to modify budget allocations—in particular, to limit spending on security and the military and increase allocations for rural development.

— Source: Excerpted from Economic Literacy & Budget Accountability for Governance, ELBAG (<http://www.elbag.org/main/>).

Oxfam and CARE; and foreign government donors such as DANIDA, the Danish development agency. Governments can also sometimes take the initiative: state-led consultations, such as those called for in the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) process initiated by the IMF and World Bank, are a good example (see Box 3). National and local governments can also be drivers, often working with NGOs or aid agencies in implementing rights-based policies and programs.

The pathways of change through which policies and programs work are varied; they include: expanding people's access to decision-making; building organizational capacity, whether of the government, civil society, or local communities; and legal and institutional reform, especially in areas related to development, governance, and accountability. Plan International's work in Bolivia helped build both governmental and civil society capacity (see Box 2), while ActionAid Pakistan's efforts with home-based women workers sought policy change and institutional reform (see Box 4). Another initiative that is gaining popularity globally involves the use of citizen monitoring of budgets as a way of increasing accountability and responsiveness (see Box 5).<sup>27</sup> Broad-based local participation and mobilization are the main conditions for successful implementation of policies and programs. Unless substantial control is yielded to rights-holders, such efforts can easily remain rhetorical, mere window dressing.

*Discursive approaches (discourse)* comprise a range of efforts to build awareness and educate people about their rights, to frame political and policy issues in terms of rights, to create

coalitions to support and promote rights, to build community support for rights-based initiatives, and to strengthen democratic community. They are similar in many respects to the discursive models studied by political theorists,<sup>28</sup> and they have been extensively studied in connection with social movements.<sup>29</sup> These efforts can be local, national, or global in scope: some of the great historical examples include the anti-slavery, women’s suffrage, and anti-colonial movements, all of which worked to transform consciousness and moral discourse as a key to achieving social and political reform.<sup>30</sup> Discursive approaches rely heavily on persuasion and mobilization, and they work through building organizational capacity, often within civil society; by raising people’s consciousness about their rights; by aiding in the construction of new social movements; and, by shaping new narratives that frame political issues and constrain political actors (see Box 6). There is a sense in which all HRBA entail discursive strategies: the shift to a human rights-based framework and the articulation of goals in terms of rights is itself an important discursive shift. As this suggests, the targets of discursive approaches are extremely varied. For instance, education and mobilization efforts frequently target civil society and individuals and communities; social campaigns around human rights can address corporations, governments, and IOs (see Box 7). The drivers of discursive strategies are equally diverse, ranging from SMOs, NGOs, and political parties working on the ground to reshape politics and discourse “from the bottom up,” to the scholarly community and even governments themselves, who are often important partners in promoting education

#### **Box 6**

#### **Solidarity for African Women’s Rights**

Equality between men and women is guaranteed in 139 countries and territories around the world; nevertheless, inadequate laws and weak implementation have made these guarantees hollow promises. Even when laws exist, barriers to women’s access to justice include cost, distance and language barriers, lack of knowledge of rights or of the formal justice system, and the threat of social sanction if women attempt to use the formal justice system (see *Progress of the World’s Women: In Pursuit of Justice*). Transnational organizations such as Solidarity for African Women’s Rights (SOAWR), a coalition of 37 civil society organizations, are working to ensure the ratification and domestication of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. The strategy is to provide judges and lawyers with the tools needed to use the Women’s Rights Protocol in domestic courts; the trick is getting women to use the courts in the first place.

Data from 16 African countries reveal that public opinion toward traditional authorities influences the extent to which individuals will support family laws that expand women’s rights in marriage and within the family. The greater the trust individuals have in traditional authorities, the less likely they are to support family law reform, which frequently undermines the role these leaders play in personal law. In cases in which reforms have taken place, changes in practice are slow to materialize. For instance, Benin’s 2004 Family Code increased the minimum age for marriage of girls from 14 to 18, and Mozambique’s 2004 Family Code requires that girls be 18 years of age to marry (16 with the consent of a parent). Early marriage, which increases poverty and women’s dependence on men, is widespread in both countries and remains a critical challenge to implementation despite these reforms.

— *Source: Susanna D. Wing*

around rights-based legal reform. Perhaps more than in any other approach, scholarly discourse and interventions can play a direct role in discursive strategies, developing new narrative frames and providing persuasive argument and rhetoric.

Discursive approaches combine many strategies and often use numerous strategies

#### Box 7

### The Vermont Workers' Center

A grassroots human rights movement achieved a remarkable breakthrough in the long struggle for universal health care in the United States when Vermont became the first U.S. state to enact a law for a universal, publicly financed health care system in May 2011. The new law is rooted in an emerging model of rights-based activism in the United States based on grassroots organizing and principled policy advocacy. This sets an example for proactive grassroots strategies to advance economic and social rights throughout the United States. It also has the potential to shift U.S. health care advocacy from its unsuccessful reliance on cost-efficiency arguments to a rights-based discourse.

The Vermont Workers' Center started the *Healthcare Is a Human Right* Campaign in 2008, focusing on the intractable issue of health care reform to develop a rights-based approach for driving political and policy change. The grassroots organization employs the human rights framework holistically to organize and mobilize people, as well as for policy analysis and advocacy. Its grassroots organizing strategy is participatory, democratic, and unifying, driven by the engagement and leadership of those most affected, and guided by shared normative principles that unite a broad constituency, thus forging sustainable networks for collective action.

Identifying the barriers to health care reform as systemic and rooted in power differentials, the Campaign determined that policy change required a fundamental shift in ideology and power. By placing people at the center of policy and practice, the human rights framework offered an accessible approach for shifting power, uniting constituencies, and developing an alternative vision for a system focused on people's health care rather than on market imperatives.

Initial steps included documenting unmet health care needs as human rights violations and holding human rights forums to put the system on trial, followed by a range of collective actions that steadily built an engaged constituency. The substantive understanding of the human rights frame evolved in a participatory process. Only after an extensive period of collecting and sharing people's health care experiences did the Campaign adopt normative principles — universality, equity, transparency, accountability, and participation — which gave depth to its organizing and advocacy work.

In contrast to the Obama administration's curtailed, market-based reform effort, the Workers' Center succeeded in changing the public and political discourse on health care and creating the political space for bold action by elected officials. The vision of health care as a human right captured the public imagination and created a positive narrative of change that led to a dynamic of reforms grounded in principles. As thousands of Vermonters claimed their collective rights and called on government to provide essential public goods, they contested the dominant individualist narrative and achieved an inclusion of right-based principles in the state's new health care law.

— Source: Anja Rudiger, *National Economic & Social Rights Initiative (NESRI)*

## Box 8

### The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)

Participatory rights-based approaches have been particularly effective in exposing and fighting extreme cases of exploitation as symptoms of systemic human rights abuses entrenched in unequal power structures. After almost two decades of grassroots organizing, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) has not only aided the prosecution of seven slavery operations affecting more than 1,000 Florida farmworkers, but also built a successful movement for human rights in the multi-trillion dollar U.S. food industry. Located in Immokalee, the epicenter of Florida's large tomato and citrus industry, the CIW is a community-led organization of mainly Latino, Mayan Indian, and Haitian immigrant farm workers. Where traditional labor organizing and legal approaches have failed, the CIW employs a rights-based strategy involving popular education, participatory analysis and organizing, leadership development, creative protest actions, and broad-based alliance building.

Recognizing that farm workers face a continuum of human rights violations — from sub-poverty wages and no workplace protections, to dilapidated housing and lack of health care, to violence and forced labor at gunpoint — the CIW's systemic power analysis identified the common roots of these problems. Rather than separating issues and population groups in the pursuit of incremental solutions, the focus has been on private corporations' obligation to respect human rights. Moving beyond labor or immigrant rights claims, the CIW adopted a strategy of long-term collective action directed at the private interests that profit from human rights abuses. By framing an antagonism between human rights and corporate profiteering, the CIW has sought a fundamental shift in how the food and agricultural industries relate to the communities that supply their labor.

In developing this approach, the farm workers drew on their experiences in popular movements in their countries of origin. Having fled human rights violations, the CIW's founders brought their understanding of equality, dignity, and non-hierarchical organizing to Immokalee's diverse, mobile, and poor community of day laborers. This enabled them to turn an organizer's nightmare into a unique model of movement building.

Since the CIW's inception in 1993, a continuous process of base-building has served as the foundation for collective actions, which in the 1990s included three general strikes and a hunger strike, winning wage increases, and altering power relations between crew leaders and workers. Amidst persistent resistance from growers and against the backdrop of the rise of multinational corporations, the CIW launched the Campaign for Fair Food in 2001 and created long-term alliances with a national network of student, religious, labor, and human rights organizations. Nationwide protest actions and boycotts led to formal agreements with the large corporate buyers of produce (e.g., Taco Bell, McDonald's, Burger King, Subway), requiring them to use their market power to influence their suppliers' practices. This created a shift in the power dynamics of Florida agriculture, prompting the Florida Tomato Growers Exchange in 2010 to sign an agreement requiring 90 percent of growers to implement the CIW's Fair Food Code of Conduct. For the CIW, however, even this historic victory constitutes but one step in the ongoing struggle for human rights and democratization in the relationship between communities and corporations.

— Anja Rudiger, *National Economic & Social Rights Initiative (NESRI)*

## Box 9

### **Constitutional Litigation for Social and Economic Rights: When does it arise, and who benefits?**

Over the past three decades, courts around the world have become ever more involved in what were previously considered purely political matters: policymaking has become increasingly judicialized. This is especially true in social policy, where there has been a sharp increase in judicial enforcement of what were once merely nominal constitutional rights.

In the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro alone, there were nearly 2,000 cases on the right to health in 2004, and the numbers have increased sharply since then. The South African courts famously challenged the HIV/AIDs policies under President Mbeki, and directed a reluctant state to begin to provide anti-retrovirals. In Indonesia, the Constitutional Court ordered the government to comply with a constitutional requirement that specifies that the government devote 20 percent of its expenditures to education, contributing to an increase in education's share from 7 percent to nearly 12 percent in the next few years (and eventually 20 percent, once the definition of the numerator changes). The Indian courts hear hundreds of cases a year on social and economic rights. Similar examples for the judicialization of development policy can be found in the Philippines, Colombia, Nigeria, Hungary, Argentina, Costa Rica, Egypt, and Poland.

*What are the conditions under which constitutionally based litigation arises?* A review of judicial enforcement of social and economic rights in Brazil, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, and South Africa finds the following. Public interest litigation arises when: (a) the existing policy infrastructure fails to provide answers to deeply felt needs, and (b) the courts appear as an even minimally viable mechanism for pressing claims. Public interest litigation thrives and produces broadly significant real-world effects, however, only when a positive balance on the litigant calculus is coupled with positive state, social and political conditions: (a) a well-developed policy infrastructure with latent capacity (a concept to which we will return), (b) a resourceful constituency on the particular issue, and (c) public authorities who are not openly hostile to the claims being made.

Under these conditions, judicial intervention becomes not a substitute for, but another form of, the democratic process of policy development and service delivery. The reason for this is that when adjudicating on policy concerns courts do not usually make final, all-or-nothing decisions; rather, they typically use "weak remedies," including orders that government agencies explain their reasoning, present plans to comply with their previous commitments, or that committees resolve factual controversies and oversee implementation plans. Often (but not always), these remedies have the effect of enhancing the deliberative quality of democratic decision-making and improving the quality of information available to policymakers.

Who benefits from these cases? Using a large sample of health and education rights cases, it is possible to estimate the numbers of people directly affected by them, and to identify the beneficiaries by social stratum. Although several writers have argued that elite interests will hijack social and economic rights court cases, the data do not bear that out. It is true that some modes of legalization — those which, like Brazil, rely to a greater extent on individual cases and narrow remedies and to a lesser extent on state or other organized litigation support structures — carry greater risk of producing beneficiary inequality, given that litigation is typically concentrated in urban, more affluent regions. But in India and South Africa the large

majority of beneficiaries are among the poorest members of society. And legalization has produced great benefits for groups that could hardly be considered privileged, such as Indian primary school students at greatest risk of dropping out, or HIV-positive pregnant women in South Africa. And it is clear that the courts have not favored powerful economic interests, at least in the context of these rights-based claims. The Indian and South African courts have repeatedly shifted burdens for rights satisfaction onto large national and multinational corporations, and the Brazilian courts have imposed ever greater burdens on private health care insurers. Especially in litigation where indirect effects dominate direct effects, the benefits of legalization reach far beyond the more privileged groups in society, crossing demographic and geographic divides.

— Source: Excerpted from Daniel M. Brinks and Varun Gauri, “A New Policy Landscape: Legalizing Social and Economic Rights in the Developing World,” in Varun Gauri and Daniel M. Brinks (eds.), *Courting Social Justice: Judicial Enforcement of Social and Economic Rights in the Developing World* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

in conjunction, as is neatly illustrated in the various tactics orchestrated by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) (see Box 8). While scholars have made significant progress in taking such discourses seriously, many opportunities remain to investigate the conditions under which specific discursive practices succeed or fail.

Finally, *constitutional litigation and mobilization* is an approach that utilizes rights litigation as a means of securing the recognition or enforcement of constitutionally recognized human rights. As a development strategy, it obviously involves litigation around

#### Box 10

### The Right to Food Campaign in India

In 2001, the People’s Union for Civil Liberties filed a Public Interest Litigation arguing that the Indian government was failing to fulfill its constitutional and statutory obligations to prevent famines. The litigants charged that the government failed to adequately respond to a drought in the state of Rajasthan and was not releasing grain stocks that had been accumulated expressly to respond to famine threats. The Supreme Court agreed with the claimants, retained jurisdiction of the case in order to oversee implementation, and appointed two commissioners to oversee the implementation of eight state-level statutory food distribution schemes, which it converted into constitutional entitlements. In a series of orders stretching over nine years, the Court identified agencies responsible for compliance, empowered local village councils to request information regarding the government’s schemes, required states to fully utilize their grain reserves, asked the state and central governments to publicize the Court’s orders through state-run media, and proscribed governments from eliminating or restricting the schemes without the consent of the Court. India’s Midday Meals Scheme, which was operative and effective in only a handful of states at the time of the court case, now provides cooked lunches to the large majority of students in government-run schools. Estimates suggest that the program may have the effect of increasing girls’ enrollments in the first year of school by as much as 15 percent and increasing consumption of micro-nutrients by 49–100 percent among school children.

— Source: Varun Gauri and Siri Gloppen

## Box 11

### International Legal Mobilization on Drug Prices

Regulations on the cost and availability of medicines are important for achieving justice in health care. South Africa's 1997 Medicines Act allowed for parallel importation and generic substitution of medicines. Seeing their monopolies threatened, the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association and 40 pharmaceutical companies challenged the law in court as a violation of the constitutional right to property. The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), viewing this as a threat to the accessibility of antiretroviral drugs (ARVs), argued as *amicus curae* (friend of the court who is not a party to the case) that the right of access to health trumps rights to private property and that the law was necessary for the government to fulfill its duty to realize the health right and to protect the rights to life, dignity, and equality, as well as the best interests of the child. To support its legal efforts, the TAC engaged in a multifaceted campaign, including local and international mobilization and advocacy. Demonstrations were held in thirty countries, and two hundred fifty organizations worldwide had signed a petition opposing the pharmaceutical companies' claim. The European Union and the Dutch government called for the case to be dropped. As a result the pharmaceutical companies withdrew the case.

This case was important in several respects. It gave exposure to the argument that medicines should be treated differently from other commodities in terms of patent law; it led to a reduction in the price of ARV medicines; and, it laid the ground for future legal attacks on the monopolistic practices of pharmaceutical companies in South Africa and elsewhere.

The TAC subsequently engaged in a number of legal initiatives that sought to force multinational drug companies to permit the generic manufacture of their drugs and/or drop the price of ARVs. In September 2002, a challenge was brought against GlaxoSmithKline and Boehringer Ingelheim to force them to lower the cost of ARVs, arguing that the high cost was directly responsible for the premature, predictable, and avoidable deaths of people living with HIV/AIDS. In December 2003, the companies settled, agreeing to license certain companies to manufacture and import generic drugs. This case acted as a catalyst for TAC to take legal action against a number of other drug companies, resulting in out-of-court settlements that effectively reduced drug prices and increased the availability of generic ARVs.

These cases concerning the activities of corporations and the regulation of private actors demonstrate how a successful outcome may hinge more on a skillful use of the bargaining power provided by "the shadow of litigation" than on actual judicial decisions.

— Source: Excerpted from C. Cooper, "South Africa" in A. E. Yamin and S. Gloppen (eds.) *Litigating Health Rights: Can Courts Bring More Justice to Health?* (Harvard University Press, 2011).

social and economic rights. This litigation can also catalyze social mobilization around human rights, linking it closely to the discursive approach: examples include efforts to mobilize citizens to take political action in support of their rights or to enshrine new rights in their state's constitution. This approach has become increasingly popular and widespread in recent years. For instance, in the past decade, apex courts in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Nepal, and South Africa — among many others — have made prominent and consequential rulings on development policies (see Box 9).

## Box 12

### Transnational activist networks and social rights litigation

Litigation on the right to health is the most prevalent form of social rights litigation globally, and in most countries it started with HIV/AIDS cases. International activists networks have been central in making these (and later other cases) spread beyond borders.

Around 1997, constitutional and human rights claims began to win access to HIV/AIDS medication in many countries. The timing is no accident. In July 1996, the discovery of combination antiretroviral therapy providing much more effective treatment was announced at the International AIDS Conference in Vancouver. Subsequently, drug prices declined dramatically, partly due to the concerted efforts (including litigation) of transnational and national NGOs [see Box 11]. The Vancouver conference not only raised hopes of effective treatment but also provided opportunities for activists to interact and strategize. In November 1996, eight Argentinean NGOs brought the first successful *amparo* action against their Ministry of Health for its failure to supply medicines to people living with HIV/AIDS.

The South African advocates who, in 2002, filed the case to force the government to provide *nevirapine* to prevent mother-to-child-transmission of HIV [see Box 11] were also present in Vancouver. On the heels of the conference, the TAC and its partners began to strategize approaches for overcoming governmental barriers to access.

Some donors openly encourage litigation. Several of the most active organizations involved in strategic litigation related to HIV/AIDS (and social rights more generally) receive financial support from the same international donors, especially the Ford Foundation, which seek to advance a social and economic human rights agenda through litigation. The guidelines developed by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) for accessing the Global Fund specifically encourage NGOs to submit proposals to develop strategic litigation to improve the conditions of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Transnational networks have also been important for other social rights litigation. The U.S.-based Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR) focuses on legal and policy change to decriminalize access to medical services such as abortion and contraceptives. CRR's international focus includes transnational litigation before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights after local NGOs have exhausted domestic remedies and support for local NGOs in countries such as Nepal and India with cases regarding the decriminalization of abortion. These cases are large in scope, potentially increasing access to health services for broad groups.

Geneva-based COHRE has been directly involved in litigation on housing rights in several countries, including the first case on the right to water in South Africa (*Lindiwe Mazibuko & Others v City of Johannesburg & Others*, 2009). "COHRE was the amicus and provided invaluable input on the international law and comparative examples." In this case, expertise on water sufficiency was provided by a U.S.-based global expert; funding came from a range of international foundations and international researchers, academics, and activists provided "lots of solidarity ... support, expertise, and encouragement" (Jackie Dugard, Executive Director of the Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa; personal communication, May 21, 2010).

— Source: Excerpted from Mindy J. Roseman and Siri Gloppen "Litigating the right to health: are transnational actors backseat driving?" in Alicia E. Yamin and Siri Gloppen (eds), *Litigating Health Rights: Can Courts Bring More Justice to Health?* (Harvard University Press, 2011), pp 246-272, at p 259.)

Constitutional litigation and mobilization is a strategy that primarily addresses the state, either at the national or local level, and corporations. Litigation against the state often seeks to force it to fulfill its constitutional human rights obligations, as in the case of the Right to Food campaign in India (see Box 10). In the case of corporations, legal efforts might turn on provisions in national or international law – which in cases involving trade are often linked, as in the example of international legal mobilization designed to force pharmaceutical companies to lower drug prices for essential medicines (see Box 11).

The main drivers of this strategy are individual litigants; NGOs and SMOs, sometimes acting as or in cooperation with litigants; and the courts themselves. Social movements and transnational networks were instrumental in spearheading campaigns around HIV/AIDS policy in South Africa and in transnational efforts to secure the right to health (see Box 12).

### Box 13

#### Colombia's Constitutional Court on the Rights of IDPs

Colombia's internal armed conflict is the longest running in Latin America. It has resulted in serious human rights abuses by irregular armed groups, including guerillas and successor groups to paramilitaries, in addition to involving drug traffickers, landowners, and other legal and illegal interests. Violence has left more than 3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), one of the highest IDP populations in the world. Since 1997, the Colombian Constitutional Court has engaged in cases submitted by IDPs who invoke specific fundamental rights — including rights to life, non-discrimination, access to health and education services, minimum income, housing, and freedom of movement. As more and more IDPs invoked cases, by 2003 the Court had dossiers submitted by more than one thousand IDP families. In 2004, the Court delivered a landmark ruling; after reviewing 108 cases, it declared an unconstitutional state of affairs.

The judgment was primarily based on the need to enforce fundamental constitutional rights, but interestingly, also sought justification from international human rights law. The Court ruled that IDPs' inhumane living conditions needed to be addressed in a deliberative process by all of the competent authorities and stakeholders and ordered the government to come back with policies and plans to address various rights of this group. It also issued orders for remedying the budgetary and administrative capacity shortfalls and established minimum mandatory levels of protection of IDPs' rights that were to be secured in an effective and timely manner. Although the Court has not been satisfied with all of the Government action since the ruling and has had to issue additional corrective orders, there has been some notable progress. This includes an increase in funding for IDP programs and the establishment of permanent evaluation mechanisms, including a set of targeted result indicators to measure progress in realizing IDPs' rights. Despite there being many challenges ahead before internal displacement in Colombia is adequately addressed, the Constitutional Court's landmark ruling is an interesting example of how courts, rather than determining the material outcome of the case in detail, engage in a dialogue with political authorities. It is also an example of a case where the court initiated the process, rather than acting in response to external legal mobilization — in this case coordinated activism on the part of IDPs came after (and it seems sparked by) the court ruling.

— Source: Varun Gauri and Siri Glopper, drawing on Cepeda-Espinosa, Manuel José (2006) How far may Colombia's Constitutional Court go to protect IDP rights? *Forced Migration Review*, Special Issue 'Putting IDPs on the Map: Achievements & Challenges,' 21-23.

Colombia's Constitutional Court played an unusual and important role both as initiator of a process of legal mobilization around the issue of internally displaced persons' (IDPs) human rights and as a participant in a dialogue about the material outcomes in that case (see Box 13).

Constitutional litigation and mobilization work through several pathways of change. Legal and institutional reform is perhaps the primary pathway, encompassing the creation and redefinition of rights, increased or enhanced enforcement of existing rights, and reforms to state institutions that facilitate these objectives. This approach can also help improve access to decision-making on rights for traditionally marginalized and excluded groups, who might otherwise have little opportunity for voice or influence (see again Box 9). Finally, mobilization around rights can both capitalize on and spark the development of new narratives about rights and the role of the legal system in their protection and fulfillment.

There are two main concerns about constitutionally based legal mobilization. First, some scholars are concerned that it undermines democratic institutions and processes, in particular the authority and legitimacy of democratically elected legislatures. Courts have increasingly sought ways of addressing this concern by designing new forms of adjudication and new remedies; for example, dialogic rulings might order the relevant authorities to formulate a plan for addressing an issue rather than dictating a specific remedy.<sup>31</sup> Second, in nations with weak state capacity, legal victories may not be followed by compliant behavior, rendering the strategy largely ineffective.<sup>32</sup> In such cases, efforts to build state capacity might have to take priority, though constitutional litigation and mobilization can help with this as well. Legal mobilization is most promising when it is part of a broader strategy aimed at improving the flow of information to citizens and increasing opportunities for participation. Courts can minimize the adverse effects on democracy by insisting that legislatures must do something about a specific issue or concern, rather than specifying what exactly governments must do.

The main HRBA approaches are summarized in Table 1. As the discussion of constitutional litigation and mobilization re-emphasizes, these strategies are not distinct or insulated from one another. Often, several of them blend together. Given their shared normative foundation in human rights principles and their common – or at least overlapping – objectives, there is good reason to hope that they might be complementary or that several strategies employed together might even have a ratcheting effect, though so far there has been no real attempt to study how the strategies might interact or interfere with each other.

### ***Implementation and Effectiveness***

Having analyzed the four principal HRBA, we turn now to a discussion of their design, implementation, and effectiveness. Given the diversity of these approaches, it is difficult to generalize about any of these issues – no single approach can achieve all of the goals or broader objectives that HRBA pursue, and multiple approaches might be useful in achieving any of them. Our focus here is on the type of contextual analysis that can help practitioners and policymakers make good choices with respect to design, implementation, and analysis and that might help guide further research on these questions. That analysis, we suggest, must emphasize pathways of change.

**Table 1 : Human Rights–based Approaches: An Analytic Framework**

Approach	Targets	Drivers	Pathways of Change	Examples
Global Compliance	Corporations Governments IOs	INGOs SMOs Treaty bodies	Legal/institutional reform Movement building New narratives	anti-Apartheid campaign New regional and international treaties (e.g., ICC)
Policies and Programs	Civil society Corporations Governments Individuals and communities	Governments IOs NGOs SMOs	Access to decision-making Build organizational capacity Legal/institutional reform	NGO-led programs (e.g., Plan International) State-led initiatives (e.g., PRSPs)
Discourse	Civil society Corporations Governments Individuals and communities IOs	Academy NGOs SMOs	Build organizational capacity Consciousness-raising Movement building New narratives	Community mobilization (e.g., Vermont Workers' Center) Reframing of issues (e.g., anti-slavery campaign)
Constitutional Mobilization and Litigation	Corporations Governments	Courts Litigants NGOs SMOs	Access to decision-making Legal/institutional reform New narratives	Constitutional litigation (e.g., right to food campaign in India) Social movements (e.g., on HIV/AIDS issues)

Source: Task Force on Democracy, Economic Security, and Social Justice in a Volatile World

### Contextual Analysis

A complete analysis of the context for implementing any HRBA will include attention to the main *actors* and the *resources* these actors command, the key *social and economic conditions*, important *cultural factors*, and the *capacity of the state* (see Figure 2). An assessment of the relevant *political context* and *actors* must include attention to the main targets and drivers of HRBA and to any interests opposing these. Such targets, drivers, and opposing interests might include key government officials, political parties, or coalitions; corporations; local power-brokers, such as traditional authorities or local opinion leaders; and, the broader constituency for the strategy, such as members of a particular social class or ethnic group likely to be significantly impacted by the sought-after outcome. Other barriers to change might include legal, institutional, or linguistic obstacles.

The resources available to these actors will also be crucial determinants of HRBA success. What coalitions can they mobilize or form? What relevant experience and capacities do they possess, and what knowledge and capacities can they develop? What kind of material resources can they access?

The pertinent *social and economic conditions* include variables such as levels of wealth, income, education, and the social resources available – from government, donors, or other

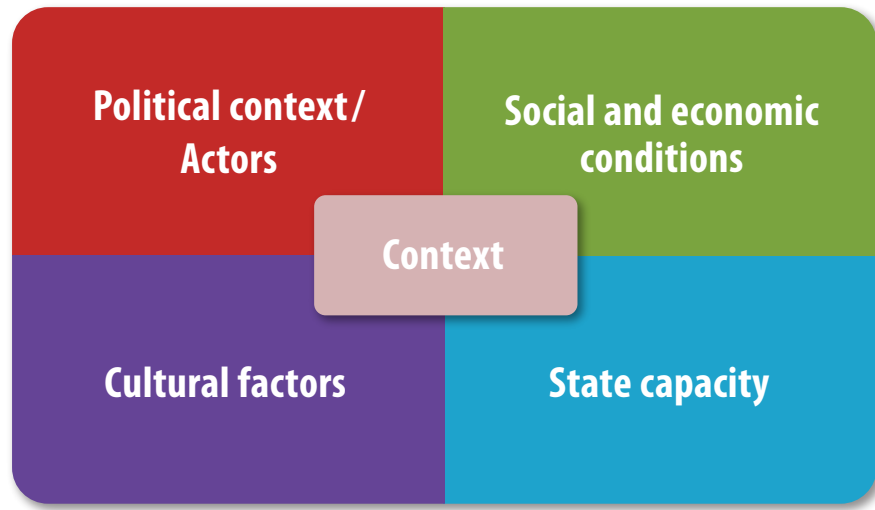
sources – for implementing the strategy. Relevant legal and economic structures should also be analyzed, with attention to possible obstacles to a strategy’s success.

Closely related *cultural factors* to be considered include the relevant history and social relations (e.g., class, ethnic, or religious conflict), religious beliefs, and local norms and customs.

Strategies that rely on international human rights treaties and discourse, for instance, might prove difficult to advance in contexts with a history of colonialism and suspicion of foreign intervention. At the same time, the appeal to international norms might prove invaluable for people contesting oppressive local customs and traditions. Similarly, devising an effective discursive strategy involves attention to local norms and discourses and the resources they might contain for mobilizing people around human rights and related objectives. This can be difficult, as local understandings can be both an obstacle to achieving human rights and a key resource for doing so.<sup>33</sup> The point is neither to insist on an abstract international definition of human rights nor simply to defer to local norms and practices, but instead to grasp the complex interplay between them. Rights-based mobilization is most likely to succeed where it gives voice to local grievances and unmet needs, taps into local human rights understandings and histories, or fashions creative and thoroughly indigenized appropriations of international norms. We need a much deeper understanding of the complex ways this process of negotiation and appropriation transpires.

A final crucial variable to consider is the *capacity of the state*. Several of the approaches we have identified take significant state capacity for granted: many policies and programs require state intervention or resources, and litigation strategies presume that the rule of law is relatively robust and that the courts are relatively independent and accessible to citizens. Access to information – for various state actors like courts and legal personnel as well as for civil society – is also crucial and might itself be an object of litigation and mobilization, as in the case of freedom of information suits and transparency movements. More basically, some HRBA rely on the state to implement and enforce laws and policies, something not all states can do effectively. Other approaches, by contrast, promote policies and programs designed precisely to cultivate and develop state capacity and rely on social mobilization to advance the emergence and codification of new legal and social norms.

Figure 2: Context for HRBA Implementation



## Pathways of Change

Given the diversity of HRBA approaches, targets, drivers, tactics, and goals, as well as the striking variety of contexts in which they might be implemented, we think it makes sense to stop talking about HRBA as an undifferentiated category. As we asserted at the outset, HRBA are a family of approaches anchored in human rights. These approaches are tied to a number of broader aims: deepening democracy, reducing poverty, promoting equality, and creating and maintaining solidarity.

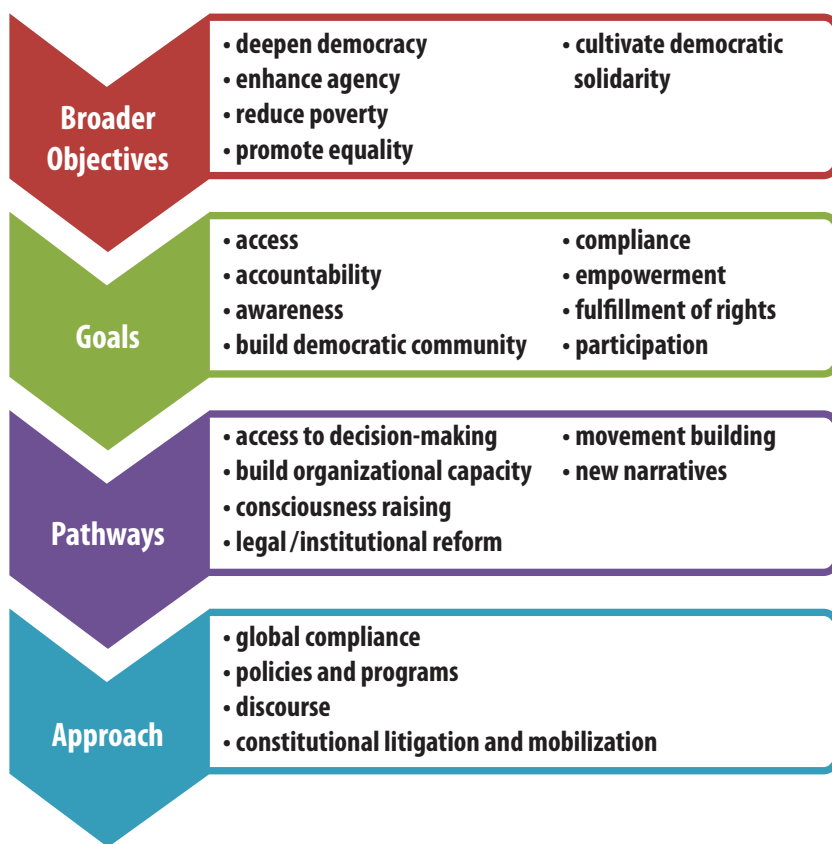
These broad objectives underscore the point that HRBA are not solely tools for economic development. Global compliance and constitutional litigation and mobilization approaches seek the democratization of states and the fulfillment of human rights obligations by IOs and corporations. HRBA promote the fulfillment of all human rights—civil, social, political, economic, and cultural — as essential to agency and constitutive of development itself. This attention to the full range of human rights marks a pragmatic recognition of the indivisibility of human rights. HRBA conceive the participatory processes of interest articulation as necessary both to fulfill civil and political rights and to realize social and economic rights. At the same time, secure social and economic rights enable people to demand greater democracy and accountability; rights are most secure when they are embedded in a web of other complementary and mutually reinforcing rights. HRBA are appealing in part because they embrace this normative view and in part because of the powerful analytic framework that viewpoint provides: an understanding of poverty and exclusion as the results of social and political processes saturated by power relations.

A second point to emphasize is that HRBA are not solely for developing countries. As evidence from the United States shows, discursive strategies for political mobilization and the creation of solidarity can be effective in many contexts (see Boxes 6 and 7). Emerging movements for social and economic rights in the United States — which compared to other rich countries does poorly in fulfilling its human rights obligations through welfare state mechanisms — have been able to use the normative power of rights to unite diverse constituencies and proactively challenge the hegemony of market-based policies and discourse. Discursive strategies based on human rights also support the struggles of oppressed identity groups. Again, a U.S. example illustrates the point nicely: the largest organization advocating social and political equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons in the United States is called the Human Rights Campaign.

For obvious reasons, the effectiveness of HRBA is a recurring question in the literature. For reasons noted above, there is little conclusive to say about effectiveness at present. Our findings also point to a more general difficulty in offering a general answer. We recommend a reorientation in thinking about successful implementation and effectiveness that begins with the identification of the broader objectives to be achieved, links those objectives to more specific goals, and identifies possible pathways of change for realizing those goals. This relationship is summarized in Figure 3.

We think a focus on pathways of change is crucial for successful implementation. Once practitioners have identified specific goals to advance their broader objectives, contextual analysis becomes essential. This analysis must incorporate a realistic consideration of the

Figure 3: Design and Implementation of HRBA



targets and tactics available to the would-be drivers of change. The identification of open pathways to change is ultimately a strategic decision that should flow from a careful read of the political opportunity structure practitioners confront.

This approach suggests a significant reorientation of scholarship and practice. Often, NGOs or aid agencies are committed to their own distinctive “brands,” policies or tactics that they apply across widely differing contexts. In addition, much of the data on HRBA is of limited use because practitioners

feel pressure to “show results” to donors and governments to maintain funding and support. Scholarship on HRBA has, up to this point, been hampered by limited data and understandably oriented toward establishing their credibility, with single-case studies being used to demonstrate the “potential” of various approaches to produce good results.

Our approach would encourage practitioners to think of HRBA as a repertoire of possible sources for composing a strategy that might help them achieve their objectives and their specific goals. To aid this, new and better research is needed – much of which is already being conducted – to help deepen understanding of contexts of implementation and pathways of change. The collection and analysis of quantitative data, where available, will be useful in this connection, as will the multiplication of rigorous case studies. Both will facilitate the comparison of multiple cases across time and help to advance understanding of when and how various HRBA can be effective in achieving their objectives and their specific goals.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, we want to emphasize four ways in which these innovations in HRBA represent a counter-narrative to dominant scholarship and practice. First, they present an alternative to traditional needs-based and market-oriented approaches to development that

concentrate on aggregate growth while too often ignoring rights and capabilities. Second, they reject the technocratic, top-down style of administration and implementation often relied on by traditional development approaches. Third, the human rights framework focuses attention on the structural sources of poverty and provides normative and conceptual links between poverty reduction and social and political empowerment. It thus stands in clear contrast with the limited conceptualization of poverty and development that has dominated theory and practice in this field for decades. Finally, HRBA suggest an understanding of democratization and democratic deepening that goes well beyond the institutional focus of political science and of policy in most democratic countries. This view demonstrates the fundamental connection between economic and political rights and their centrality in mobilization for change.



# Participatory Governance

## Introduction

Participatory governance (PG) comprises a wide variety of institutional arrangements that emphasize greater accountability and participation in decision-making as a strategy for democratic deepening. It helps address deficits in representative democratic systems by improving outcomes, bolstering legitimacy, and directly challenging elite control of politics.

PG is a working practice of democracy throughout much of the world today. Participatory budgeting (PB) in Brazil is perhaps the most well-known and best-studied example (see Box 14). The variety of mechanisms that exists in practice is impressive: participatory budgeting, citizen councils, oversight boards, participatory urban planning, neighborhood committees, policy councils and conferences, and many others have proliferated (see Box 15). Participatory budgeting itself has spread to the United States, with the first experiment taking place in Chicago. The spread of PG has been most impressive in Latin America where, following democratization, it was explicitly conceived and framed as a way to deepen democracy.<sup>34</sup>

PG should be distinguished from direct democracy, in which the citizens themselves directly make all or many of the key political decisions; it should also be distinguished from deliberative democracy, a model that seeks to create forums in which distortions of power and selfish interests are filtered out of public discourse in an effort to reach normatively privileged consensus.<sup>35</sup> PG does rely on a more active role for citizens in decision-making, and it does sometimes utilize deliberative processes. It is best conceived, however, as a family of mechanisms that complements representative democracy in an effort to deepen it, often by grafting participatory institutions onto local government to make it more responsive, efficient, or accountable. PG is about thickening and diversifying the institutional landscape of representative democracy – or, to change metaphors, about the increasingly diverse political architecture being designed and built to accommodate a greater role for citizens' involvement in democracy.

The third wave of democratization in the late 1980s and 1990s marked a profoundly important shift in world politics. In 1996, then-IPSA President Carole Pateman wrote:

Today, virtually everyone wants to be called a democrat, and it is the opponents of democracy who are seen as the “odious class.” Never before has democracy been so popular, and never before have the basic democratic institutions of constitutional government, civil and political freedoms, multiparty elections, and universal suffrage existed so widely throughout the world.<sup>36</sup>

While the third wave crested in the 1990s and arguably receded in the wake of 9/11, the Arab Spring of 2011 indicates that authoritarian rule is losing appeal across all regions of the world.

## Box 14

### Participatory Budgeting in Brazil and Beyond

Participatory budgeting is a year-long decision-making process during which citizens negotiate amongst themselves and with government officials in organized meetings over the allocation of new capital spending on public work projects and social services. Citizens are mobilized to attend meetings, during which they deliberate over resource allocation, vote for public policies, and elect community representatives. After specific policies are selected, the government implements them under the watchful eye of citizen-based oversight committees. Most of these programs are implemented at the local level. Many participatory budgeting programs have a “social justice” component whereby poorer neighborhoods receive a greater per capita share of public resources than middle- and upper-class neighborhoods. Importantly, this helps to overcome class and education biases associated with participation and representative democracy.

Participatory budgeting has its roots in Brazil during the country’s political opening in the 1980s, which led to the return of democratic rule. During the political opening, social movement activists and oppositional political parties created and then sought to institutionalize new ways of incorporating citizens directly into public life and state institutions. During this period of political and civil society renewal, a leftist government and its civil society allies in the city of Porto Alegre initiated the rules and process now associated with participatory budgeting. The now-famous case of Porto Alegre stands out for having robust levels of participation (30,000 participants per year), reforming state institutions, and attending to basic social justice claims.

Brazil’s federal system provides municipalities with nearly 15 percent of all public spending, which helps to explain why CSOs and politicians focus considerable attention on public policy and budgets at the municipal level. Brazilian mayors enjoy extensive autonomy, allowing them to initiate new programs with only minimal interference from municipal legislative chambers. These programs are housed within the mayoral administration and complement the legal and political responsibilities of mayors and municipal legislators.

By 2011, hundreds of municipalities across Brazil had adopted PB and adapted the basic rules associated with the program to meet local needs. There is a guiding set of principles as opposed to a “one-size-fits-all” formula. Over the past twenty years, a conservative estimate shows that 2 billion U.S. dollars have been spent by municipal governments on PB projects in major urban areas such as Porto Alegre, Recife, Belo Horizonte, São Paulo, and Fortaleza. This represents a significant shift in how public resources are allocated—citizens selected projects that their governments implement. Participatory budgeting in Brazil now is an institutional element in the political and policymaking system, linking political elites to ordinary citizens, as other mechanisms of democratic state-society intermediation are exceptionally weak in Brazil.

Over the past two decades, participatory budgeting programs have been adopted in every region of the world, from wealthier European countries to middle-income countries (India, Mexico) to poor countries (Uganda, El Salvador). The core guiding principles of citizen participation, budget transparency, public deliberation, and oversight are what link these programs. They are helping to connect citizens to each other as well as to government officials.

— Source: Brian Wampler

## Box 15

### Participedia

Participedia is a tool for strengthening democracy. Based on a wiki platform, its main content consists of user-generated articles which describe and assess participatory governance throughout the world. For instance, there are articles on the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly of 2004, consensus conferences in Denmark, participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre and other cities, local school council governance in Chicago, municipal evaluation meetings in China, and the People's Campaign for Democratic Decentralization (under the Panchayati Raj reforms) in Kerala, India. In addition, there are articles on participatory methods, such as deliberative polling, citizens' assemblies, and participatory budgeting, as well as articles about the organizations that sponsor, implement, and study participatory governance. Over time, we hope Participedia will garner hundreds and perhaps thousands of such articles.

There are three main kinds of article in Participedia:

- Articles about cases, or experiences, of participatory or deliberative governance (e.g., British Columbia Citizens' Assembly of 2004).
- Articles about specific *methods* of public deliberation, participation, or collaborative governance (e.g., Participatory Budgeting).
- Articles about *organizations* that design, execute, or support public participation, deliberation, or collaborative public action (e.g., Everyday Democracy).

Participedia's wiki-based platform is enhanced with a Semantic Wiki extension. This extension enables the organization of articles into databases, thus enhancing the value of Participedia for practitioners and researchers. Articles are associated with properties through simple form-based templates. Properties include, for example, geocoded location, dates of operation, cost, number of participants, sponsoring organization or government, policy area or social issue, purposes and goals of sponsors and participants, methods of selection, participation, and deliberation, cost, decisions, implementation, and outcomes. The properties identify the key contextual, design, and outcome variables in order to:

- Provide comparability among cases and methods,
- Support research into the strengths and limitations of particular kinds of method, and
- Enable users to find the processes that fit their problems and interests.

— Source: Excerpted from *Participedia* ([http://participedia.net/wiki/Welcome\\_to\\_Participedia](http://participedia.net/wiki/Welcome_to_Participedia))

Political scientists have carefully studied many aspects of this historic transition to democracy, with an emphasis on the politics of transition and consolidation and the role of presidentialism and party systems.<sup>37</sup> Scholars and political elites have focused intently on electoral democracy's role in promoting and maintaining stability, a fitting concern given the fractious context in which many political transitions play out.

Popular mobilization and its effects have worried democratic elites since the 1930s, when the potential for mass social unrest was palpable and the example of Weimar Germany still fresh. Joseph A. Schumpeter's brand of electoral competition among elites thus offered

a reassuring and familiar example.<sup>38</sup> The concern with stability resulted in a great deal of attention to incentives and institutional design – to getting the details of electoral democracy right – such that by the end of the 1960s, democratic theory had become largely a theory of system stability.<sup>39</sup> With few institutional options for handling a mobilized citizenry, elites around the world preferred to see them stay home.

At the same time, many civil society activists anticipated and worked for more fundamental changes in politics and society. They expected that democratization would improve the quality of state performance, increase voice and accountability, educate and empower citizens, and allow better use to be made of public resources. These activists were not opposed to electoral democracy, but rather saw it as one facet of a more comprehensive political transformation.

Concurrently with the third wave transitions, scholars and activists in established democracies were beginning to pay greater attention to the democratic deficits becoming apparent in their own political systems. These deficits manifested in increasing control of decision-making by experts, in the insulation of representatives from the popular concerns of citizens, in a perceived lack of accountability and responsiveness in existing democratic institutions, and in a general sense that democracy was not working as it should.

Many of the most important questions in democratic theory today – whether in long-standing democracies or newly democratized countries – are questions about democratic deficits and about how to make democracy work better. The merits of the familiar democratic model – representative institutions, genuine competition among parties, and regular rotation in office – are not in doubt. The key questions today concern democratic deepening: How can the political system work better – be made more responsive, more accountable, give people a greater voice, and promote social justice?

In this section we begin with a discussion of how PG can deepen democracy, emphasizing the concept of effective citizenship as a way to comprehend the aims of increased participation. We outline a pragmatic framework for conceptualizing and justifying PG within representative democracy, and then consider a number of important variables that bear on PG's success in practice. Finally, we consider the political and institutional conditions in which PG can effectively promote social justice as a way to illustrate and round out our discussion.

## *Deepening Democracy*

Political science relies heavily on quantitative measures of democracy, particularly the Polity Index, which are very helpful in comparing levels of democracy among countries or in determining when a regime has completed a transition to democracy. These measures are less useful in thinking about the “democratization of democracy.”<sup>40</sup> They reflect the presence of functioning representative political institutions, competitive party systems, guarantees for basic civil and political rights, and so on. They provide little useful leverage, however, on the problems associated with democratic deficits—that is, whether a regime is sufficiently responsive and accountable to citizens and whether it provides adequate, effective opportunities for citizens to shape key decisions and play an active role in government. As just noted, concerns like these are important in both long-established and newly consolidated

democracies; making democracy deliver for people can be — especially in light of their sometimes significant expectations for it — a difficult challenge, but one that is itself crucial for democratic stability and legitimacy.

The concern with deepening democracy is, again, a concern with the various kinds of democratic deficit that characterize contemporary representative systems. Some of these deficits reflect gaps or flaws in existing democratic institutions, whereas others reflect distortions of the democratic process — its corruption by power or money, its capture by experts, bureaucrats, or special interests. One problem of particular concern is that

high levels of economic or status inequality can enable powerful actors to produce institutions and policies that reduce the potential benefits to others while reinforcing their position of dominance. [...] Under conditions of high inequality, elites may create socially suboptimal institutions and policies, and they may subsequently resist changes that promote development but threaten their dominance.<sup>41</sup>

Put differently, democratic deficits do not necessarily open up suddenly like sinkholes; some are dug intentionally to entrench powerful interests. In such cases, traditionally subordinate or marginalized groups — often marked by gender, class, ethnicity, religion — are systematically excluded from effective participation in political life.

PG helps counteract and close these deficits by expanding opportunities for involvement for all citizens; it empowers people to be effective citizens. While it is sometimes linked to specific substantive aims, such as greater social justice, PG is primarily about institutionalizing opportunities for involvement, about empowering citizens to take a greater role in governing themselves. The primary aim of PG is effective citizenship.

Effective citizenship is a potentially powerful concept for political science. There is a tendency to conflate the status of citizenship with its practice, but in many countries — perhaps especially in newer democracies or in democracies in the global south — citizens may lack the capacity to utilize or exercise their citizenship in meaningful ways. Enabling citizens to participate effectively is thus both a means and an end. As a means, advocates of PG hope that it will increase the probability of fairer, more efficient, more legitimate, and more just outcomes; we will consider the conditions under which it might be expected to do so later on. Yet greater participation itself is likely to enhance citizens' capacities and their sense of efficacy,<sup>42</sup> and one important focus of research on PG is understanding how and where citizens engage the state and how they might better do so through expanding the surface area of the state—that is, the points of contact and information exchange between government and citizens. As an end, effective participation fulfills an important democratic right and affirms the equality of all citizens.

This notion of expanding the surface area of the state neatly reinforces the important point that PG is a complement to representative democracy rather than an alternative to it. This is evident in the state's role in making PG work. Many of the most effective mechanisms for PG involve what is sometimes called co-governance, in which citizens and state officials cooperate, deliberate, and decide on policy issues in forums created explicitly for this purpose. The involvement of state officials makes clear that PG is not a rival to, but rather an integral part of, existing democratic systems. Brazil's public policy management councils

## Box 16

### Public Policy Management Councils and Conferences

The 1988 Brazilian Constitution expanded citizens' role in public policy ventures by requiring some municipalities, states, and the federal government to adopt public policy management councils. These are required today in the policy areas of education, health care, and social services, but governments are permitted to establish councils in other areas as well. Today, there are more than 20,000 councils in Brazil, and there are hundreds of thousands of citizens who occupy official seats.

The councils are granted two principal responsibilities: first, council members have the authority to approve new programs and the annual budget for the corresponding agencies. Second, council members engage in oversight — verifying that resources are allocated correctly, bureaucratic units are following rules, and service providers (outsourcing) are adhering to their contracts. This oversight mechanism helps produce accountability. These two sources of authority allow councils to engage at different moments of the policy cycle, from proposing policies to oversight of government policies.

Seats in the councils are allocated to five types of actor: civil society (individuals or representatives of organizations), labor unions, government officials, service providers, and policy experts (often university faculty). Not all councils include all five types, but representatives of civil society, labor unions, and government officials are active in most of them.

Representatives may be elected (e.g., civil society organizations compete amongst themselves, unions hold internal elections for seats guaranteed to them) or appointed (e.g., government officials representing the mayor are selected by the government) for one to four years. In most councils, the number of seats allocated to each group is written into the formal legislation that created the council or in the internal rules governing the council. All council members need to have an interest in and knowledge specific to their council, which creates the means and the basis from which to form a new policy community. Members are not paid.

The organization of many councils revolves around biweekly or monthly meetings. Council members have the opportunity to present information, question government officials, and debate. Government officials often provide information to the council members. All council meetings are open to the public. Much of the detailed policy work of the councils is carried out in subcommittees. These committees conduct research, draft policy proposals, and engage in oversight. They then report back to the larger council to advance its work. In the better organized councils, there are multiple subcommittees that are tasked with specific problems.

Complementing the public policy management councils are policy-oriented thematic conferences, which are held at the municipal, state, and federal levels of government. Most conferences take place over one or two days every one to four years. They are attended by interested citizens and community leaders. A key responsibility of the participants is to propose, discuss, debate, and then vote on general policy initiatives. This helps orient government officials to think about which policy programs they might want to address.

Many conferences are linked to the public policy management councils in the thematic areas. At a weekend-long conference, participants deliberate over policy options and seek to define

clear policy agendas for their area. For example, in one year, a health care conference may focus on mental health, encouraging the government to address the issue. In another year, the health care conference may decide that the most pressing issue is family health and work with the government to strengthen these programs.

Councils and conferences are often interconnected in two ways: first, the representatives for the councils are often elected during the annual or biannual conference meetings. Second, the councils develop the content and the agenda for the conferences. Thus, the key co-governance institutions are linked together in the hope of creating a more coherent and participatory policymaking process.

— *Source: Brian Wampler*

and conferences nicely illustrate how participatory mechanisms are grafted onto existing representative institutions to realize co-governance (see Box 16).

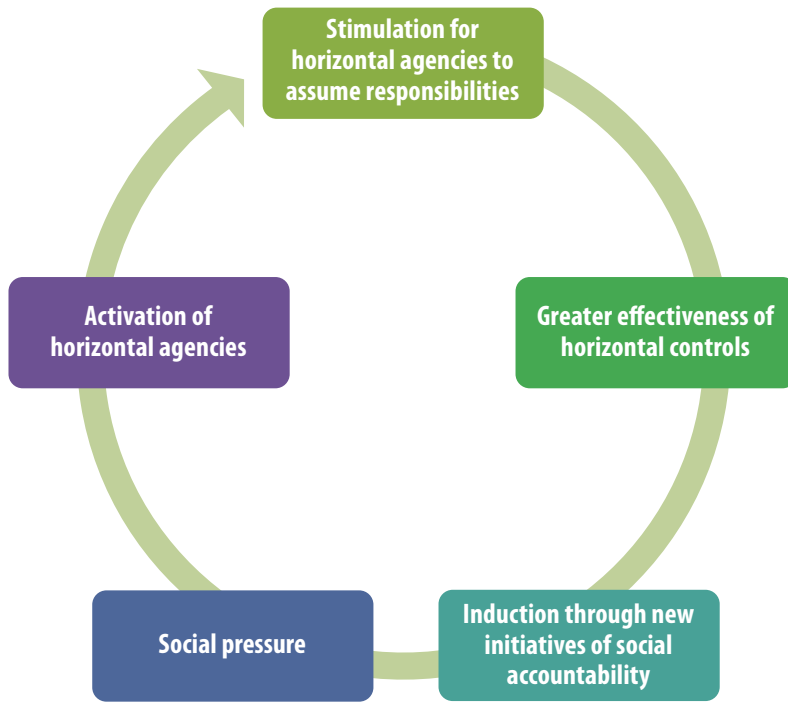
PG is not equivalent with or reducible to civil society activism or pressure; rather, it seeks to concretize social influence by establishing institutionalized avenues for citizen participation in decision-making and oversight. Institutionalization of new forms of influence is essential to the sustainability and success of such influence. The term “co-governance” captures this well: PG aims to legalize citizen participation by making it a formal part of a state’s governance arrangements.

The evidence suggests that PG can deepen democratic systems in a least three ways. First, increasing the surface area of the state is likely to increase both the rate and quality of citizen participation. Citizens will have more and better access, voice, and influence. Second, PG can help redefine the linkages between citizens and public authorities, replacing clientelism with relationships based on deliberation and public reason. Third, it can improve state performance and political outcomes — though again, whether and how effectively it does so depends on a range of factors, including the type of state formation, the configuration of civil society, the political context, the local party system, the design of the mechanism, and the level of available resources.<sup>43</sup>

The kind of participation that deepens democracy in the ways just described must be differentiated from the forms of participation advocated by some large international donors and IOs. The latter consist largely of consultations with citizens who are likely to be affected by new projects and programs and of efforts to make service delivery more efficient.<sup>44</sup> These are important objectives, but they are not synonymous with PG, which gives citizens a direct role in shaping decisions and achieving outcomes through active participation. PG channels citizen input and influence to organs of state power, where decisions are made, to make PG more effective.

As an example, consider how PG can enhance accountability within a political system. Traditionally, political scientists separated in their analyses vertical from horizontal accountability. Vertical accountability refers to the influence of citizens on policy through their influence on policymakers through elections. Numerous studies have shown that vertical accountability offers at best a very limited degree of influence to citizens.<sup>45</sup> Horizontal accountability

Figure 4: A Reinforcing Cycle of Accountability



refers to government agencies or institutions holding one another accountable; this can work through audits, oversight, human rights commissions, anti-corruption agencies, checks and balances among branches of government, and so on. While important, these mechanisms also provide only very limited and indirect accountability to citizens.

Scholars increasingly have begun to emphasize the importance of social accountability, or accountability achieved through the activity of civil society acting

as an independent force in influencing government and holding it accountable (see Figure 4). PG or co-governance combines and enhances these mechanisms. By institutionalizing social accountability, PG allows for new forms of horizontal accountability, and by involving citizens in non-electoral modes of participation that improve flows of information and

**Box 17**

**MKSS Undertakes Social Audits in India**

The grassroots organization MKSS was formed in India in 1991 after a land struggle between a feudal landlord and peasants and workers in the rural state of Rajasthan. More recently, it has focused on the government's failure to pay the legally required minimum wages to workers employed on public works programs. Since the denial of wages was directly linked to government secrecy (which allowed government officials to misappropriate funds meant for wage payments), MKSS launched a successful mass campaign to demand the enactment of a right to information law, as well as a law to protect the rights of poor workers.

MKSS is governed by a central committee and supported by ten full-time and two part-time staff. It draws its membership from thousands of peasants and workers in rural Rajasthan who donate their time, money, and food to MKSS campaigns.

In April 2006, MKSS joined with other Indian non-governmental organizations to organize a social audit in the Dungarpur district of Rajasthan. (Social audits are participatory processes

through which community members monitor the implementation of government programs in their community.) Approximately 800 people from a variety of backgrounds participated. The audit focused on program funds spent in Dungarpur under India's recently enacted National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), which entitles every rural household to 100 days of government employment at the minimum wage.

At the start of the project, all participants received a two-day orientation, which included information on the NREGA's management, the government documents that record payments made under NREGA programs, and techniques of social auditing. The orientation also helped participants develop communication skills that could be used during the social audit, including the use of songs, puppet shows, and street plays.

Participants were then divided into 31 groups of approximately 20–25 people apiece and provided with a "social audit kit." Wearing multicolored turbans, brandishing puppets and banners, armed with megaphones, and carrying bags full of labor rolls listing workers' names and the payments made to them, the participants spread out across the district.

Over the next seven days, participants visited every village and work site where NREGA programs were operational. They met with many of the approximately 140,000 workers helping build roads, dams, wells, etc., under the NREGA, discussed the operation of the program with them, and checked whether the program was being run according to NREGA standards. Among other things, NREGA requires regular payment of minimum wages, provision of first aid kits and drinking water at the work site, and the organization of day care services for working mothers. By law, program records must also be available at the work site to enable citizens to conduct spot checks of a program while it is being implemented.

The social audit in Dungarpur identified many infringements, such as non-payment of minimum wages, late wage payments, and poor work site facilities. The pattern of wage payments also raised serious concern: in most of the work sites, laborers were paid much less than the statutory state minimum wage of 73 Indian rupees (approximately 1.8 U.S. dollars) per day because wages were instead calculated on the basis of tasks performed. This practice violated the NREGA guidelines issued by the central government, which explicitly state that under no circumstances may laborers be paid less than the minimum wage rate fixed by the state government for agricultural laborers. All of these issues were raised in a public forum with the district administration, which promised corrective action

— Source: Excerpted from <http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/MKSS-Undertakes-Social-Audits-in-India.pdf>. Original Source: *Our Money, Our Responsibility: A Citizens' Guide to Monitoring Government Expenditure* by Vivek Ramkumar (International Budget Partnership, 2008), available at [www.internationalbudget.org](http://www.internationalbudget.org).

influence between citizens and government officials, it blends social accountability with an enriched form of vertical accountability. PG thus deepens democracy by thickening the web of accountability within society.

One example of social accountability is related to budgets and social audits; INGOs like the International Budget Partnership (IBP) and ELBAG (see Box 5) use budget monitoring as a tool for accountability. In one case featured by the IBP, the Indian organization MKSS used social audits to force the government to enforce its own wage law and expand legal entitlements to information (see Box 17). This example shows how the direct effect

of improved accountability is supplemented by the indirect benefits of the participatory modality itself, which spurs and sustains mobilization and makes citizens better informed, more confident, and better able to function in their various roles within the network of accountability and influence on which democracy relies. In short, it helps make them effective citizens.

### ***A Pragmatic Approach to Participatory Governance***

We offer a brief conceptual account of PG designed to highlight its role as a complement to representative democratic institutions. This pragmatic justification clarifies and justifies PG's role in deepening democracy.

PG is sometimes depicted as a radical proposal, a stark alternative to representative democracy. This view betrays long-standing fears about citizens' capacities and the dangers of mass mobilization and involvement in politics. We reject as false this choice between thin electoralism and direct democracy, between Schumpeter and Rousseau. After all, in some robust democracies there are many and varied opportunities for citizen participation in governing – whether through juries, zoning hearings, school board meetings, or the myriad other ways, many of them legal entitlements, in which citizens take part in governing. These arrangements approximate the ideal of effective democratic citizenship. Such opportunities are, unfortunately, attenuated or lacking altogether in many other democracies, and often are very unevenly distributed among citizens even where they do exist.

We offer a pragmatic justification of PG, one that is less ideological than functional—though one nonetheless animated by and oriented toward a robust conception of deep democracy. Put differently, our justification reflects the commitment to making democracy work better. This pragmatic justification of PG begins with a rebuttable proposition of democratic representation as the baseline for justifying PG in specific cases.<sup>46</sup> Representation is a tried-and-true mechanism for achieving many important democratic aims, especially in large and complex modern societies. It is well established, it has a great deal of legitimacy, and it works well in many instances.

The rebuttable presumption essentially says that to justify complementary political mechanisms such as PG requires a demonstration that representation is not working, or not working well enough, in specific cases or contexts. Given the complexity of modern democratic societies and the challenges they face, it is hardly surprising that representative democratic institutions sometimes prove inadequate or insufficient. Indeed, we do not expect these cases to be rare. We anticipate that there will be many instances in which alternative, participatory arrangements can effectively supplement representation and lead to better, more democratic outcomes.

We conceive this improvement of democratic outcomes in terms of correcting or compensating for democratic deficits through mechanisms of PG – a variation on John Dewey's dictum that the solution to the problems of democracy is more democracy. By more democracy, we mean more and varied institutional opportunities for participation to complement representation. Again, this need not mean replacing electoral mechanisms: in the case of the British Columbia Citizens Assembly, a participatory mechanism was used to try to improve the electoral system (see Box 18).

## Box 18

### The British Columbia Citizens Assembly

The Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform was a body created by the government of British Columbia, Canada. The Assembly was charged with investigating and recommending changes to improve the electoral system of the province. The body was composed of 160 citizens selected at random from throughout the province. These members met approximately every other weekend for one year to deliberate about alternative voting arrangements. In October 2004, the Assembly recommended replacing the province's existing First Past the Post (FPTP) system with a Single Transferable Vote (STV) system. This recommendation was put to the electorate-at-large in a referendum held concurrently with the 2005 provincial election. The referendum required approval by 60 percent of votes and simple majorities in 60 percent of the 79 districts in order to pass: final results indicate that the referendum failed, with only 57.7 percent of votes in favor, although it did have majority support in 77 of the 79 electoral districts. Because this referendum was somewhat inconclusive, the government called another referendum on the same question, with the same approval thresholds, that was held on May 12, 2009. In that referendum, the STV was defeated, with 62 percent of voters opposing the change.

The model of the British Columbia Citizens Assembly has been replicated in Ontario. The Assembly as a device of political reform has also been considered in California, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

—Source: Excerpted from *Participedia* ([http://www.participedia.net/wiki/British\\_Columbia\\_Citizens\\_Assembly\\_on\\_Electoral\\_Reform](http://www.participedia.net/wiki/British_Columbia_Citizens_Assembly_on_Electoral_Reform))

The pragmatic justification for PG lies in the recognition that no institution can address all of the problems of democracy; complementary democratic mechanisms can often improve democratic performance or outcomes in some way. This view advocates seeking the institutional arrangements that best realize democratic values and principles, however these are defined. We do not attempt to defend a particular definition of them here. Freedom and equality are core democratic values that any persuasive account of democracy will satisfy; beyond that, there are many possible interpretations. For the sake of illustration, we shall use a standard liberal definition of democracy as advancing the welfare (interests) and autonomy of citizens.

The challenge is to identify the institutional scheme that best realizes these values in a political society. The pragmatic approach regards this as an empirical rather than a theoretical problem. That is, instead of trying to devise general answers, we should work to identify those areas in which representative democracy is not delivering and design institutions that make participation effective in addressing them. In the pragmatic view, there is no reason to expect a general answer to the question of what institution best realizes welfare and autonomy (to stick with our example). No single institution can adequately promote them in all cases.

So, we begin with the rebuttable presumption — and empirical fact — of representative democracy, and with the expectation that its adequacy and effectiveness will vary with context and with the nature of the problems being addressed. The pragmatic approach seeks

to identify those instances in which complementary institutions might better realize welfare and autonomy and to design institutions to address the problem or fill the gap.

### ***Institutional Architecture for Participatory Governance***

PG helps create a thicker and more diverse institutional landscape than that found in classic models of representative democracy. This new architecture for democracy still relies on many familiar democratic ideas – the election of delegates for legitimacy, majority voting as a decision rule, etc. – but applies them in more localized settings through more inclusive and participatory institutions.

In thinking about the successful selection, design, and implementation of PG mechanisms, two approaches suggest themselves. One is to begin with a broad understanding of the political system (macro-level factors), then consider meso-level factors such as the political party system and existing democratic institutions, before thinking about which specific participatory mechanisms might be appropriate and what kind of rules might help make them optimally effective. This approach helps ensure that the mechanisms selected are suited to the particular political and institutional context in which they are intended to operate. Another, more theoretical approach, would employ design principles derived from democratic theory and principles and use those principles to tailor institutions to the context and problems they are meant to address. In either case, designing or selecting institutions appropriate to the context is crucially important.

We want to emphasize that, in our approach, the introduction of PG is not an end or good in itself. In some instances, PG mechanisms might be superfluous. Participatory public planning, for example, might be unnecessary in a context in which existing mechanisms of local government give citizens meaningful input and influence and deliver fair and legitimate outcomes. (One could argue that in such cases PG is already in place.) Again, in our view, PG works best as a remedy for deficits in existing democratic arrangements; it is not a general prescription for how to govern, but rather a corrective for the ills of thin democracy.

It is thus crucial to identify, in any particular context, precisely what problem PG is intended to solve. If the problem is social justice, certain design choices are indicated. If the problem is instability or lack of legitimacy, other mechanisms might be more appropriate. The conditions for success of the different mechanisms will vary. Support from a progressive political party in government might be crucial for PG to successfully promote social justice, although some of the most effective PG mechanisms for achieving social justice are becoming more mainstreamed. Institutions that promote greater accountability, by contrast, might be feasible in a variety of political circumstances. The sustainability of these mechanisms is another important question. Institutions that rely on high and recurring participation might be appropriate to address specific, one-off, or time-limited problems, but they often lose effectiveness over time and become susceptible to elite capture.

More generally, it is important to get the balance between institutions and participation right. Too much reliance on institutions, with insufficient attention given to meaningful participation, runs the risk of co-optation, corruption, and clientelism. On the other hand, too much participation can overwhelm weak or immature institutions, leading to

disappointment and perhaps even instability. In balancing these risks, the associational capacity of the society or community must be considered in its historical, cultural, and economic dimensions. Getting the role of institutions right is also crucial: too much formalization can stifle participation, but too little can make it difficult to translate participatory inputs into policy outcomes.

Institutions for PG are frequently grafted onto representative democracy at the level of the city, region, town, or village, where the creation of new, participatory organs of government can most easily reduce the costs of political involvement for marginalized people and where the impact of those new arrangements is most keenly felt. It is at this level – paradigmatically, the level of the medium-sized city – where citizens are most directly affected by public goods and services and most familiar with their politicians and public officials, their neighbors, and the issues and challenges they face. PG increases the connections among citizens and their officials; it provides citizens with more information and more options for influencing policies that directly affect their daily lives. In so doing it can make government more effective, legitimate, and accountable. The local character of many PG mechanisms makes analysis and comparison at the sub-national level extremely important, as national analysis and comparisons will often miss or diminish important local developments.<sup>47</sup>

One important factor to consider is state capacity: institutionally, decentralization and autonomy—especially in fiscal affairs—make a big difference, as they make it more likely that local participation can be translated into meaningful policy change. There is a risk that PG mechanisms might overload a state or burden it with unrealistic expectations, however, which could lead to poor results and perhaps cynicism. That said, effective PG mechanisms do not necessarily require extensive state capacity; limited state capacity will itself bear on the needs that PG seeks to address. PG can be oriented to redirecting and expanding what the state is and is capable of doing. Especially in such cases, attention is required not just to increasing participation but also to establishing strong institutional links between participatory inputs through government institutions to policy outputs.

Perhaps the most significant finding in the literature is that for PG to work requires both a commitment from political leaders who believe in the importance of citizen self-government and a civil society that is mobilized to fight for participation as an end in itself.<sup>48</sup> The support of parties committed to increasing participation may be a decisive variable, as a comparison of reform efforts in Brazil, India, and South Africa attests (see Box 19). Some parties might be ideologically inclined to support or oppose certain PG mechanisms – for example, programmatic left parties are more likely to support mechanisms designed to re-allocate public resources or expand public provision of services. Depending on how PG is framed and how institutions are designed, legislators or government officials might view it as a rebuke or a threat to their power or autonomy. The more widespread the support for PG among the public and key government actors, the more likely it is to succeed.

In sum, PG succeeds where state and political actors (civil society) can mold institutional design to participatory dynamics. Participation is easier to channel and sustain when it comes from the bottom up, but it can also come from the top down, if the government is sufficiently committed to seeing it through. In 1989, the Workers' Party in Brazil introduced

## Box 19

### The Politics of PG in Brazil, India, and South Africa

In the 1990s, Brazil, India, and South Africa, three of the most consolidated but also the most socially unequal democracies in the global south, embarked on ambitious decentralization reforms. The reforms strengthened the developmental functions and capacities of local governments, but also specifically promoted participatory governance. In all three cases, the institutional design of participatory governance was strikingly similar and in keeping with the basic design features discussed in the primary text of this report. The actual impacts of these reforms have, however, been highly uneven, and a comparative analysis underscores the importance of understanding political configurations, and, in particular, party–civil society relations.

In Brazil, more than 400 municipalities have adopted some form of participatory budgeting (see Box 14). The actual design of participatory budgeting has varied significantly, but research shows that, overall, PB has increased the accountability of local government, favored more redistributive public expenditures, and incentivized more active citizenship. In India, constitutional reforms in 1993 that sought to democratize local rural government (panchyats) have had very mixed effects. In most states significant reforms have been blocked by political and bureaucratic elites. Some states, however, have been able to significantly devolve resources, and in the southern state of Kerala (population 31 million), the People’s Campaign for Participatory Planning, launched by the state government in 1996, has institutionalized a highly participatory process of local development planning and budgeting across more than 1,200 rural panchayats.

In South Africa, the reforms have been far less successful. Though local governments, and especially the larger municipalities, enjoy significant resources and capacity, participatory reforms have provided few actual points of leverage for citizens and civil society organizations. Local government and development planning have instead been dominated by a highly technocratic approach that has crowded out community involvement. The recent rising incidence of often violent “service protests” has been attributed to mounting community frustration with the ruling party’s top-down control.

A careful comparative examination reveals important lessons for understanding the complicated political configurations necessary for institutionalizing PG on a wide scale. In all three cases, reform was made possible by a programmatic, left-of-center party. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) in Kerala; the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), or Workers’ Party, in Brazil; and the African National Congress in South Africa played the key roles in pushing through reforms and creating the institutional space for PG. But if inherited state capacity created a context highly favorable to strengthening local participatory governance in South Africa, the political configuration has proven to be less propitious for participatory politics. In Brazil and Kerala, a highly competitive electoral arena has pushed left parties to work closely with civil society organizations and social movements. Thus, both parties have favored participatory reforms as part of an overall political strategy of strengthening the associational capacities of traditionally marginalized groups (the urban poor, women, Dalits) and directly confronting the legacies of social exclusion and clientelism. In both cases this allowed civil society organizations not only to play an important role in shaping and implementing PG, but also in mobilizing citizens. In contrast, because the ANC faces limited political competition (routinely

securing about two-thirds of the vote in national elections) it has had little incentive to work with civil society and has instead emphasized the political objective of consolidating its control over public institutions. The power that flows from electoral dominance has, in other words, come directly at the expense of participatory democracy.

— *Source: Patrick Heller*

participatory budgeting—one of the most well-known and best-studied examples of PG—from the top down in Porto Alegre; it has since spread to more than 400 municipalities across the country.

## ***Participatory Governance and Social Justice***

In this section we explore in greater depth how PG can advance social justice. We do so for three reasons: first, many innovations in PG are explicitly geared toward social justice, making this an important category to consider. Second, this discussion elaborates on our previous remarks concerning design and implementation, providing greater depth as well as insight into the challenges of fitting PG mechanisms to a political and institutional context. Finally, this focus spotlights two of the Task Force’s marquee concepts, democracy and social justice, illustrating a promising innovation that demonstrates the practical links between the two.

When considering the connection between democracy and social justice, the political science literature has traditionally focused on the European welfare state. The key finding of these studies has been that mobilization of the working class was central to and strongly correlated with the size and depth of the welfare state, which is itself correlated with more egalitarian social and economic outcomes.<sup>49</sup> Yet mobilization of the working class itself was in some respects an outcome rather than a cause—it depended on alliances with other classes, such as the small peasantry and the urban middle class, since the working class was rarely a majority. In addition, it depended on political parties playing a key role in framing debates and mobilizing support, and it relied on a strong civil society to help overcome collective action problems.

This model does not apply in a straightforward manner to the global south, where the working class is often small, highly fragmented, or politically sidelined. These differences have led some scholars to conclude that democracy is unlikely to deliver social justice in much of the developing world — a pessimism compounded by a critique of globalization that depicts it as a hegemonic and homogenizing force leaving little room for deviation from neoliberal orthodoxy. In this view, not only are “traditional” paths of economic and social development blocked, but social and political experimentation is impossible.

Despite these gloomy prognostications, the evidence suggests that skepticism about social democracy on the periphery is misplaced; the prospects are not nearly so dire as the aforementioned critique of globalization suggests. In numerous cases with very different social, political, and economic trajectories — Chile, Costa Rica, Kerala, and Mauritius, for example — subordinate class mobilization has been a key factor in achieving social justice.<sup>50</sup> Democratization has increased the social and political space available for such mobilization,

helping to create the conditions for effective democratic politics and participation – conditions well suited to the utilization of PG.

### **PG in Pursuit of Social Justice**

Nothing about PG inherently promotes social justice. Yet in countries where there are many poor people, where huge inequalities of wealth and income exist, and where provision of public services is limited, democratic politicians have clear incentives to find better ways to respond to citizens' needs. PG can be one effective way of doing so.

Simply creating participatory opportunities will not automatically lead to more just social outcomes. To take one example, the “big society” initiative of the conservative UK government “empowers” local councils to decide how to implement sharp cuts in public financing and service provision decided at the national level. Instead, social justice must be an explicit aim of PG mechanisms. The evidence suggests that, if well designed and implemented, PG can promote social justice. But getting the design and implementation right is itself very much a political challenge.

It is also a challenge addressed poorly by conventional political science. There is a great deal of emphasis among scholars on demonstrating why political systems generate the results that they do and on devising ways to tweak existing institutions in order to tweak the outcomes. Often this literature takes the power and privilege of various actors as a given, as factors to be balanced in crafting stable and efficient systems. Relatively little attention is paid, by contrast, to designing institutions to achieve specific results. A more useful political science might investigate how, in a given context, social justice might be achieved.

The isomorphism of both the normative orientations and core design features of real-world experiments in PG is striking. Discursively, these experiments are framed as a critique of representative democracy – specifically, of its perversion by power and social exclusion. They all emphasize generative projects predicated on notions of effective citizenship that tie civil and political rights to social and economic rights and emphasize the value of deliberative approaches in place of traditional bargaining among interests. Common core design features include direct involvement by citizens and civil society organizations in governance; inclusive assemblies, along with mechanisms linking them to decision-making bodies; a range of direct accountability measures, such as limiting the power of delegates; procedures to increase access to information; and various incentives and other efforts to increase the probability of participation by subordinate groups.

Drawing on the empirical evidence, we see five design principles for PG that promote social justice (see Table 2): decentralization, rewards for mobilization, public forums for deliberation and accountability, promotion of new networks and alliances, and increased oversight. Two important points deserve special emphasis. First, to promote social justice, PG must reduce the transaction costs of influence for traditionally marginalized groups, and increase them for elites. The second, and related, point is that for PG to promote social justice, it must be designed with an inclusive, pro-poor bias. Many successful programs work because they are designed with specific normative ends in mind – promoting inclusion, equality, etc. Compulsory voting in Brazil, for instance, helps mobilize the poor, who are less likely to vote

Table 2: **Participatory Governance Design Principles Promoting Social Justice**

Principle (rule set)	Purpose
Decentralize City-level Government	<p>Allows targeted populations to make decisions on local issues</p> <p>Links bureaucrats and policy experts at the neighborhood level</p> <p>Distributes resources on a per capita basis, with poorer neighborhoods receiving greater levels of funding</p>
Reward Mobilization	<p>Permits citizens to directly vote on policy outcomes</p> <p>Draws attention to policy issues that have strong relevance to targeted communities (e.g., basic infrastructure, health care clinics)</p> <p>Allocates resources based on need and population—poorer communities receive greater levels of public resources</p>
Expand Deliberative Forums	<p>Encourages citizens to debate each other and government officials</p> <p>Provides information to citizens to allow them to hold a more substantive debate on government priorities and state responsibilities</p> <p>Permits citizens to question the (in)actions of government officials and community leaders</p>
Promote New Networks and Alliances	<p>Links citizens to government officials, citizens to other citizens, and CSOs to CSOs</p> <p>Fosters growth alliances among the poor</p> <p>Establishes new intermediaries in the absence of strong parties</p>
Engage in Oversight	<p>Allows citizens and CSOs to monitor policy implementation</p> <p>Helps citizens to gather information about ongoing policy efforts</p> <p>Promotes more efficient and effective use of state funds</p>

Source: Brian Wampler

otherwise, thus helping mobilize support for parties and programs dedicated to increasing social justice.

These aims are hardly radical; as we have repeatedly noted, concern with participation, inequality, accountability, and the like are mainstream concerns in political science. In addition, that progressive parties and programs are vital in achieving progressive social outcomes is a valid political science finding. Moreover, implementation of PG for social justice frequently is neither expensive nor a drag on economic performance. Land reform is often crucial, as is providing universal services and social insurance — a finding harmonious with the emphasis that economic citizenship places on such programs. Even simple reforms like issuing identification cards to the indigent to allow such individuals to take advantage of existing services have proved highly effective.

Measuring the gains from PG for social justice remains problematic. The appropriate measures are difficult to define and quantify, and the causal role of PG is difficult to isolate.

Still, there is some evidence that PG appears to better align expenditures with democratic preferences, increase participation and accountability and decrease leakage, and make patterns of allocation more redistributive. More research and better methods for studying the developmental impact of PG and its consequences for social justice are needed, but the initial evidence is quite encouraging.

## **Conclusions**

PG offers a pragmatic response to democratic deficits. It complements familiar representative democratic arrangements, enriching the institutional landscape of democracy in ways that help make citizens more effective. It deepens democracy by addressing democratic deficits in legitimacy, accountability, and responsiveness. Significantly, it can promote social justice if it is carefully designed and implemented with that goal in mind. Central to the success of PG in promoting social justice is the involvement of the poor and other traditionally marginalized people.

Among the most important tasks ahead for political scientists seeking to understand and improve PG is to devise better ways of analyzing its effectiveness. Would it be possible to devise measures of thicker or deeper democracy? What outcomes would be measured, and how? Democratic theorists need to think more about democracy as a set of principle-based outcomes rather than as a process. Identifying democratic outcomes — results democratic political systems are expected to deliver — is essential for understanding both the limits of representative arrangements and the potential contributions of participatory ones.

Further analysis of the concept of participation also is needed to better understand the different modalities of participation, the political configurations in which it can be effective, and the aims to which it is best suited. Mass mobilization, for instance, might be more useful for toppling corrupt regimes or pushing specific reforms than for improving accountability in a systematic way. Participatory mechanisms that seek to influence decision-making — including arrangements for co-governance — need to be better differentiated both from civil society mobilization and from deliberative democracy.



## Economic Citizenship

We selected *economic citizenship* as a framework for addressing important innovations in the arena of what has traditionally been called the welfare state as a way of stressing that economic security and social justice are essential entitlements of democratic citizenship. Employment, income support, social insurance, public goods provision, and other mechanisms for advancing social justice and economic security support democratic citizenship by giving substance to human rights and enabling political participation. This vision of economic citizenship offers a clear contrast with the dominant neoliberal tendency to regard people as factors in production, recipients of services, and targets of assistance.

Economic citizenship is of crucial importance for rich and poor countries alike. In many developed economies, large segments of the population lead an increasingly precarious existence, with economic globalization contributing to growing economic instability. Partly as a result, employment is less secure, inequality is rising, people are exposed to heightened market risks and costs, and public-sector austerity threatens public services and public goods provision. In developing countries, high levels of inequality and associated economic and political exclusion contribute to widespread and chronic poverty in many places. That many workers in developing countries enjoy limited social protections and often lack basic rights such as collective bargaining or protection from arbitrary dismissal only adds to the insecurity they experience.

Persistent poverty and growing inequality “are stark reminders that economic globalization and liberalization have not created an environment conducive to sustainable and equitable social development.”<sup>51</sup> Structural adjustment policies, with their emphasis on fiscal stability, deregulation, and privatization of services, have exacerbated inequality and exclusion while failing to stimulate widespread and sustainable growth. Inequality and exclusion, in turn, hamper both economic and political development. Inequality is rising in most countries, and economic insecurity and volatility pose long-term challenges for economic development and sustainability and, thus, for political development and stability.<sup>52</sup>

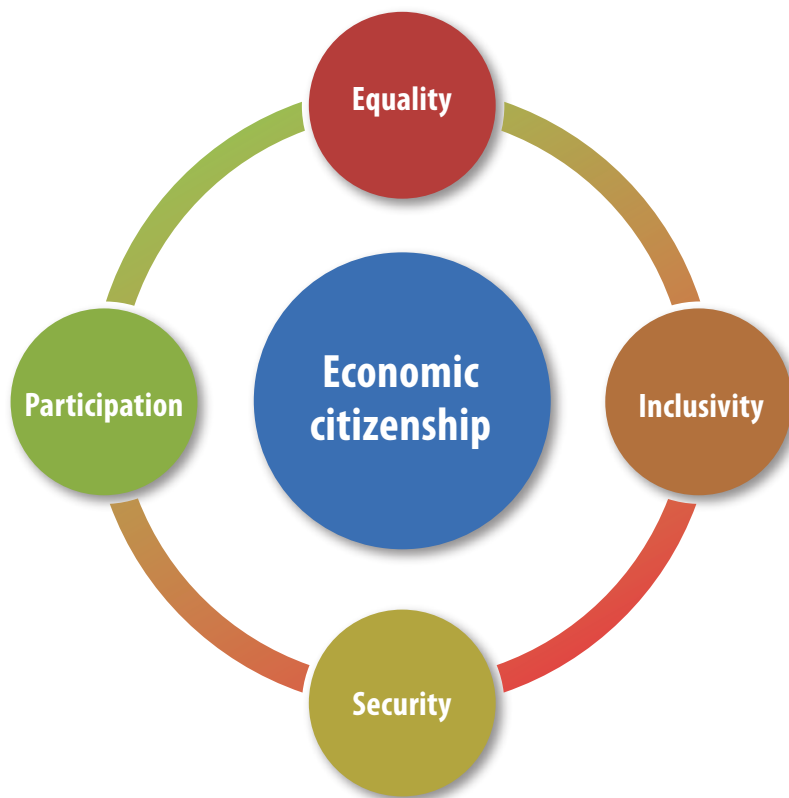
In this section we highlight innovations designed to bolster economic citizenship as a way to counteract these trends. Policies and programs for economic citizenship can play a vital role in addressing insecurity and inequality, stimulating development, promoting social justice, and sustaining human rights and welfare in rich and poor countries alike.

### *Dimensions of Economic Citizenship*

The key dimensions of economic citizenship are *equality*, *inclusivity*, *security*, and *participation* (see Figure 5). *Equality* is perhaps the most difficult of these concepts to define precisely. Political theorists have long been divided over what exactly the democratic commitment to equality requires, and there is a rich theoretical literature on these questions.<sup>53</sup> To some, “equality” means equality of outcome; to others, equality of opportunity, although there is

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Figure 5: Dimensions of Economic Citizenship



also deep disagreement about what constitutes genuinely equal opportunity. Every democratic society must decide for itself what vision of equality to pursue. But every democratic society must pursue equality; it is a core democratic principle and a foundation of effective citizenship. Too much inequality can impede economic development<sup>54</sup> and threaten democratic government.<sup>55</sup>

We are less interested in prescribing a particular concept of equality than in stressing the myriad ways in which inequality can be reduced and limited. Certainly equality of rights and status are of fundamental importance, as they provide a

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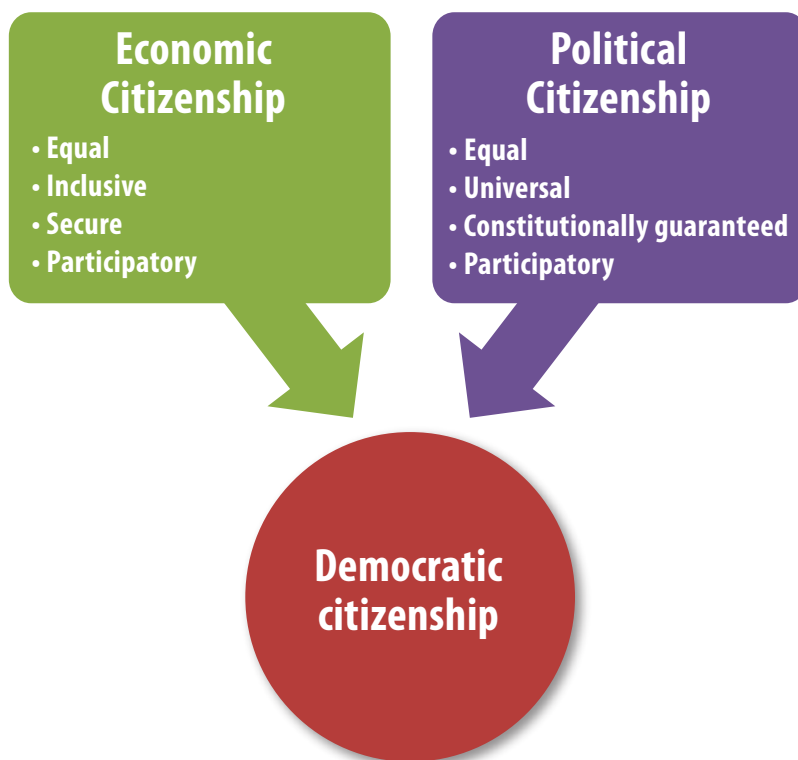
foundation for personal freedom and social development. Inequalities in rights and status often translate into poverty and social exclusion. Economic development, cash transfers, social insurance programs, educational policy, and many other strategies can all contribute to equality, but they do not automatically do so. One of our key findings is that more equal outcomes result from conscious political choices and commitment.

A second important dimension of economic citizenship is inclusivity. By this we mean that policies for economic development and social insurance should be comprehensive, encompassing, and non-discriminatory. Inclusivity requires attention to the various types of social and economic vulnerability that affect different and differently situated people and to designing programs and policies that will reach them. It suggests a preference for general or unconditional rather than targeted programs and for programs that respect and respond to the many types of contribution people make to the economic and social well-being of their societies – such as care work, reproductive work, and paid work in the formal and informal economy. Universal programs are often easier to defend politically, as the coalition in support of them is likely to be much larger. Inclusivity parallels HRBA's concern for non-discrimination and reflects a commitment to equality; it contributes to the security of economic citizenship as well.

*Security* encompasses the idea that a citizen’s adequate economic standing should be guaranteed as a matter of right or entitlement. The opposite of security is insecurity, or precariousness<sup>56</sup> — the dependence on chance or charity for one’s survival. As this definition implies, economic citizenship is analogous to political citizenship. Rights to political participation, expression, assembly, and so on are not left subject to the political fortunes of groups or individuals, but rather are constitutionally protected precisely because meaningful democratic citizenship is impossible without them. The same is true of economic rights: economic disenfranchisement is as debilitating as political disenfranchisement for democratic citizens. Therefore, economic citizenship must also be secured to protect and enable full democratic citizenship.

Finally, economic citizenship demands the *participation* of citizens in defining their interests and making crucial social and economic decisions. This is both an important democratic freedom and a key to the success and sustainability of development.<sup>57</sup> Participation is not the same as consultation. While consultation is important, it is no substitute for effective decision-making power, as the results of participatory budgeting programs illustrate clearly (see again Box 14). Participation helps ensure the legitimacy of social insurance and development programs and facilitates coalition-building and the development of solidarity around those programs. Participation also expresses the ideal of equality and helps ensure the inclusiveness and security of economic citizenship as well as its effectiveness.

Figure 6: Democratic Citizenship



Economic citizenship provides a useful conceptual framework for issues of economic security and social justice because it recognizes the interdependence of these four dimensions and emphasizes their centrality to full democratic citizenship. As Figure 6 illustrates, economic citizenship is a direct analogue of political citizenship; together they form the basis of full democratic citizenship. One way in which they are not analogous, however, is that while the security of political citizenship is commonly achieved through constitutional guarantees, economic citizenship often remains legally and politically insecure.

Economic and political citizenship are mutually reinforcing: effective political rights are instrumental in realizing progressive social and economic policy; progressive social and economic policy, including secure social and economic rights, bolsters political rights and equality by enabling more citizens to participate effectively in self-government. This mutual dependence is at the core of the normative case for economic citizenship.

### *Economic Citizenship in More Developed Countries*

In the more developed countries, the normative goal of the welfare state has historically determined the shape and extent of economic citizenship. The classical distinction is between residual and institutional welfare states.<sup>58</sup> The former target the poor at points in time, whereas the latter aim to provide security for everyone.

The focus on the poor in the residual model might suggest that it would provide greater benefits for them, leading to lower poverty and inequality. In fact, the opposite is usually true. The institutional model reflects a normative commitment to greater equality and security for all citizens, including the least well-off. This commitment typically translates into greater risk pooling, more multivariate social policies, and higher overall levels of security, all of which contribute to more comprehensive coverage of the least well-off.

This has been called an ideal of “equality of the highest standards” that resonates with both the socialist and the liberal traditions – the latter, for instance, as reflected in early formulations of the New Deal in the United States.<sup>59</sup> The liberal element arguably exists in the ways that economic security provides relative freedom from market forces and from direct control by the state.<sup>60</sup>

The Nordic countries are distinctive in their very broad commitment to pursuing equality through supporting and building common institutions and pooling risks, a commitment that goes beyond redistributing money from rich to poor to include such measures as public employment and welfare services, labor standards, occupational training, public subsidies for social insurance, and far higher active and passive spending on the unemployed.<sup>61</sup> In practice this last aspect has varied quite considerably, and growing competitive pressure has had a significant impact.

More generally, market liberalization has in recent years led to greater precariousness for many citizens of developed countries. Tax and tariff changes, deregulation of capital flows, policies promoting labor market flexibility, and increased global competition in production, services, wages, and workplace and environmental standards have all contributed to employment volatility and greater economic insecurity. Many citizens are increasingly reliant on cash wages as state benefits are pared back, sometimes dramatically. Inequality has in many instances grown as efforts to curb it – through progressive taxation or redistributive policies – have floundered.

Yet it is political choices, not market “discipline,” that determine the levels of equality and egalitarianism in society. Despite the challenges just described, many countries – notably the Nordic states – have chosen to preserve their commitment to low inequality and high, sustained levels of public finance and social insurance. These efforts have, predictably, resulted in more egalitarian social outcomes.

One area of concern is the weak legal standing of economic citizenship in many countries. Equality and other social gains have historically relied on voluntary collective agreements that are now being challenged, for instance, in European private law. Making economic rights and their funding constitutional and justiciable – as some developing countries have done – would therefore help to secure economic citizenship in Nordic and other states.<sup>62</sup>

### *Economic Citizenship in Less Developed Countries*

Contrary to popular impressions, less developed countries (LDCs) have long maintained social welfare systems. Beginning with Chile, where social protections were implemented as early as 1924, such protections have since spread to more than 70 other developing countries. Substantively, however, these programs differ from those in developed countries. The latter typically focus on social programs that protect a majority of their citizens from the risks associated with market uncertainty (unemployment, old age, etc.), whereas welfare states in developing countries have historically provided security for a relatively small number of more privileged citizens located in the urban sector.<sup>63</sup> LDC welfare efforts traditionally take one of two forms: a productive welfare state, in which the majority of state welfare spending is devoted to improving education, or a protective welfare state, which focuses on public employment, labor market protections, and pensions. The unfortunate reality is that these welfare institutions have historically failed to protect the very poor in developing countries.<sup>64</sup> Achieving economic citizenship in less developed countries brings the additional challenge of overcoming limited state resources and capacity.

Countries that have succeeded in narrowing inequality and reducing poverty have relied on “comprehensive social protection policies that are grounded in claimable entitlements, derived from rights or contribution payments that cover a majority of the population.”<sup>65</sup> It is possible to achieve universal-leaning social policies at relatively low cost – the keys are effective and strategic public finance, synergies among programs and institutions, and effective mobilization of resources.<sup>66</sup> As demonstrated by the examples of Nordic and East Asian countries, broad social objectives like solidarity, nation-building, catching up, full employment, and equality must be pursued.<sup>67</sup> Participation provides legitimacy, cultivates solidarity, and mobilizes political support for the essential public role in meeting these objectives.

Good policy—with clear objectives, adequate financing, competent bureaucracy, and effective state capacity for implementation and financing—is essential. As in the more developed countries, there has been a virtuous cycle between democracy, inclusion, and growth in Costa Rica, Kerala, Mauritius, and, to a lesser extent, Chile. The more egalitarian and democratic the state – that is, the deeper the normative commitment animating the welfare state – the better its overall economic performance.<sup>68</sup> This finding is consistent with the arguments showing that states with higher social expenditures have better export-oriented growth performance.<sup>69</sup>

It might seem that policies for economic citizenship would compete for resources and attention with policies promoting development. Many of the policies that promote economic citizenship, however, also facilitate development, though they do so in a more complete way.

Specifically, policies that enhance equality, are universal, provide real security of economic rights and resources, and promote participation are crucial to successful efforts to limit poverty and inequality (see Box 20).

Reducing inequality is important because it can be an impediment to development and because it is highly correlated with poverty (Box 20, point 3). High inequality breeds resentment among those in the lower-income segments of society, potentially undermining social solidarity. It can also foster crime and other activities that divert public expenditure from productive uses to social control.

Inclusiveness and breadth of coverage in social policy promote welfare and development. Income security, especially for those in precarious socio-economic positions—such as

#### Box 20

### Reducing Poverty and Inequality

UNRISD presents the following “seven arguments towards the reduction of poverty and inequality.” We highlight the first five arguments here to stress their compatibility with the four dimensions of economic citizenship: equality, inclusivity, security, and participation.

- 1. Structural change that generates productive employment reduces poverty and inequality.** There are significant multiplier effects when jobs are created, and jobs are an effective means of distributing income. It is important to treat jobs as an explicit policy aim, not simply as a fortuitous by-product of growth, and to create jobs that are sustainable. Structural reforms to encourage productive employment include: appropriate industrial and agricultural policies; adequate domestic demand, infrastructure, and education; and macro-economic policy that is not pro-cyclical and preserves monetary and financial policy options in times of slow growth.
- 2. Comprehensive social policies reduce poverty and inequality.** After-transfer poverty rates are drastically lower in most countries, especially where comprehensive social policies aim at universal coverage. Targeting is often ineffective where poverty is widespread, and it often fails to attract crucial middle-class political support. Effective social policy should be anchored in universal rights and should aim to: “reinforce the redistributive effects of economic policy; protect people from income loss and costs associated with unemployment, pregnancy, sickness, chronic illness, disability, and old age; enhance the productive capacities of individuals, groups and communities; and reduce the burden of the growth and reproduction of society, including care-related work, which is unfairly borne by women” (UNRISD, *Combating Poverty and Inequality*, p. 5).
- 3. High levels of inequality are an obstacle to poverty reduction.** Even when economic growth is strong, it is difficult to reduce poverty in a context of high inequality. Poverty is deeply connected to dimensions of inequality like income status, gender, ethnicity, and geographical location (region). Inequalities limit employment, earnings, and access to social services in ways that are interlocking and dysfunctional for development. First, it is hard to incorporate the poor into economic growth, limiting their potential contribution to development. Second, the poor are often stuck in subsistence economies, limiting the size of domestic markets and economies. Third, high, interlocking inequality limits the realization of rights, and can contribute to increases in crime and chaos. Finally, high inequality

can engender institutions that maintain elite privilege and create poverty traps. To counter these challenges requires providing the poor with greater access to productive resources (including land), investing in public infrastructure, utilizing affirmative steps to incorporate all citizens in growth, providing adequate welfare benefits, developing efficient tax administration and limiting tax evasion, reducing political opposition to progressive taxation and redistribution, and creating a stable global economic environment responsive to the needs of low-income countries.

**4. Poverty reduction requires effective state action.** Quick reductions in poverty have been achieved on purpose by growth-oriented, welfare-enhancing political systems with competent bureaucracies. State capacity is critical to overcome market failures, assist with technological development, mobilize and channel resources to productive sectors, enforce standards and regulations, establish social pacts, and fund and manage services and social programs. While market-enhancing reforms like good governance, managerialism, and decentralization can be valuable, they are not necessarily effective in generating and sustaining growth or producing socially equitable outcomes.

**5. Politics matter for poverty reduction.** Among the key political variables for development and poverty reduction are the protection of civil and political rights, the cultivation of active and organized citizens, real electoral competition adequate to ensure accountability, and political parties that effectively engage the poor and other disadvantaged groups, including in bargaining regimes and social pacts that provide meaningful voice and accountability. Consultative mechanisms are often inadequate, as they do not afford citizens real power to make significant change or to hold policymakers accountable.

**6. There are many paths to poverty reduction.**

**7. Poverty is reduced when economic and social policy, including institutions and political arrangements, are mutually supportive.**

—Source: Excerpted from UNRISD, *Combating Poverty and Inequality (2010)*, 4–8.

those created by unemployment, sickness, chronic illness or disability, old age, and heavy care responsibilities—obviously enhances welfare, but it also supports development by contributing to stability and security. HRBA are particularly effective and important in this connection.<sup>70</sup> Universal social services, such as health care, education, access to clean water, proper sanitation, and social support for care, similarly promote both welfare and development. Education, for example, builds human capital and boosts productivity, enabling growth. Savings, in the form of public or private pension schemes, can provide funds for infrastructure development. Breadth of coverage and security are, again, vital to the success of such programs, along with strategic public financing.<sup>71</sup>

### ***Mechanisms of Economic Citizenship***

There are many different mechanisms for achieving economic citizenship. A recent United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) report recommended numerous tools for reducing poverty and inequality that illustrate the principles of economic citizenship we are advocating.<sup>72</sup> Included among these tools were job creation, income support programs, savings schemes (both social and contribution-based), public finance (especially on

health care and education, both of which contribute to productivity and thus help to create jobs and social savings), and measures to make care work and domestic work less onerous.

In this section we discuss some conceptual and policy innovations in economic citizenship. Policies and programs promoting economic citizenship can be roughly divided into micro- and macro-level mechanisms. By “macro-level policies” we mean those that primarily involve social investment directed toward public goods provision, whereas by “micro-level policies” we mean those that directly support social incomes through direct provision of assistance, support, or security to individuals. The distinction is admittedly imperfect and imprecise: both types of policy are essential for realizing economic citizenship, and they are closely related, as overall levels of taxation and spending clearly impact capacity to implement micro-level programs. Additionally, as we discuss below, micro-level policies are more effective on the whole when good macro-level policies are in place.

### Macro-level Policies

The primary macro-level innovation on which we focus here – progressive public finance (PPF) – is a conceptual one, though one with important policy implications. “Public finance” refers to the range of policies that provide goods such as education and health care. We define “progressive public finance” as public finance that promotes the aims of economic citizenship: equality, inclusivity, security, and participation. In a very broad sense, PPF aims to enhance freedom through economic security.

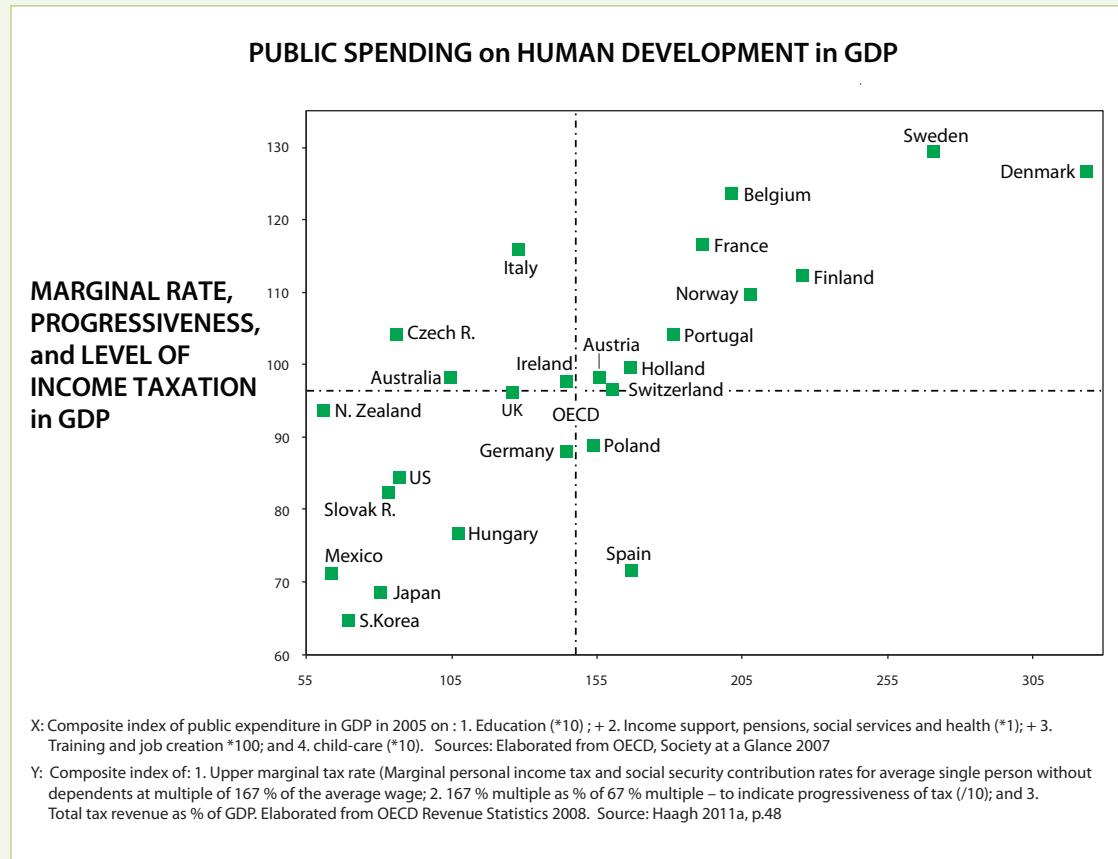
PPF comprises the collection and expenditure of resources. While taxing and spending are clearly two different systems, the global cross-state evidence indicates that a close correlation exists in practice between a high level and broadly progressive structure of taxation and a tendency to spend progressively – that is, to spend deliberately in ways that promote equality of opportunity and economic security in several dimensions.<sup>73</sup> This correlation underscores our earlier point about the importance of a strong political commitment to realizing economic citizenship; the reasons given for the tax system and the uses to which spending is put are crucial to the justification of public finance.

Reducing income inequality is a multifaceted problem; few people think that a perfectly equal income distribution is feasible or desirable. That said, the low levels of inequality in Scandinavian countries (Gini coefficients in the 0.20s range) are democratically desirable. They make it reasonable to speak of a common culture. In addition, low income inequality, coupled with effective high public spending, promote meaningful equality of opportunity at the start of life, in education, and in the family (see Box 21).<sup>74</sup> Tax systems and public spending do not automatically promote equality, however. Reductions in overall rates and scales in the past 30 years have contributed to substantial increases in inequality and insecurity. Such moves contribute directly to increasing income inequality and lower the political incentives and capacities of states to address economic insecurity.<sup>75</sup>

Decreased revenues can make targeted social policies seem attractive for promoting social justice, but evidence suggests that countries relying more on targeted than on inclusive policies have higher inequality and poverty and a less equal distribution of secure opportunities. Many countries – more and less developed – have concentrated their social

Box 21

Public Finance for Human Development



This graph illustrates the relationship between the structure of taxation and more progressive spending. The index for progressive spending features levels of public expenditure in GDP on the major items of social spending; it gives priority to expenditures that are critical for people to attain control over both occupational life over time (e.g., education, training, and job-creation) and also every-day life (e.g., child-care). Training and job creation, which are often quite small but are nonetheless critical in economic transitions, are weighted most heavily. The other large social expenditures (including income support, social services, pensions and health) are also factored in.

The commitment to redistribute both passive and dynamic sources of economic security is a public statement that individuals in a modern society are not alone responsible for their economic plight and that they need and deserve support to participate as economic citizens in an active way. Progressive spending is thus a practical counter-narrative in the same sense as high and progressive taxation is: it is in the spirit of the early democratic movements of mutual aid and belies the idea of the atomistic economy.

—Source: Haagh, Louise. 2011. “Basic Income, Social Democracy and Control over Time.” *Policy & Politics* 39 (1):43-66, at 53.

## Box 22

### Economic Security and Values in Brazil

Two surveys of economic security and values about work, carried out among residents of São Paulo's city and slums, found no evidence that income grants or unemployment insurance de-motivate work or job search behavior. More intrinsic sources of work motivation — the value of the work for itself — were strengthened with more contributory sources of economic security.

In slums, job search behavior was more likely to be affected (positively) by objective conditions — such as younger age, higher schooling, being male, previous history of short employment, or greater proximity to places of work — than by work motivation as such (although that relationship was also positive). The surveys distinguished between two kinds of work motivation — one associated with the immediate job, and one associated with a longer-term view of occupational life. The latter was weaker in slums whilst the former was strongly shaped by the degree of stability in respondents' history, including previous (short length) of unemployment, having obtained a formal job, and longer employment. In slums, a positive motivational effect of a cash grant (a version of the Bolsa Família) was linked to opportunities for more stable employment.

All groups tended to value job stability more than the size of pay, but long-term occupational values were notably weaker in slums, where employment was intermittent and offered few hours of work each week. In both districts, the groups with more (combined) contributory sources of economic security felt greater intrinsic motivation to work — e.g., those with higher schooling, more access to income support, or a history of more stable employment.

On the other hand, while having more sources of security positively motivates people, most respondents were unable to enjoy different forms of security. In the city, people with more education were more likely to have unemployment insurance. However, the expected associations between more schooling (at the middle-range) and longer employment and shorter unemployment were not borne out. In contrast to assumptions of market-driven social policies, motivation to seek stability through employment was difficult for individuals to realize on their own. This finding contradicts social conservative arguments that unemployment is a matter of personal motivation and responsibility: respondents valued stable employment but were often unable to find it. The lesson is that opportunities for stability shape expectations and motivation, not the other way around.

Another important implication of this research is that cash grants programs that emphasize school attendance must, to bear real fruit, pay more attention to the quality of the link between education and work opportunity.

Finally, economic stability had a strong motivating effect on women, but women's positions in the labor market were closely correlated with their family size; the same was not true for men. The position of women clearly demonstrates that achieving gender equality will require devising forms of economic security explicitly linked, for example, to care and reproductive work.

— Source: Haagh, Louise. 2011. *Working Life, Well-Being and Welfare Reform: Motivation and Institutions Revisited*. *World Development* 39 (3):450-473.

policy efforts on targeted income assistance to reduce poverty and, in less developed countries, encourage children's attendance at school. In developing countries this has had progressive effects, primarily because social policies have historically concentrated on urban benefits for middle- and upper-class groups while neglecting the rural and urban poor.<sup>76</sup>

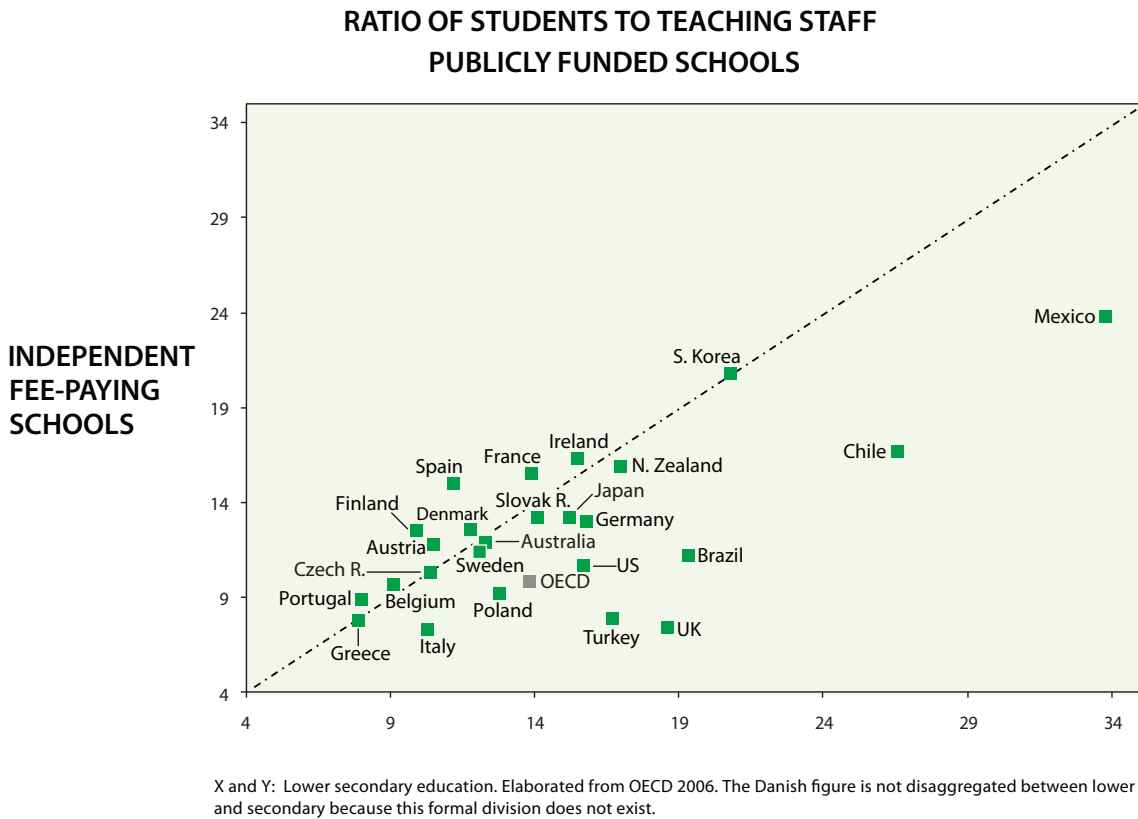
One problem with targeted schemes is that they often deliberately set benefits well below subsistence levels and keep them short term. As a consequence, the intended health and nutritional outcomes do not materialize.<sup>77</sup> The weak overall fiscal capacity of states contributes to the problem, as does the dogma that cash grants and transfers de-motivate individual initiative and responsibility. Recent research conducted in Brazil strongly counters this view. While the poor have shorter time-horizons in the valuation and planning of their working life, this results in large part from their perception of greater economic and income insecurity (see Box 22). Moreover, as this research suggests, micro-policies for economic citizenship are more likely to be effective in a macro-context of PPF. While the overall value of public spending certainly matters, it cannot fully account for divergent outcomes. Similar levels of transfer are likely to be less effective in countries with less progressive public finance than in those where it is more progressive.

Another factor that contributes to persistent income inequality and high poverty is the very unequal pattern of educational attainment and quality in many countries. Higher (tertiary) education is highly concentrated in very unequal societies, and income returns to higher education are, unsurprisingly, also quite high. This pattern devalues attainment at lower levels (see Box 22) and, by raising the relative incomes of highly trained and educated people, helps sustain the cycle of high income inequality, low public investment in education, and low-skill employment instability.<sup>78</sup> High returns on education in countries with greatly unequal economic groups are therefore not an indicator of overall high productivity or inclusive growth. The effect on economic citizenship is to redistribute insecurity, low motivation, and the inability to plan one's economic life downwards to the poor and those with lower middle incomes, that is, to the majority.

A representation of more equal quality of education can be seen in the difference in teacher resources available between public and fee-paying students (see Figure 7). This, of course, is only one way that inequality of opportunity might be defined, but as school attendance and completion grow, especially in highly unequal countries, it is one to watch. As Figure 7 shows, this inequality is typically higher in countries with low or falling levels of income equality. In the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), these countries include Chile, Italy, Mexico, Poland, the United Kingdom, the United States). Note in particular the position of the UK: it has seen among the highest expansions of public spending (from a low level) in the OECD since the mid-1990s.<sup>79</sup> Despite this, the inequality in funding between the private and public sectors continues to grow, as fees in Britain have risen dramatically. This rise in fees – and with it the inequality of opportunity for state school students – corresponds with a flattening of the tax rates (a sharp drop from a marginal rate of 60 to 40 percent in 1988) and increases in income inequality.

Research has shown that UK students with elite educations (private secondary schools) dominated key top occupations despite representing only a fraction (around 7 percent) of national students.<sup>80</sup> The notable contrast is the Nordic economies, in which participation in

Figure 7: Inequality of Opportunity—Education Divides in the OECD



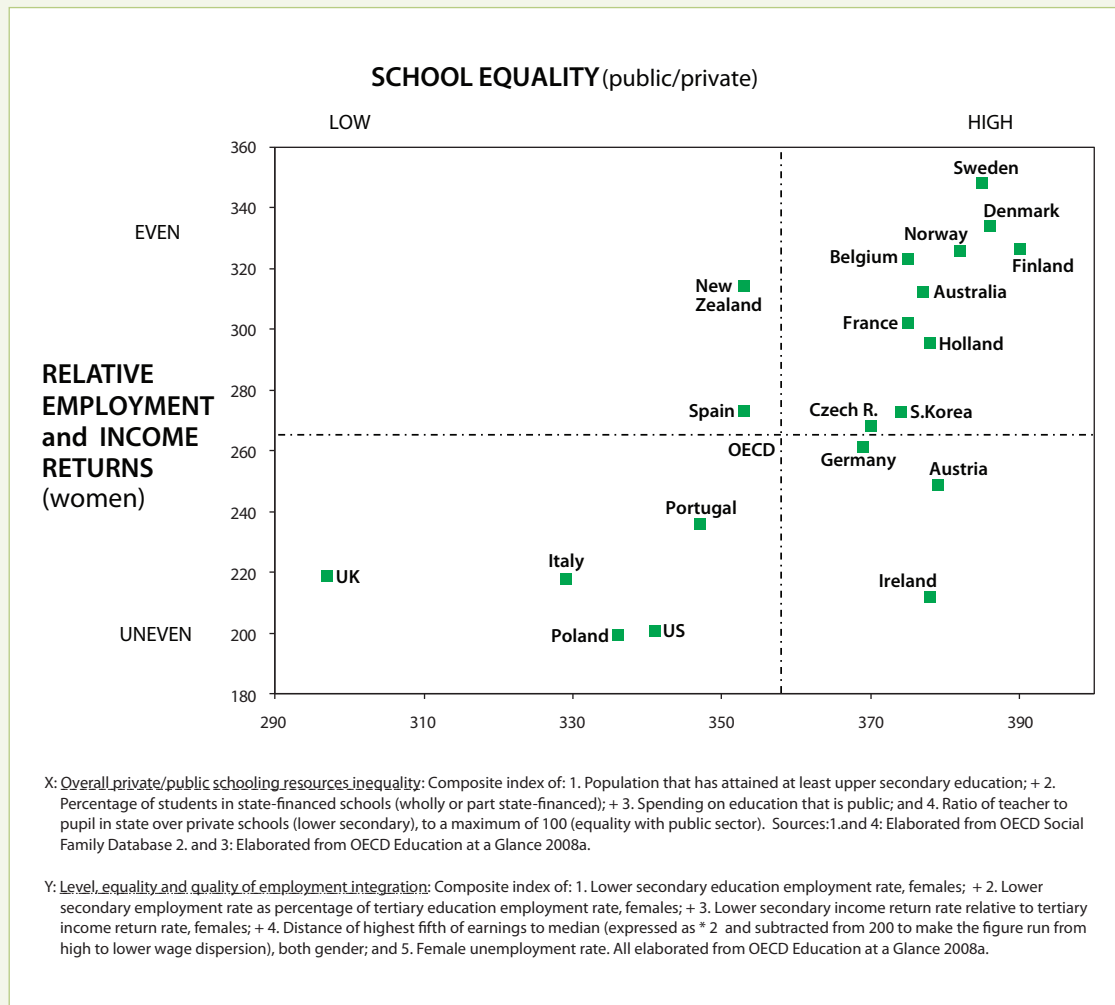
—Source: Haagh (2010).

independent, fee-paying schools is much higher — 13 percent in Denmark — but where fees are offset by public financing. Lower fees result from a combination of high and progressive taxation, the lowering of incomes at the top end of the distribution, and a level of public resources that can sustain high subsidies to independent schools. The effect is that equal quality of schooling is maintained in practice without sacrificing parental involvement or choice. The impact on opportunities later in life is also remarkable: the high public investment in schools and diverse occupations, including subsidies of apprenticeships and technical high schools, for instance, as well as social welfare training and public employment, increases the effective employment and income returns to lower education and decreases overall income dispersion (see Box 23).

As already observed, the Nordic economies feature more extended structures of multivariate security that include high levels of public spending on both education and time for care, in the form of subsidies and extended parental leave, and also affordable child care. Notably, it is also in the Nordic states, as well as in some continental European countries with high social spending, that public finance has been used to support women who work in care in the home.<sup>81</sup> This implies that care roles are recognized in their different forms, and that choice and control over time for women are arguably higher and better supported publicly in Nordic states.

Box 23

Equality of Schooling and Employment Returns



This graph shows how more equal resourcing of state schools leads to more equal employment and income return rates to schooling and lower income dispersions between income groups at the middle and top. The measures of education return rates are taken for women. Women generally face greater trade-offs between formal occupational and informal care roles than men do. A more even integration of women with less relative to more education is a strong indication that women receive sustained public support. It can be assumed that their more even integration, especially in Sweden and Denmark, is an effect of both even schooling and of other sources of public finance support. Among these are the much higher rates of public spending on family life and time for care (see Figure 7).

—Source: Haagh, Louise. 2011. *Basic Income, Social Democracy and Control over Time*. Policy & Politics 39 (1):43-66, at 53.

While this introduction to PPF has focused empirically on European economies, its lessons are important for all states. As already noted, improvements in areas like health and education are relatively inexpensive in economies where labor is abundant. Further, more progressive public finance policies are effective in reducing poverty and inequality and in facilitating development.

#### Box 24

### Alaska's Permanent Fund Dividend: Basic Income in Practice

Basic Income, defined in the primary text as “a universal, unconditional cash transfer to all citizens as a matter of right,” might sound like a policy goal for the distant future, but it has existed in Alaska, under the name of the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD), since 1982. Each year, the state puts a small portion of its oil revenue into a sovereign wealth fund called the Alaska Permanent Fund (APF), which invests in a diversified portfolio of assets. After inflation-protection and reinvestment, the APF's yearly income is returned to every citizen-resident Alaskan as a dividend—the PFD.

The size of the PFD varies from year to year, depending on the performance of the APF's investments. The dividend varied between U.S. \$500 and \$1,000 in its first 15 years of existence. For the last 15 years, it has usually been between \$1,000 and \$1,500. It reached a high of \$2,069 in 2008, and in that same year the legislature voted to use part of the state's budget surplus to supplement the dividend by \$1,200, for a total disbursement of \$3,269 for every citizen in the state.

The Alaska dividend is not enough to cover a person's basic needs, but even if the dividend is only \$1,000 in a particular year, it comes to \$5,000 for a family of five. This amount can make an enormous difference to people living on the economic margins.

The Alaska dividend clearly illustrates some of the key dimensions of economic citizenship discussed in the primary text of this report. It is universal by definition, and it directly promotes equality and security. It has helped to make Alaska the most economically equal of the states in the United States, and the only state in which economic equality has been growing over the last 20 years. In addition, it has helped give Alaska one of the lowest poverty rates in the United States. The program is enormously popular; in 1998, more than 83 percent of Alaskans voted against a referendum to redirect some of the APF's returns away from the PFD. It has also enhanced participation in government because it has attracted the electorate's attention to the performance and management of the APF.

Several important lessons can be drawn from Alaska's experience. First, resource dividends work, and they are popular. It might be politically difficult to create universal programs like the PFD, but it is equally difficult (perhaps more difficult) to kill them. Second, a polity need not be rich to have a resource dividend. Every polity possesses enormous common resources, most of which are given away by governments to corporations that sell them back to the people. Estimates show that even a resource-poor state, such as Vermont, could support a dividend larger than Alaska's. Third, Alaska does not have the dividend because it is resource rich. It has the dividend because the right leadership took advantage of the opportunity at the right time. There are many such opportunities to promote economic citizenship that can be taken advantage of (Karl Widerquist and Michael W. Howard (eds.), *Exporting the Alaska Model: How the Permanent Fund Dividend Can Be Adapted as Model for Reform Around the World*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

—Source: Karl Widerquist

## Micro-level Policies

Micro-level policies for economic citizenship are those that directly impact citizens' social incomes. By "social income" we mean the combined sources of income – from production, cash wages, enterprise non-wage benefits, state benefits, community benefits (from family, friends, and local sources), and private benefits (income from investments and savings).<sup>82</sup> Individuals need a social income sufficient to survive and function as full democratic citizens in society. Economic citizenship, however, requires not merely that the level of citizens' social income be adequate, but also that it come from sources that are secure and universally available.

One way to defend the comprehensive idea of social rights as sources of de-commodification, that is, of greater individual liberty from market pressures, is to grant a fully unconditional right to basic subsistence. This might take the form of a basic income (BI) understood as a universal, unconditional cash transfer to all citizens as a right. Basic income is, conceptually at least, an ideal program for economic citizenship that promotes equality, reflects universality, and enhances security.

Proposals for BI date back to the 18th century;<sup>83</sup> they have been championed in recent years by networks of scholars and activists in Europe and North America in particular (see, for example, the Basic Income Earth Network, or BIEN, and the US Basic Income Guarantee Network, or USBIG). Critics and skeptics often dismiss BI as infeasible. The primary challenges are political: BI can be a tough sell both because of its cost and because of the initial difficulty in building coalitions in support of such programs.<sup>84</sup> One case in which such obstacles were overcome is the state of Alaska. The Alaska Permanent Fund dividend (see Box 24), paid from the returns on investments in a sovereign wealth fund, provides every citizen-resident of the state with a direct cash transfer annually. In a fascinating pilot project, BI was implemented in an impoverished Namibian village (see Box 25). Funded through private sources, this project had remarkable effects, illustrating the potential of BI as a scheme for development and economic citizenship in even the poorest countries.

We note that the effects of implementing BI in countries pursuing PPF might be quite significant. BI would be likely to have greater effects on overall freedom in the Nordic states, for example, given that parallel policies to promote more equal opportunity and provide greater economic security are already in place. A BI reform could form part of – and help initiate – greater public discussion of a state's support of a larger variety of productive choices.

Such programs may be most effective when they explicitly seek to limit inequality and when they permit and encourage participation in their design and administration. At the time of this writing, a unique experiment in participatory economic citizenship is underway in India to examine the importance of participation to economic security. In this project, an unconditional universal cash transfer or BI is being provided to all adults and children in two villages, one in which the poor have a voice organization, and another in which there is no such body. The outcomes are being evaluated over an extended period, and they are being compared with what happens in two comparable villages in which no such cash transfer is being provided. While it is too soon to know the results, the investigators expect that the

## Box 25

### Basic Income Grant (BIG) Pilot in Namibia Transforms a Village

From 2008 to 2009, the BIG Coalition implemented the first-ever pilot project of a BIG in the village of Otjivero-Omitara, a settlement of about 1,000 people approximately 100 km to the east of Windhoek in Namibia. The Coalition is spearheaded by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) and includes the Council of Churches (CCN), the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), the umbrella body of the NGOs (NANGOF), the umbrella body of the AIDS organisations (NANASO), the National Youth Service (NYC), the Church Alliance for Orphans (CAFO), the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC), and the Labour Resource and Research Institute (LaRRI).

The BIG Pilot Project provided a universal, cash-based grant designed to provide income security and predicated upon redistributive justice. Funding came from individuals and congregations and from international donors, including Bread for the World, the Lutheran World Federation, United Evangelical Mission, Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland, Evangelische Kirche von Westfalen, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and others.

All residents below the age of 60 years received a Basic Income Grant of N\$100 per person per month, without any conditions attached. The grant was given to every person registered as a resident in July 2007, whatever their social and economic status. Among the many notable findings from the Pilot were the following:

BIG ignited hope in a deprived community; residents created an 18-member committee to mobilize the community and offer advice on how to spend their BIG money wisely. This suggests that the introduction of a BIG can effectively assist with community mobilisation and empowerment. The BIG induced significant migration of impoverished members of local families into Otjivero-Omitara, even though these migrants were not eligible to receive the grant. This highlights the importance of a universal national grant. After the introduction of the BIG, household poverty dropped significantly. The food poverty level was cut by more than half in the first year (from 76 to 37 percent), and among households not affected by in-migration, it fell by more than three quarters (to 16 percent). BIG also sparked an increase in economic activity. The rate of those engaged in income-generating activities (above the age of 15) increased from 44 percent to 55 percent. Many people started their own businesses, and the BIG contributed to the creation of a local market by increasing households' buying power. This finding contradicts critics' claims that the BIG would lead to laziness and dependency.

The BIG resulted in a significant reduction of child malnutrition. Using a World Health Organization (WHO) measurement technique, the data shows that children's weight-for-age has improved significantly in just six months, from 42 percent of underweight children in November 2007 to 17 percent in June 2008 and 10 percent in November 2008. The BIG enabled HIV-positive residents to afford nutritious food and gain access to anti-retroviral medication. This was further enhanced by government's decision to make ARVs available in Otjivero, freeing residents from the need to travel to Gobabis. After the introduction of the BIG, more than double the number of parents paid school fees (90 percent) and most of the children now have school uniforms. Non-attendance due to financial reasons dropped by 42 percent; this rate would have been even higher without the effects of migration. Drop-out rates fell from almost 40 percent in November 2007 to 5 percent in June 2008 and further to almost 0 percent in November 2008.

The residents used the settlement's health clinic much more regularly after the introduction of the BIG. The BIG contributed to the reduction of household debt, with the average debt falling from N\$ 1,215 to N\$ 772 between November 2007 and November 2008. Savings increased during that period, as reflected in increased ownership of livestock and poultry. The BIG contributed to a significant reduction of crime. Overall crime rates reported to the local police fell by 42 percent while stock theft fell by 43 percent and other theft by nearly 20 percent. Finally, the introduction of the Basic Income Grant reduced the dependency of women on men for their survival, giving women a measure of control over their own sexuality and freeing them to some extent from the pressure to engage in transactional sex. The BIG Coalition, encouraged by these findings, continues to push for the implementation of a national, universal BIG in Namibia.

— *Source: Excerpted and adapted from the BIG Coalition Namibia website, <http://www.bignam.org/>.*

scheme will function better in the former — though it might be, as in the Basic Income Grant Pilot Project in Namibia, that the transfer scheme may induce the emergence of a collective body in the villages where none existed (see again Box 25).

There are numerous “universal-leaning” cash transfer programs in place globally. Two that have received significant attention recently are Brazil's Bolsa Família (BF) and the NREGA schemes in India. BF provides aid to poor families and encourages school attendance (see Box 26). It thus works simultaneously to address short-term poverty via transfers and longer-term poverty via human capital development. It is widely credited with contributing to a significant drop in poverty in recent years.<sup>85</sup>

India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) entitles adults in rural households to 100 days of wage employment per year (see Box 27). Its design addresses many dimensions of economic citizenship directly—the guarantee of employment as a legal right contributes to security. It is quite inclusive, as it is essentially available to all rural households, and by specifically targeting the rural poor, NREGA helps to make the Indian welfare state, historically oriented toward the urban middle- and upper-classes, more inclusive overall. The program also includes numerous design elements that enhance transparency and accountability and allow for participation in the implementation of the scheme (see Box 17).

Another type of scheme that has been gathering strong support is the universal, unconditional social pension, which has been adopted in countries in southern Africa and in a few other countries globally. Unlike public and private pensions in most of the world, these are non-contributory and are not means-tested. In other words, they do not go just to those for whom pension contributions have been paid for a number of years or for those who have been deemed to be below a set poverty line. The social pensions go, in principle, to all those over a certain designated age, typically 60 or 65, regardless of their past or current income, work status, or work record. These pensions have been found to have a very high take-up rate, particularly when compared with all other pension schemes. And in the case of South Africa in particular, they have been found to have strong progressive redistributive tendencies, both directly and indirectly, via benefits trickling down through the generations.

## Box 26

### **Bolsa Família (BF)**

Bolsa Família (BF) is a social welfare program of the Brazilian government, part of the Zero Hunger (Fome Zero) network of federal assistance programs. BF provides financial aid to poor Brazilian families; if they have children, families must ensure that the children attend school and are vaccinated. The program attempts to both reduce short-term poverty by direct cash transfers and fight long-term poverty by increasing human capital among the poor through conditional cash transfers that promote education.

The program was a centerpiece of former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's social policy. BF is currently the largest conditional cash transfer program in the world, though the Mexican program, Oportunidades, was the first nation-wide program of this kind. BF currently provides a monthly stipend of about U.S. \$20 per child attending school, to a maximum of three children, to all families with a per-capita income below U.S. \$100 per month. The money is given preferentially to a female head of household. Recipients register with the office at the federal government; they are then issued an ATM card that allows them to withdraw the cash or to use it like a debit card. A key feature of the program is that it diminishes the power of small town mayors and government officials to control the clientelistic exchanges that have long been a feature of Brazilian life.

The BF program has been mentioned as one factor contributing to the reduction of poverty in Brazil, which fell 27.7 percent during President Lula's two administrations (2003–2006 and 2007–2010). "Surveys conducted by the Federal Government among BF's beneficiaries indicate that the money is spent, in order of priority, on food, school supplies, clothing, and shoes. A study conducted by The Federal University of Pernambuco inferred that 87 percent of the money is used, by families living in rural areas, to buy food" (Natália Sátyro and Sergei Soares, "Análise Do Impacto Do Programa Bolsa Família")

*Sources: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolsa\\_Familia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolsa_Familia); Natália Sátyro and Sergei Soares, "Análise Do Impacto Do Programa Bolsa Família E Do Benefício De Prestação Continuada Na Redução Da Desigualdade Nos Estados Brasileiros — 2004 a 2006," in IPEA Texto para Discussão (IPEA, 2009)*

## Box 27

### **India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act**

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was passed into law on September 7, 2005. The objective of the Act is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

The program's goals include: providing a strong social safety net for vulnerable groups by providing a fallback employment source when other employment alternatives are scarce or inadequate; providing a growth engine for sustainable development of an agricultural economy; empowering the rural poor through the processes of a rights-based Law; and changing the way of doing business by serving as a model of governance reform anchored on the principles of transparency and grass-roots democracy.

NREGA fosters conditions for inclusive growth, ranging from basic wage security and recharging the rural economy to a transformative empowerment process of democracy. Through

providing employment on works that address causes of chronic poverty — such as drought, deforestation and soil erosion — the Act seeks to strengthen the natural resource base of rural livelihood and create durable assets in rural areas. Effectively implemented, NREGA has the potential to transform the geography of poverty. NREGA covers the entire country, with the exception of districts that have a completely urban population.

Adult members of rural households who are willing to do unskilled manual work may apply for registration in writing or orally to the local Gram Panchayat. The Gram Panchayat, after due verification, will issue a Job Card bearing the photograph of all adult members of the household willing to work under NREGA. (Cards are free of cost and should be issued within 15 days of application.) A Job Card holder may submit a written application for employment to the Gram Panchayat, stating the time and duration for which work is sought. The minimum days of employment have to be at least 14. The Gram Panchayat will issue a dated receipt of the written application for employment, against which the guarantee of providing employment within 15 days operates. Employment will be given within 15 days of application for work; if it is not, a daily unemployment allowance is paid by the states. Work should ordinarily be provided within five kilometers of the home village; where work is beyond this radius, extra wages of 10 percent are payable to meet additional transportation and living expenses. Equal wages will be provided to both men and women and adhere to state and national minimum wage standards.

At least one-third of beneficiaries must be women who have registered and requested work under the scheme. Work site facilities such as crèches (day care), drinking water, and shade must be provided.

NREGA marks a paradigm shift from all precedent wage employment programs. First, NREGA provides a statutory, rights-based guarantee of wage employment. Employment is dependent upon the worker exercising the choice to apply for registration, obtain a Job Card, and seek employment for the time and duration that the worker wants. The legal mandate of providing employment in a time-bound manner is underpinned by the provision of Unemployment Allowance. In addition, the Act creates incentives to the States for providing employment, as 90 percent of the cost of employment provided is borne by the Center. There is a concomitant disincentive to states for not providing employment, as the States then bear the double indemnity of unemployment and the cost of the unemployment allowance. Moreover, unlike earlier wage employment programs that were allocation based, NREGA is demand driven. Resource transfer under NREGA is based on the demand for employment, supplying another critical incentive to states to leverage the Act to meet the employment needs of the poor.

NREGA has extensive inbuilt transparency and accountability safeguards. Extensive documentation helps to ensure transparency with respect to eligibility and payment. Citizen Information Boards operate at worksites, and the Act creates Vigilance Monitoring Committees and provides for extensive inspections and social audits at many levels. Annual reports to Parliament are required, and personnel responsible for implementation by the Act are legally responsible for delivering the guarantees under the Act.

— *Source: Excerpted and adapted from the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA) Operational Guidelines 2008, 3rd ed., Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, New Dehli. [http://nrega.nic.in/Nrega\\_guidelinesEng.pdf](http://nrega.nic.in/Nrega_guidelinesEng.pdf).*

## Conclusions

Economic citizenship is an important complement to political citizenship; the two are mutually dependent. Our key finding is that economic citizenship reflects primarily a normative and political commitment to greater economic security and social justice. Despite talk of narrowing policy options due to globalization, our research indicates that both more and less developed countries have at their disposal a wide range of policy options for realizing economic citizenship.

We have emphasized that progressive public finance — taxation and public spending and investment schemes that specifically seek to reduce poverty and inequality and increase economic stability for all citizens through the provision of public goods — can and do work. In addition, programs to support social income can make a huge impact. Cash transfers, employment guarantees, and basic income schemes all show a great deal of promise in enhancing economic citizenship in a variety of contexts. Such programs work best in the context of PPF.

More research is needed not only on which policies best enhance economic citizenship in different settings, but also on how support for such policies can be built and maintained in diverse social settings.



## From Innovations to Imperatives: Democracy in a Volatile World

This report has argued that innovative strategies to improve democracy, economic security, and social justice are closely intertwined in theory and practice. Democracy requires effective citizenship, which is built on the twin pillars of economic and political citizenship. Economic citizenship entails a regime that guarantees economic rights, provides universal public services as a matter of right, and maintains a system of public finance to support these aims and reduce and limit poverty and inequality. Political citizenship entails not only the franchise and the familiar civil and political rights, but also active participation in governance to secure legitimacy, accountability, and responsiveness. The protection of rights is thus central to both pillars of democracy, and participation in defining and securing rights is itself part of the democratic promise.

These connections are not serendipitous; we selected human rights-based approaches (HRBA), participatory governance (PG), and economic citizenship as areas of focus in part because we were interested in the connections among them, some of which are suggestive of areas ripe for new research.

At a time of great global volatility, we believe that a better understanding of innovations like those discussed here, and of the interconnections and complements among them, is imperative for ensuring the future of democracy. Rising inequality, stubborn poverty, and growing democratic deficits threaten the legitimacy and perhaps the very survival of democracy. We urgently need to learn more about how representative institutions can be complemented through more participatory mechanisms of governance and about how democratic citizenship can be enriched through a renewed commitment to economic citizenship. Human rights are the foundation of both political and economic citizenship, and we need to better understand how rights can be secured through a variety of approaches to promote democratization, economic security, and social justice.

In this conclusion, we briefly highlight some of the important connections among these areas of innovation. We also consider how research in these areas might help broaden the study of politics in productive ways, fleshing out our recommendations for a political science better equipped to address the kinds of innovations we have highlighted throughout.

### **Connections**

The connections among PG, HRBA, and economic citizenship are clear and suggestive, indicating how countries at various stages of economic and political development might fashion coordinated strategies for democratic deepening. Innovations in each of these areas can contribute to all of the areas of concern to this Task Force: democracy, economic security, and social justice.

One common theme uniting innovations in all three arenas is expanding the surface area of the state – increasing the points of access, influence, and contestation for citizens.

This is achieved through the creation of a diverse array of institutions and mechanisms for participation and by guaranteeing the full range of fundamental human rights that ensure effective citizenship. There is no single blueprint to follow for deepening democracy; rather, a pragmatic approach that is sensitive to context, including political dynamics and a state's institutional and associational capacity, is required for identifying and addressing democratic deficits. Breaking the control and domination of elites and markets is central to such efforts.

The importance of rights is another common characteristic among the three areas. Human rights enable political participation; they anchor economic security, and they facilitate development. Human rights enjoy remarkable political legitimacy globally, and they are deeply tied up with the theory and practice of democracy. This report has not focused on defining and securing human rights, but these are matters of crucial importance for political scientists. How to secure economic rights — especially in poorer and weaker states — and how best to make them justiciable are among the most urgent questions to be addressed.

### **Participation and HRBA**

Some more specific connections that emerge from this report warrant brief attention here and call for further research. One such connection is between HRBA and PG. HRBA have a strong participatory focus, with participation serving both as a means to securing human rights and promoting development and as an important end in the form of effective democratic citizenship. PG views participation as a structure or process integral to democratic decision-making. PG experiences confirm that HRBA are most effective when they are not confined to the implementation of pre-defined programs, but rather begin with the very definition of community needs and end with the sustained monitoring of outcomes by rights-holders. Participation as an end in itself creates the kind of impact that more limited HRBA efforts will not be able to attain.

HRBA and PG are linked through their overlapping concern with social justice. HRBA are primarily associated with development and democratization, but these are important aspects of social justice in themselves. In many countries of the global south, many of the participatory mechanisms oriented toward achieving social justice are conceptually almost indistinguishable from HRBA; if participation is a democratic right, then PG mechanisms oriented to social justice exemplify HRBA in practice.

From the intersection of rights and participation run several important lines of inquiry for political scientists. Our investigations indicate that rights and participation are in many ways two sides of the same coin. But we still know relatively little about the conditions under which rights claims sustainably promote and secure effective citizenship. Similarly, participation comes in many different forms, and additional research is needed that identifies how specific participation practices are effective in securing rights.

Another point regarding PG and HRBA concerns the nature of aid. Although political scientists recognize the major international financial institutions as governance agencies, and while the politics of aid — who aids whom, in what ways, and why — has been an important area of investigation, aid implementation is typically regarded as something other than governance. If aid is a form of governance, as in many ways it appears to be, then HRBA might

be a democratic requirement – an insight that begins to shed a little light on the question of whether there is a general right to participatory governance.

Finally, it is important to remember that HRBA can be as much concerned with the realization and maintenance of political rights as with economic rights. The capacity to exercise political rights effectively is crucial both to the success of HRBA and to PG. In this sense, both can play an important role in democratization and democratic deepening.

### PG and Economic Citizenship

Another set of connections we want to highlight is between PG and economic citizenship. Participation is one method for sustaining support and legitimacy for the progressive policies of economic citizenship. This point reiterates our earlier emphasis on the mutually supporting character of economic and political citizenship. Another earlier point to reiterate is that PG mechanisms oriented toward achieving social justice can be – and must be, to be successful – designed specifically with an inclusive, pro-poor bias. Thus we might gain valuable analytic leverage on the problem of how to make PG effective for social justice by thinking about the ways in which PG can support and sustain economic citizenship – by helping to build and sustain political support and legitimacy, by reallocating resources, and so on. This focus might be especially useful in the global north, where established industrial and post-industrial democracies are grappling with widening democratic deficits and growing economic precariousness.

Conceiving economic citizenship as an aspect or dimension of social justice raises a larger theoretical question about the nature of democratic justice. Moral theorists typically regard justice as a broader and more encompassing concept than democracy, and rightly so, as there are many aspects of justice that fall beyond the purview of democracy. From this, moral theorists often conclude that justice must be in place prior to democracy. However, when thinking about social institutions and relations, about *political* relationships, the priority or independence of justice as a concept becomes less clear.<sup>86</sup> It might be rather that “a suitably developed account of democracy affords the most attractive political basis for ordering social relationships justly.”<sup>87</sup> Our investigations suggest that democratic justice comprises human rights, social justice, economic citizenship, and enhanced participation for effective citizenship. There needs to be a better normative grasp on how these concepts cohere and a better empirical grasp on how to arrange social and political institutions to advance them jointly.

### HRBA and Economic Citizenship

HRBA and economic citizenship share an emphasis on universality and on security and stability of provision – that is, on entitlements. These conceptual links indicate that HRBA and economic citizenship share a fundamental aim: economic security sufficient to enable effective democratic citizenship.

If HRBA and economic citizenship are closely linked conceptually, that link opens the possibility of rethinking each concept and its application. For instance, HRBA have historically been pigeonholed under “development,” obscuring their relevance for countries in the global north. Economic citizenship, by contrast, has been associated with the social-

democratic welfare states of northern — particularly European — democracies, obscuring the extent of the welfare state in the global south. This conventional wisdom blinds scholars and officials to the innovations taking place in the global south while also exaggerating the democratic sufficiency of the traditional welfare states in the global north. Greater attention to the legal and political implications of thinking about economic citizenship in terms of rights might prove valuable theoretically in addressing this important democratic deficit. The idea of economic rights — as distinct from the abstract ideal of social justice — remains uncommon in many democracies, but it offers powerful potential as an analytic tool, as a resource for political mobilization, and as a legal means of securing economic citizenship.

In developing societies, social justice can often seem like a distant aim and is frequently ignored by politicians in the name of economic growth. Economic citizenship suggests some concrete aims and a discursive and analytic frame for HRBA that might better capture an important part of what HRBA seek to achieve. This frame has the advantage of underscoring the deep connections between political and economic democracy and citizenship. Similarly, the focus of HRBA on human development and democratization highlights the linkage between economic and political citizenship far better than traditional discourses on either have done.

### ***Broadening Political Science***

We stated at the outset that one of our aims in writing this report is to encourage a broadening of the traditional study of politics. We encourage PhD programs and funding agencies to support work on democratic innovations and counter-narratives, especially when undertaken by graduate students and junior faculty. In closing, we briefly consider three specific ways in which the discipline might be broadened through attention to the issues and concerns raised in this report.

### ***Innovations and Counter-narratives***

The concerns on which we have focused here are anchored in the mainstream of political science research: rights, citizenship, participation, inequality, development, democratic deficits, and so on. However, rather than addressing them in the manner familiar to mainstream political science, we have instead highlighted important innovations in these areas. These innovations reflect broader democratic counter-narratives, alternatives to the traditional disciplinary approach to democracy, economic security, and social justice. These innovations and counter-narratives, anchored in the real world, challenge the conventional narratives of electoral democracy, neoliberal economic and development orthodoxy, and suspicion of citizen mobilization. Indeed, recent events, including riots in the UK and the Arab Spring, are reminders that volatility can result from a lack of rights, democracy, and opportunities for participation and from economic insecurity bred of excessive faith in markets.

Focusing on these innovations and counter-narratives opens up new possibilities for valuable political science research—which is not to say that political scientists should abandon traditional avenues of research. We want to broaden, not displace, the study of politics. For example, the idea of a counter-narrative is itself an intriguing structure or frame. How do political actors use this frame to mobilize support, to challenge dominant discourses,

to advance a progressive political agenda? When are their efforts effective? Are narratives of recovery – of an imagined past, of lost ideals – more or less effective than narratives of transformation?

The study of innovations and counter-narratives also promises to improve the ability to understand and anticipate political change. Political science as a discipline was caught largely unaware by the political upheavals of 1989, and despite a vigorous debate at the time about explanations and possible remedies, the discipline has been caught equally flat-footed by the upheavals of 2011. This is not to say that political science is or ought to be a predictive science; instead, it is to suggest that perhaps the dominant narratives crowd out emerging counter-narratives worthy of attention.

For example: if democracy is conceived as an electoral system in which citizens are primarily interested in stability and in policies that improve their welfare, it might be hard to detect political discontent in relatively wealthy authoritarian or soft-authoritarian states perceived as stable. If, on the other hand, democracy is conceived more substantively as a political system in which effective citizenship empowers people to lead their lives in freedom and dignity, the inherent instability of those same regimes would be more apparent.

Another example concerns the recent wave of left-of-center governments gaining power in Latin America. The dominant narrative frames this as a “pink tide,” the resurgence of socialist power, and a threat to U.S. interests and to stability in the region. This framing unhelpfully lumps together the very different politics and policies of countries like Brazil and Venezuela; perhaps worse, it closes off an alternative understanding of these developments as part of a process of democratic deepening with tremendous transformative potential as well as real pitfalls. Again, to study counter-narratives is not necessarily to embrace them. Scholars should be skeptical of some of these developments, but must also be open to understanding them in their own terms, as clear and direct challenges to thin democracy and an unpopular economic orthodoxy. Such an understanding is crucial to comprehending this trend and its wider significance.

Put differently: if politics is fundamentally about contestation, attention to counter-narratives is essential for understanding the operation of power and the dynamics of social inclusion and exclusion, both within states and globally. The dominant narrative always attracts challenges, and in the nature of those challenges – their discourse, the breadth of their appeal, their critique of the status quo – lie valuable clues to understanding the present as well as to possible futures.

### **Two-way Learning**

It is common for political scientists to assume – often unconsciously – that innovations in democracy, economic security, and social justice occur in the global north and diffuse to the global south. Another way in which this report seeks to broaden political science is by highlighting some of the many important contemporary innovations originating in the global south. Greater attention to these innovations invites the possibility for increased two-way learning between scholars and politicians in the global north and south. As the spread of these innovations throughout Latin America and the global south indicates,

south-south learning and innovation is also taking place, and scholars must not close themselves off to these developments, which promise to enrich our comprehension of politics.

Many of the best-known and most thoroughly studied innovations in PG, for example, are taking place in Latin America, most prominently in Brazil. Mechanisms for participatory budgeting contrast markedly with the top-down models typical of established democracies like the United States. Participatory budgeting offers a clear alternative — a counter-narrative — to the politics of austerity and protest that have typified recent efforts to come to grips with the fallout of the financial crisis in many U.S. states and municipalities.

This is, of course, only one example; established democracies offer citizens many opportunities for meaningful participation in governance at all levels. The point is not to pick a winner, but rather to emphasize that many democracies all over the world are developing innovative ways to address democratic deficits and economic insecurity that provide salutary examples for democracies everywhere. We recognize that the problems and challenges facing different democracies vary tremendously, both in outline and in detail, and we are not proposing the rejection of one model for another, but rather appealing for greater pluralism and experimentation and a greater openness to solutions that work, regardless of where they originate.

### **Bridging the Normative-Empirical Divide**

A final way in which we hope to broaden the discipline is by illustrating the value of mending the artificial rupture between normative and empirical research in the discipline. This rupture impairs understanding of political phenomena in subtle and important ways.

Take as an example the study of democracy. Normative democratic theory produces a rich array of conceptions of and justifications for democracy. Much of this work, however, is abstract and rather idealized, and it pays relatively little attention to articulations with real-world institutions and political processes. Empirical democratic theory, by contrast, operationalizes a rather thin conception of democracy as electoral competition. While the standard measures of democracy do fairly well in differentiating democratic from non-democratic regimes, they are not designed to capture the processes of democratic deepening we have been studying here.

In between ideal democratic theory and the empirical study of democratic practice lie many of the democratic innovations we have studied here. As we have argued, making sense of developments in PG, HRBA, and economic citizenship requires a thick conception of democracy and a solid grasp of the dynamics of democratic deepening. It also calls for greater disaggregation and for sub-national analysis in cases where innovation happens locally.

Normative and empirical scholars of democracy have emphasized democratic institutions and procedures and neglected democratic outcomes — typically on the grounds that democratic outcomes are those that emerge from democratic processes. Aside from the apparent paradox of “illiberal democracy” that this view engenders,<sup>88</sup> it provides scant guidance for anyone seeking to make sense of recent democratic developments.

Another important gap to bridge is the one that still separates scholars in political science from those interested in policy and practice. Too many political scientists regard practical relevance as a secondary concern or even a compromise of scientific standards, and too many practitioners dismiss academic research as abstract and irrelevant to their concerns. Much of the literature we cite here belies both of these views, and we encourage scholars to proudly highlight the practical and policy implications of their work and practitioners to take another look at the rich and suggestive research being conducted in this and related disciplines.

Working together, normative and empirical scholars interested in theoretical, conceptual, and practical questions could produce significant progress in defining democratic outcomes and devising measures and methodologies with which to study democratic deepening. Indeed, on a whole range of issues – norm diffusion, identity-based conflict, social movement politics, PG, HRBA, economic citizenship, and many others – normative theory and empirical research can and should enrich one another. This will require normative theorists to overcome their skepticism and anxiety about quantitative methods of empirical research and temper their tendencies toward abstraction and idealization. It also will require empirical researchers to accept that the separation of facts and values in the study of politics is artificial and detrimental and to recognize that many of the most important questions in politics are fundamentally normative ones. We believe bridging this gap is another democratic imperative, and we hope this report illustrates the kind of fruitful collaboration we envision.



## Endnotes

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# Democratic Imperatives: Innovations in Rights, Participation, and Economic Citizenship

Report of the Task Force on Democracy, Economic Security,  
and Social Justice in a Volatile World

The Task Force on Democracy, Economic Security, and Social Justice in a Volatile World was convened amidst the convulsions triggered by the global economic and financial crisis of 2008. The tumult had already spread far beyond the economy, with bank bailouts sparking popular outrage that shook democratically elected governments in many countries. Today, the repercussions of the crisis are still being felt, from turmoil in the euro-zone to a sputtering global economy and growing popular rejection of the politics of austerity. Meanwhile, global inequality is increasing, poverty remains stubbornly high, and evidence is mounting that traditional aid and development programs are not working.

The global economy is hardly the only source of volatility in the world today, however. The upheavals of the Arab Revolutions of 2011 – and the harsh reprisals that have followed across the region and beyond – have once again thrust democratization, with all its promise and perils, to the center of the global stage. Protest movements like Occupy and the Indignados are spreading within established and more recent democracies. The 10th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, in a context of growing war weariness and lingering security concerns, has led to renewed questioning of the costs, wisdom, and future of the so-called War on Terror. Climate change poses growing and diverse threats which politicians and policy-makers have frankly failed to meet.

These developments have created an opening for consideration of new ideas and innovative models to advance democratization, development, and social justice. Events in the Middle East and North Africa vivify the continuing appeal of democracy and human rights and sharply challenge conventional thinking about the stability of authoritarian rule and the “dangers” of popular mobilization, and innovations in participatory governance highlight exciting new democratic possibilities. New approaches to development and democratization anchored in human rights point toward hopeful, if so far rarely realized, possibilities. New ideas about economic security and social justice offer a clear alternative to the politics of stagnation and retrenchment.

This report focuses on three arenas in which promising democratic innovations are emerging: human rights-based approaches to democratization, welfare, and development; participatory governance; and, economic citizenship. One of our main aims is to draw attention to some crucial themes and objectives they share in common: deepening democracy; enhancing collective and individual agency; reducing poverty; achieving greater equality of wealth, income, power, respect, influence, legal status, or opportunity; and, cultivating solidarity in democratic communities. We view these as *imperatives* for revitalizing democracy in our volatile world, and the innovations we highlight throughout have been selected to illustrate how this revitalization might take place.



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