

The Participant's Dilemma: Bringing Conflict and Representation Back In

DEBBIE BECHER

Abstract

Innovations in democratic participation involving small-scale, long-term focused governing bodies have increased citizen influence in poor American urban neighborhoods. Scholars have described these emerging forms of participation as essentially cooperative in spirit and directly democratic in nature. I argue that the new participatory regimes continue to involve social processes of representation and conflict inherent to more traditional forms of engagement. Participants move dynamically between cooperation and conflict and between participating as individuals and representing constituencies. This article presents a careful study of how a single decision developed and was implemented in such a participatory experiment, the American Street Empowerment Zone in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, between 1994 and 2008. Archival and interview data support the general perspective shared by articles in this symposium — that participation involves dynamic movement between conflict and cooperation. This article suggests that the durability of the participatory regime depends not on the level of conflict but on how participants move between displaying identification with either government or their community constituents. This article uses the concept of intermediation to describe this kind of dynamism and to reflect the flexibility a participatory structure must nurture to endure.

Introduction

Small-scale designs have the potential to increase popular participation in urban development policy. A group of scholars of democratic governance propose 'rolling-rule regimes' as a design model for participatory organizations that have a different relationship between breadth and depth from the large-scale experiments such as participatory budgeting assemblies or public spheres. The rolling-rule regime designs are

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smaller in scale and scope but are expected to endure over a longer period of time. A long-term, 'learning model of policy-making that is participatory, flexible, adaptive, and decentralized' (Fiorino, 1999: 15) allows for constant adjustment and communication (Sabel *et al.*, 1999; Fung, 2004). Research has demonstrated that such small-scale, focused participatory bodies successfully involve residents of poor American urban neighborhoods in policymaking (Berry *et al.*, 1993). Beyond the aforementioned elements of structural design, however, there is little empirical evidence about what makes these participatory institutions maintain effective citizen involvement and influence over time. This article demonstrates that despite theory to the contrary, conflict and representation become part of the experience of these small-scale participatory regimes, and that constraining these processes can negatively affect popular involvement and influence.

I build on sociological research on organizations and contentious politics to understand the consequences of conflict and representation. I argue that we are more likely to anticipate participatory success and failure if we understand the participants in these small-scale democratic bodies as involved in what I call intermediation. The concept of intermediation builds on research identifying states of betweenness (also called brokerage, mediation, and more) as crucial to inter-organizational communication and mobilization in contentious politics (Fernandez and Gould, 1994; McAdam *et al.*, 2001; Mische, 2008). Those who get involved in participation structures move between identifying with other community members and government; participatory structures and cultures can either facilitate or hinder this dynamism.

This article takes advantage of a research project on the dynamic nature of long-term participation. I focus on one participatory group and its decisions related to a specific policy option over 15 years. I track how a federally funded, locally managed participatory program for neighborhood revitalization in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania made decisions related to the city's use of eminent domain for economic development, from the program's inception in 1994 up through and beyond the decision's implementation in 2008. The participatory program, as viewed through the lens of the policy decisions related to eminent domain, was initially successful but was later seriously flawed, and resident leaders eventually took advantage of organizational resources to exert pressure on government from the outside. The evidence about how participation and decisions unfolded demonstrates the mechanisms that influence the durability of small-scale, focused participatory structures. Participants in urban policymaking will endure in the role over a long time and maintain influence if they move among three different modes of intermediation, each with a specific identity affecting communication and decision-making. This case demonstrates how the participatory structure can enable or limit individuals' ability to move among these roles and thus maintain influence.

Dynamic Representation

In the rolling-rule regime design, participatory bodies are convened on a small scale and focus on specific interests (Fung and Cohen, 2004) instead of attempting participation of unattainable breadth and depth (Dahl, 1994; Lowi, 1999; Wilson and Weltman, 1999). They extend through a longer term to allow 'citizens as local agents [to] experimentally determine how to pursue a . . . changing project' (Sabel *et al.*, 1999: 10). The scholars who have described the small but durable structures privilege cooperation and partnership (*ibid.*), just as other scholarship on participatory democracy has done (Mayer, 1995; Pierre, 1998; Freeman and Langbein, 2000; Fung and Cohen, 2004; see Menkel-Meadow, 2005 for a similar critique). As theorized, these participatory institutions supposedly help diverse constituencies sit at the table together, take advantage of local wisdom, move past stalemate and find creative solutions to trenchant

formes nouvelles de participation sont, dans l'esprit, essentiellement coopératives et, par nature, directement démocratique. Il est exposé ici que les nouveaux régimes participatifs font encore intervenir des processus sociaux de représentation et de conflit propres à des formes d'engagement plus traditionnelles. Les participants oscillent de manière dynamique entre coopération et conflit, et entre participation en tant qu'individus et représentation collective. Cet article présente une étude minutieuse de la manière dont une décision a été élaborée et mise en œuvre dans le cadre d'une expérience participative de ce type, 'American Street Empowerment Zone' à Philadelphie (Pennsylvanie), de 1994 à 1998. Des données issues d'archives et d'entretiens corroborent la perspective générale commuue aux articles de ce symposium: la participation implique un mouvement dynamique entre conflit et coopération. L'article suggère que la pérennité du régime participatif dépend, non pas du niveau de conflit, mais de la façon dont les participants alternent dans leur manifestation d'une identification soit au gouvernement soit aux membres de leur communauté. Le concept d'intermédiation est utilisé pour décrire cette forme de dynamique et pour traduire la souplesse que doit garder une structure participative pour perdurer.

Appendix 1 – Major programs and organizations

Abbreviation	Program or Organization	Description
	Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Initiative	Federal urban revitalization program mandating community participation in distribution of funds, enacted 1993. Local governments would administer multimillion dollar awards.
EZ	Philadelphia Empowerment Zone	Together with neighboring Camden, NJ, was one of six Empowerment Zone awards from federal program in 1994.
ASEZ	American Street Empowerment Zone	One of three sites that together comprised Philadelphia's Empowerment Zone. The three sites were separately managed but coordinated by city staff.
ASCTB	American Street Community Trust Board	The American Street Empowerment Zone governing board, comprised of community representatives and mayoral appointees. The group was considered a city advisory board and could make recommendations to the Mayor for approval of projects to be funded by the ASEZ.
CLI	Community Leadership Institute	An independent, grassroots organization created and incorporated in the late 1990s to improve political empowerment in the neighborhoods of the ASEZ. It was funded by the ASEZ until 2003.

problems through cooperation and consensus (Habermas, 1984; Gutmann and Thompson, 1996). These experiments have met with some reported success in moving conflict-ridden issues past gridlock and towards agreement about public policy.

I join a recent flurry of voices calling for scholarship on politics more generally to move beyond false choices between cooperation and conflict and to theorize participation and politics as dynamically vacillating between moments of each (McAdam *et al.*, 2001; Hickey and Mohan, 2004a; Mische, 2008; Silver *et al.*, 2010, this issue). The reverence for partnership, trust and consensus puzzles those who have witnessed cooperation emerging without trust and worries those who notice the productive results of anti-establishment social movements (Fainstein and Hirst, 1995; Szasz, 1995; Benhabib, 1996; Davies, 2007). Berry *et al.* (1993: 149), who positively evaluate this kind of organization, in fact noticed a productive coexistence of antagonistic organizing activity in participation experiments in five American cities. When necessary, they said, neighborhoods still engage in an 'open fight'. Participation and politics, including this kind of democratic participation, are more completely understood to encompass a constant movement between times of conflict and cooperation (McAdam *et al.*, 2001; Menkel-Meadow, 2005; Mische, 2008; Aylett, 2010, this issue; Hernández-Medina, 2010, this issue).

Similarly, although these structures are designed to get constituents more directly involved, they need not be expected to achieve 100% participation; thus participants will continue to act as representatives. In any participatory scheme, those involved will be expected to represent those who are absent (Gaventa, 2004; Hickey and Mohan, 2004b; Aylett, this issue). The dilemmas of this kind of local representation are rarely discussed by scholars of participation. These issues are more clearly recognized in studies of the involvement of community organizations in local governance (Marwell, 2007; Mische, 2008) but less so in research on direct participation. How does one serve simultaneously as both a self-interested community member (that is, direct participant, whether resident, business or corporate member) and a representative of others? How does a resident remain credible and responsive to both government and community members, while not really speaking exclusively for either? (Aylett, this issue, explores this question as the problem of legitimacy to both government and community.) I argue below that a participant needs to remain convincing in both roles — as a member of the governing body and as a constituent — though only sometimes at the same moment in time. The concept of intermediation helps articulate how a participant's performance can signal identification with either government or the community, and that a participant will be called on to inhabit these intermediary identities at different times (see Figure 1).

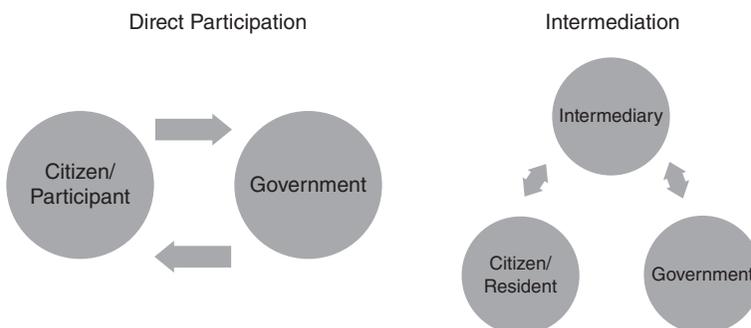


Figure 1 Communication models

Intermediation

I introduce intermediation as a concept to understand the dynamic nature of officially participating in local policymaking or government advisory bodies over time. The main ideas behind the term intermediation as I use it have been elaborated by scholars of 'brokerage' and 'mediation' in the study of inter-organizational networks and contentious politics. Brokerage focuses attention on how communication is forged among otherwise disconnected individuals, groups or organizations (Galaskiewicz and Krohn, 1984; Gould and Fernandez, 1989; Fernandez and Gould, 1994; McAdam *et al.*, 2001; 2008; Burt, 2005; Mische, 2008). Scholars of brokerage have identified the structural position as someone or some organization that bridges two entities, and they have shown that this position carries influence in various settings, including policy and politics (Galaskiewicz and Krohn, 1984; Fernandez and Gould, 1994; McAdam *et al.*, 2001). Brokerage carries power.

But only certain kinds of brokerage wield power in policymaking. Gould and Fernandez (1989) distinguished brokerage roles by the structural relationship between the so-called broker and two parties being connected by that broker. They differentiated types of brokers by the connections between the three parties in any brokerage relation: the broker, the initiator of communication and the recipient of communication. (In the case of participatory democracy, we might think of the participant as the broker, other constituents as initiators and government as receivers of communication.) The distinguishing characteristic of each ideal type was this: which of these three parties consider themselves part of the same group? With which of the two previously disconnected entities does the broker identify, if any, and do these two entities identify as part of the same group themselves? Basically, what is the insider/outsider status of each member of the triad with respect to the others? Power does not derive directly from which of these roles a broker inhabits; power derives from whether the broker's communications are appropriate to her or his role. Fernandez and Gould (1994) found that participants in a health policy discussion lost legitimacy, and thus influence, if they stated a policy preference when their role suggested they should be impartial (not a part of either group). Conversely, an actor gained legitimacy by taking a position when his or her role warranted partiality (identified with either the initiator or receiver of communication).

I apply Gould and Fernandez's (1989) typology of brokerage roles to participatory governance as intermediation. The participant as intermediary, as I envision him or her, speaks alternatively for citizens, government and sometimes for both. I use the word intermediation instead of brokerage or mediation. Brokerage and mediation usually imply that someone is taking an impartial stance. Though intermediation can also suggest distance, intermediaries sometimes are clearly designated as the representatives of one party to a negotiation. Intermediaries, in my use of the term, represent one party and bridge a communication gap between that party and another. Of the five types Gould and Fernandez identified, three (called gatekeeper, coordinator and representative) imply that the linking individual or organization identifies with one or both of the groups involved (see Figure 2). In the ideal participatory democracy, everyone belongs. Citizens are entirely identified with each other and with government, so the instigators and receivers of communication are part of the same group. In this case, we would thus consider the participant to be a coordinator, rather than a gatekeeper or a representative. When issues are contentious (as eminent domain is), participants need to communicate alternatively as gatekeepers and representatives. It may be possible for them to move between these two roles and maintain legitimacy in both, but it may not. Doing so may take more than just personal skill (Fligstein, 2001); it requires a structural and cultural environment that affords that flexibility.

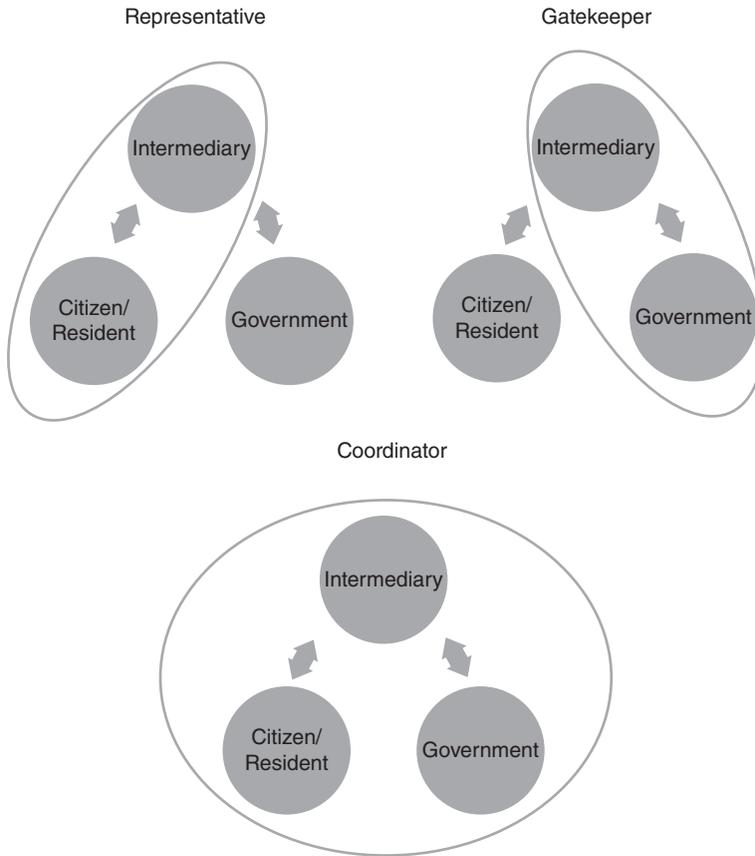


Figure 2 Intermediary identities adapted from types of brokerage relations pictured by Gould and Fernandez (1989: 93)

Case background: the federal Empowerment Zone and Philadelphia's American Street

I present findings from research into a participatory body's positions on Philadelphia's use of eminent domain to assist revitalization along its American Street (about a mile north of the downtown area) in the 1990s and 2000s.¹ (Eminent domain is the American term for government acquisition of private property for public use, in exchange for equitable compensation. Elsewhere, the practice is known as compulsory purchase and forced expropriation.) The 2100 block of North American Street, the site of the first of the three large-scale land acquisitions (1.5–3 acres) discussed here, was a pilot project for Mayor Street's signature anti-blight initiative. The city's failure to deliver on promises about relocations and redevelopment sparked strong anti-government activism rather than support for its economic development efforts.

1 Sources are multiple: I scoured the internal files located in the two primary city government offices involved for emails, memos, letters, reports, etc. I read through twelve years of minutes from meetings of the ASEZ governing body, the American Street Community Trust Board (ASCTB), and I acquired and read through media coverage of the ASEZ and eminent domain. I also personally conducted 50 semi-structured interviews with government staff and American Street residents, community leaders, and business owners. Interviews averaged eighty minutes in length.

A federally funded program for revitalization was the primary overseer of government activity along American Street in the 1990s. The Empowerment Zone (EZ) program is one of many urban experiments that have supported economic development in poor American neighborhoods where residents have traditionally been disengaged (Clarke, 1993; Sabel, 1994; Mayer, 1995), and it required community involvement. President Bill Clinton's (1993–2001) EZ program revived President Lyndon Johnson's (1963–9) emphasis on community participation as central to the success of economic development (Berry *et al.*, 1993), after an intervening period when the Reagan and Bush administrations' economic development initiatives did not have such an emphasis.

In December 1994, a Philadelphia–Camden partnership became one of six urban places to win the coveted national EZ designation, bringing funding and tax incentives for neighborhood revitalization. The American Street Empowerment Zone (ASEZ), a collection of neighborhoods with approximately 20,000 residents, was one of three Philadelphia areas designated to receive funds (US \$29 million). Though the EZ was a federally devised program, it was locally managed. The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development mandated that local governments administering the Empowerment Zone (EZ) programs create 'community-based partnerships'; program guidelines neither required participation nor outlined how it might be supported. As a result, the methods used to ensure community partnerships generally and community participation more specifically varied largely by site, but all EZs established governing boards with community representation (Herbert *et al.*, 2001).

The American Street Empowerment Zone (ASEZ) supported quite active participation in its governing board and other bodies in the first half of the program's life, roughly 1994 to 2000. (The board did not have full decision-making power; the body passed its recommendations on to the Mayor, who approved the large majority of the recommendations.) It was neighborhood leaders who had originally lobbied the Mayor of Philadelphia to include them in an application. In the program's early years, members of the ASEZ governing board often praised the quality of participation in comparison to what they learned of other EZs around the country. 'Philadelphia seems to be the only city working with the bottom-up process while the only people empowered in other cities are the Mayors', reported the chair of the American Street governing board upon return from a national conference.² When participation was not even the issue at hand, members sometimes volunteered it as one of the ASEZ's strengths. These praises were tempered with critiques as well, many of which are described below, but there was clearly some enthusiasm for the experiment in grassroots participation.

The participation was structured much like the rolling-rule regime advocates have proposed. Philadelphia devised mechanisms for continued general and focused community participation in ASEZ governance. Residents, small-business owners, and community leaders engaged in small-group work and public meetings which largely drove the content of the 1994 ASEZ grant application. These kinds of activities continued to inform broad visions and plans over the first several years of the ASEZ. Work scaled to the neighborhood level further focused involvement through committees on education, housing or other issues. According to one staff member, 'committees . . . did all the groundwork around creating a project and pulling together information, meeting with experts and building partnerships' (interview, 25 March 2008).

Findings

In 1994, when Philadelphia filed its EZ application, land use was a significant challenge for the city as a whole and especially for the American Street area. Philadelphia had one of the highest rates of vacant land of any city in the country in the 1990s (about 10%),

2 Unless noted otherwise, quotes are taken from the American Street Community Trust Board (ASCTB) Minutes. Exact dates are available from the author.

and North American Street was one of the hardest-hit areas. Once the heart of Philadelphia's textile industry, American Street by the 1990s was lined by empty lots, abandoned and occupied row-homes, vacant factory buildings and just a few operating businesses. Yet community life was vibrant in many ways, and particular blocks and buildings received significant care. The neighborhoods were predominantly inhabited by Puerto Rican and low-income residents. In the 1980s, residents organized around efforts to reclaim the neighborhood from those who dumped and drugged there, and in the 1990s convinced the Mayor to apply for their area to become a federal EZ.

Participation moves group to skeptical agreement

Though the ASEZ governing board was not asked to formally consider the specific acquisitions along American Street, resident leaders on the board had expressed their willingness to support the use of eminent domain under certain circumstances. The issue came before the board in the 1990s over the development of a ball field, which they knew would require a handful of relocations because of its intended site. The group agreed that using eminent domain to relocate a few residences made sense, as long as relocatees were treated well. No matter what the planned end use, one EZ staff member recalls, in general 'the board was, as a group, very reluctant to get behind any effort that would end up with people having to move from their house . . . [the board] always said it was against the idea of acquiring land in a way that dispossessed people unless it was absolutely necessary' (interview, 25 March 2008).

By 1998, the Commerce Department and the ASEZ had a new, pressing incentive to ask the city to pursue eminent domain along American Street. A local company, Reline Brake Center, began talking to them about moving operations onto American Street, because a developer was interested in buying its existing property a half-mile to the south. Reline promised to provide new jobs with an expanded facility on the 2100 block of North American Street. EZ board members made it clear that their willingness to sacrifice even a few scattered residences was only justified if the development actually provided local jobs. One board member explained to me, 'I supported that [the 2100 block acquisition] only because I saw the importance of bringing jobs because the neighborhood is dying. And it needs to be revived, and if we don't bring jobs we are going to die' (interview, 12 March 2008).

Despite their hopes, skeptics understood that despite policymakers' best intentions, government acquisition of land takes much longer than anticipated, and businesses operating on a tight timeline might not be able to wait. Even if light warehousing and industrial companies would build there, these skeptics claimed, government could not ensure that they would offer jobs to people from the immediate neighborhoods. Residents point to 'the strip' (American Street) and say that they don't give jobs to 'us', meaning poor people, and more specifically the poor people of color who live around there.

In the consideration of eminent domain for economic development just described, the kind of common reason that deliberative theorists celebrate allowed participants to reach agreements on solutions to difficult problems; deliberation helped parties to learn from each other and reach agreements that would have been unthinkable prior to the communication. The board structure enabled this kind of interaction. But cooperation and common reason were not always the norm; involvement was robust, *and* differences in opinion were strong (McAlister, 2010, this issue, similarly observes lasting conflicts in a study of participation over time.) Securing any cooperation among community leaders in the area was considered a major coup, even with the multimillion dollar carrot. Existing conflicts endured as neighborhood and organization leaders joined the ASEZ governing board. Organizations had developed strong claims to turf and rifts that prevented collaboration (interviews, 24 January 2007; 25 January 2007; 22 March 2007; 26 February 2008). Members with power in numbers sometimes pushed their projects through by force, which created anxiety about resource distribution. Tension among

board members, organization leaders or not, could range from political to personal issues, as represented in just a few lines of one member's explanation of her resignation: 'Personal agendas are the norm at the board level. There are those who think that the expenditure of these monies south of Berks Street is a foreign concept and something to be avoided at all costs. Some believe that sleeping with another board member's husband is a fashionable thing to do' (letter to Empowerment Zone, 1998). Compromises about specific policy decisions are more fragile than the consensus-based agreements imagined by scholars of participation because the former are more likely to break down if the expected outcomes of the policy decisions are not realized.

Participation fails to extend to implementation: contradictions between role (representation) and structure (gatekeeping)

The ASEZ staff and some board members initially supported the use of eminent domain, but the city's Redevelopment Authority would actually accomplish the land acquisition. By 2001, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia was formally pursuing three large blocks and a few scattered properties, together including 68 privately owned properties (of which 42 were vacant lots and buildings, 14 were occupied homes and 2 were occupied businesses).

Government's initial contacts with the first seven homeowners proved irresponsible and insensitive, in comparison to what ASEZ staff and board members had hoped. Initial letters informing residents, sent in December 2001, were crafted with greater attention to legal scrutiny than to a lay understanding; the recipients did not realize that they were likely to be displaced. Negotiations over inter-agency agreements to fund the acquisitions delayed additional letters and personal visits to the same residents for about seven months. When these communications did happen, in July and August of 2002, residents felt government pressured them to get out quickly but inadequately supported them in doing so.

Residents became upset and fearful, largely complaining that they had not been given early or complete information. The development results in the short-term future were disappointing as well. The delay was too long for Reline Brakes to wait, and as Reline relocated to the suburbs, the city lost 30 existing jobs as well as the additional 30 Reline had hoped to add.

One of the most important facets of the rolling-rule regime is that its structure should enable government to hear feedback so that it can respond quickly to constituent demands (Fung, 2004: 232). Ideally, active participation in implementation facilitates constant feedback. If the ASEZ's participatory mechanisms had been functioning in this way, the governing body and staff may have identified problems with the relocation process early on and made sure that residents being relocated received better compensation and care. Once developers pulled out, they may have stopped the acquisitions or helped find an alternative use for the vacant land. How did participation that seemed at least satisfactory in the first five to six years of the ASEZ fail to respond to, and correct, problems with relocation and redevelopment as they arose?

The ASEZ experiment with eminent domain was hampered by a failure to realize the importance of participation in the implementation period. In 1999, just before the eminent domain process began, there was an intentional and explicit cut in numbers of both staff and board members; issue committees dissolved; board member elections were abandoned. The culture of the board shifted as well, to participation with greater distance from the daily details. As the eminent domain moved forward, government staff did not announce the specific addresses designated for acquisition to the board, but according to one board member, this is not the kind of detail the new more formal board would have wanted to consider (interview, 11 March 2008). Yet more emphasis on meaningful participation during implementation alone would not have enabled board members to communicate effectively over the long term.

The involvement of ASEZ governing board members was structured as gatekeeping, but they had a defined role as representatives; the former hindered their performance in the latter capacity. The group took on a legal status as part of government as an entity of the Mayor's Office of Community Services and a city advisory board. This government position gave them an identity as gatekeepers. However, many board members were officially called 'community representatives' and two-thirds of the board members were elected, until the elections were abandoned. The tensions created between gatekeeping and representation dampened involvement and reduced the efficacy of the communication of those who stayed involved. In the three sections that follow, I describe how this tension became apparent and hindered effective participation and communication.

Conflict becomes suspect

Overt conflict with government staff was common, but ASEZ staff members treated it as if it ran counter to the cooperative spirit of participation; the resulting tension may have contributed to burnout. Some community representatives regularly displayed their distrust of government staff members. They repeatedly charged that staff concealed information or made too many decisions (Center for Community Change, 1998), accusations staff usually denied. What government staff members considered to be mistakes and oversights in performing their work, community representatives characterized as willful and significant errors in the performance of their duties. A particularly vocal board member once accused the staff of hiding information from the board 'to avoid questions or discussion that take a lot of time during the meetings'. The lead organizer for the ASEZ defended his co-workers, explaining that 'nothing was being hidden . . . to say staff is hiding information, that is wrong . . . [I] can take responsibility of a possible oversight in the mailing packet, but the staff of the EZ is not hiding information from the board'.

After the meeting where this exchange occurred, the Philadelphia Empowerment Zone Executive Director worked into the night to draft a letter to the board. The original version of the letter, before a revision, explained bluntly: 'I want you to think of us as your partners in this process and not your enemies. You have excellent staff which are committed and have received unfair treatment from some of you . . . I welcome entering into this dialogue with you soon'. Coming to agreement with people and organizations one distrusts will always demand energy, but it will be all the more draining if that struggle is resisted in the name of partnership, and the distrust is considered an individual rather than a structural property. The strong emphasis on cooperation and partnership between the board members and government, which would make sense from a gatekeeper or coordinator but not a representative role, caused stress and confusion when board members took positions contrary to government staff members but had no explicit language to justify the conflict in that setting.

Conflict of interest policies cause confusion

Even more specifically demonstrating the problems with making participants part of government, some members resigned because of perceived violations of the conflict of interest policy, itself a direct product of the understanding of the ASEZ board as part of government. Though the conflict of interest policy required that they be only the 'stewards', many board members would be both 'stewards' and 'receivers' of ASEZ resources, as even Mayor Rendell acknowledged at the time. Precisely because the most devoted parties were involved in narrowly defined issues at a local level, these are bound to be the very people who stand to benefit from programs, personally and professionally. The conflict of interest policy was repeatedly discussed in ASCTB meetings as either confusing or problematic. When the policy was first elaborated, members seem to have quietly resisted; they failed to hand in their required disclosure forms after repeated reminders.

The resignation of resident representative Rosemary Cubas, forced by a perceived conflict of interest, was detrimental to the board's ability to correct government errors in the eminent domain policy. Cubas had joined the board in 1996 and had spearheaded a long struggle to get funding to create a grassroots political empowerment organization called the Community Leadership Institute (CLI). With funding approval finally in hand after several years of work, the CLI began a search for an Executive Director. A few months later, Cubas announced that she had retired from her job of 29 years to take the position. ASEZ staff members felt that she should have clearly understood that she was violating conflict of interest policies because she was not permitted to benefit financially from ASEZ funding during or within two years of service on the board.

Cubas believed there was no conflict of interest. To satisfy ASEZ staff members, she resigned from the ASEZ board and took on the CLI Executive Director's position in an unpaid capacity. This happened just as the eminent domain process was moving forward. A few months later, Cubas became the leader behind the anti-eminent domain activity. If Cubas had remained on the board, perhaps she would have pressured reform without raising such public controversy. She may have urged policy corrections more quickly, with greater benefits to the relocatees, and with less political damage for city government.

Communication is hindered

One board member expressed the sentiment of many, namely that bad communication was the reason land acquisition went so wrong: 'If nothing else I can tell you that the communication for this condemnation was very poor from the beginning. If that is why it failed, it was because of the bad communication . . . And there were many people behind it' (interview, 26 February 2008). ASEZ staff members say they had expected community leaders who did know about the specific eminent domain plans to bring that information to residents in a timely and sensitive manner. Yet, like their government counterparts, community leaders failed to provide early information to residents targeted by the acquisitions. The same board member was frustrated with how other community leaders acted, as he explained to me in an interview:

If I have been given the title of being a leader, and if I am known within the community, and I know that Debbie is going to lose her house, and I know that Debbie knows me, and I know that Debbie trusts me, then I should sit down with Debbie and explain the process and tell her the pros and cons of what is going on but not stay neutral to Debbie because Debbie is getting a lot of information and does not know what the truth is (interview, 26 February 2008).

The strong structural connection to government and the lack of a concept of intermediation have prevented the kind of communication that some board members might have used to stem problems with land acquisition. Board members regularly voiced feelings of responsibility for communicating what the ASEZ was doing to other residents who did not have positions on the board, but ties to government made them hedge when the news was not good. No matter what board members said, some residents transferred their suspicions of government to the board members. Board members repeatedly expressed a desire to show the community that they really were doing something good for the community, and board members felt personally implicated by public impressions of the ASEZ. One ASCTB member complained that residents had been showing up to his committee meeting and personally attacking him because of the ASEZ.

The board minutes illustrate how these leaders might have seen their dilemma in the eminent domain projects. Board members agreed that they should facilitate communication with residents, relay their support for the broad goals of development, and show how limited their involvement with relocations was. One member said, 'We

should not be embarrassed about the importance of pursuing a viable industrial corridor along American Street; the corridor is important to the neighborhood'. Another added:

When it comes to potential relocation, land assembly and the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, we . . . are only a small part of a much larger picture. The Mayor will move forward with his plans although we expect to impact, inform . . . the initiative in this neighborhood.

The following remarks by Rosemary Cubas in particular show sensitivity to the need for them to mediate more directly between government and residents, but when the conflict erupted she was no longer on the board:

Relocation is a big concern for the community. The Community Trust Board should be prepared to discuss it from the perspective of Community Trust Board's role in any potential relocation within the ASEZ. The Community Trust Board, however, is committed to convening the appropriate parties to address any questions or concerns from the ASEZ community about relocation.

These statements betray the tension representatives were strapped with, a tension that may have pushed leaders who were privy to information to avoid communicating the bad news. Certainly, no matter what the specific institutional arrangements for participation, grassroots leaders may avoid blame for policies expected to hurt constituents (Weaver, 1986; Leibfried and Pierson, 1995). Still, more explicit emphasis on board members as intermediaries charged with communication — sometimes on behalf of governments, sometimes on behalf of residents and sometimes speaking for both simultaneously — could have supported them in more direct communication. The concept of them as intermediaries may have helped them avoid blame while forthrightly sharing information.

Anti-government participation through community organizing

Once there were signs that the use of eminent domain had gone awry, government failed to adapt quickly enough to allay fear and protest. Perhaps ironically, the support the ASEZ had given to the fledgling Community Leadership Institute (CLI) may have created the organizational resources to later fight government. Just as President Johnson's War on Poverty provided the political opportunity for the poor to organize urban social movements in the 1960s and 1970s (Fainstein and Fainstein, 1985), the ASEZ created the opportunity for organization against the use of eminent domain along American Street.

In October 2002 activists and residents suddenly, it seemed, emerged to berate the city's use of eminent domain. About six or seven months after Cubas had been forced to resign from the ASEZ board but was still pursuing the Community Leadership Institute (CLI) with some EZ funding, a 70-year-old widow living on the first block to be acquired, approached her for help. Cubas explained: 'She kept repeating over and over again that she'd gotten a letter that she couldn't understand, but that the government was coming to take away her home'. Cubas and others responded by organizing residents, in the name of the CLI, against the city's efforts. They recruited about 200 residents to come to their first large public meeting about the ASEZ and eminent domain, and they formed a group called the 'Concerned Residents of the ASEZ', within the CLI, to address 'worries about lack of voice in the changing community'.

Leading the anti-eminent domain movement put CLI's funding under threat; ASEZ staff told Cubas that the government could not fund an organization whose work was at direct odds with its programs. The ASEZ Executive Director described a 'policy that the City cannot fund projects working at cross purposes from other City funded projects'. When Cubas would not change her strategy, the ASEZ cut the program off. CLI members

felt they were doing important work, and they had Temple University program perform an evaluation to verify as much. The city's withdrawal of financial support only strengthened Cubas' conviction about the righteousness of her struggle against government power.

The CLI's organizing against eminent domain clearly drew additional government attention to the problems with relocation. Once Cubas held the large community meeting, ASEZ staff members began personally visiting affected residents, sometimes accompanied by District City Councilperson Rick Mariano. The ASEZ staff held two community meetings of their own, gathering over 300 people. They provided substantial bilingual information packets to attendees. They held meetings with community organization leaders on the subject and even appeared on a radio show.

When government or institutions with formal links to government fail, more independent pressure is needed to push for resident interests (Susskind, 1999). (This safety valve is necessary.) The activism here did not stop the planned acquisitions, but it did create some benefits for residents and property owners affected by this and future projects. The uproar forced the city to extend the relocation timeline for this project, which helped residents being relocated because many said they wanted more time to adjust to the news. The public attention and resulting direct intervention of ASEZ staff members also seems to have secured slightly more care and compensation than these residents would have otherwise received. Over the next year or so, as residents hit roadblocks in the relocation process, they sometimes appealed to Santiago Burgos, one of the ASEZ staff members who had visited them during the height of the controversy, and he helped them resolve the problems.

Because the public furor reached the mass media and City Council, it forced a slight reform of more general relocation processes as well. City Council members gave agency heads public tongue-lashings and said they intended to make sure that things were done differently in the future. Though there is no evidence that Council members followed up with any specific pressure, the Redevelopment Authority began to send out notification letters earlier in the process and revised and translated its letters to property residents and owners to be more comprehensible both in English and Spanish. Finally, facing criticism that some of the communication with Puerto Rican residents was marred by monolingual staff members, the agency hired Spanish-speaking relocation workers and Spanish-speaking receptionists.

The independent collective organizing alternative was important when community leaders could not remain a part of the participatory body and represent what they felt were their neighbors' interests. But organizing outside of government is no panacea. The campaign discussed here achieved moderate success in forcing a government response but also reinforced distrust of government and, to some extent, disempowered residents by proliferating false information. Government staff, as well as many leaders and residents sympathetic to the cause, felt that the anti-government organizers misled residents. Rumors spread that a large swathe of the area, several blocks wide and a half-mile long, was slated for clearance. Some thought the land would be used for businesses. Others heard a highway was coming in right along the neighborhood's most vibrant residential street. One resident and ASEZ board member remembers: 'We never actually saw anything on paper. We never heard anything formal, but that [the talk] was enough to get the whole neighborhood in an uproar' (interview, 12 March 2008). ASEZ staff labeled the activism a 'misinformation campaign' in internal memos. Most staff and community leaders who knew her thought that 'Rosemary [Cubas'] motivations were good... she... did not want to see... massive displacement' (interview, 25 March 2008). Faced with residents' questions, various informal community leaders apparently did take up the communication role, asked government staff about specific plans for acquisitions and passed along their belief that the planned takings were much more limited than the rumors made them seem. Slowly, fear in the neighborhood subsided (interviews, 26 February 2008; 12 March 2008).

Conclusion

The early stages of the ASEZ succeeded in meeting the goals of a small-scale participatory governance program. As tracked here through one policy issue, the governance experiment increased grassroots influence and encouraged agreement on a contentious issue. Community members of the ASEZ governing board expressed their willingness to support the use of eminent domain, even if it would mean relocating a few residents and businesses. But conflict was a regular part of negotiations, and this agreement was not a deep consensus; rather support for eminent domain rested on specific expectations about future relocations and development.

In the later stages of the ASEZ and the implementation of the decisions to use eminent domain, participation languished. The participatory body failed to help government correct problems with another agency's work. Residents to be relocated were informed later than people associated with the ASEZ expected and in an extremely confusing manner. Additionally, inter-governmental problems delayed the acquisition so long that the developer promising to bring jobs lost interest and moved outside of the city. Thus, neither of the conditions on which the earlier agreement had rested was realized.

Contradictions between structuring participation as part of government, and thus forcing a gatekeeper role on the intermediaries, and expecting members to act as community representatives prevented participation from making government more responsive. Members of the governing board who expressed distrust of the staff members were met with pleas reminding them they were in a cooperative body. Conflict of interest policies demanded that governing board members dissociate from the very programs in which they were supposed to be directly involved (and sometimes justified their being there as participants) or risk losing board membership. Board members, knowing they were perceived as in control of the ASEZ, found it difficult to communicate with constituents honestly and directly about the hurt that would be caused by decisions like eminent domain; like their government counterparts, participants took it on as their responsibility to sell the program's successes. In these ways, being so closely identified with government made the participants gatekeepers but thwarted their attempts to represent their neighbors. Some participants significantly disturbed by problems with the use of eminent domain moved outside of the ASEZ to organize directly against government, and met with some success in gaining resources for relocated residents.

This study is new in that it focuses on participants' needs to perform different intermediary identities. Their ability to move among these identities can affect the success or failure of the whole participatory enterprise. Participants' communications signal allegiances. Both government workers and community constituencies evaluate and respond to those signals.

I drew on research on brokerage to label three possible intermediary identities of a participant: as gatekeeper, coordinator or representative. The coordinator role is most relevant when issues are not contentious. When conflict is evident, the participant will need to do some of each of the two polar roles (gatekeeper and representative).

The participant's dilemma is to negotiate among all three intermediary identities, though successful performance in one may preclude successful performance of another. Here we saw participants attempting to move between these roles but being stymied by structural and cultural ties to the gatekeeper role. The failures of the participatory regime here, and the successes of the collective action that emerged in response, suggest that an actor who can move smoothly between them all will be most successful at gaining influence, and a structure that allows him or her to do so will be most durable.

The impetus behind the rolling-rule regime is that its organizations should last and help government learn from and correct its failures. This research is completed in the hope that the rolling-rule regime design will be able to adjust to its own failures. What might a structure that supports participant movement across these three intermediary roles look like? It would need to acknowledge the multiple roles both structurally and culturally. Participation may be legally structured as part of government, as an

independent group or associated with some other entity; perhaps ideally it is structured as part of all of these. Whatever its alliances, or lack thereof, structural flexibility must allow participants to act in ways that conflict with those bodies and still remain bona fide participants. Culturally, the same allowances are needed. The cultural opportunities can begin with clear statements of the three intermediary roles expected of a participant.

Debbie Becher (debbiebecher@gmail.com), Department of Sociology, Barnard College, Columbia University, 3009 Broadway, New York, NY 10027, USA.

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Résumé

Les innovations en matière de participation démocratique qui impliquent des organes de gouvernement œuvrant à petite échelle et à long terme ont accru l'influence des habitants dans les quartiers urbains pauvres américains. D'après certains auteurs, ces