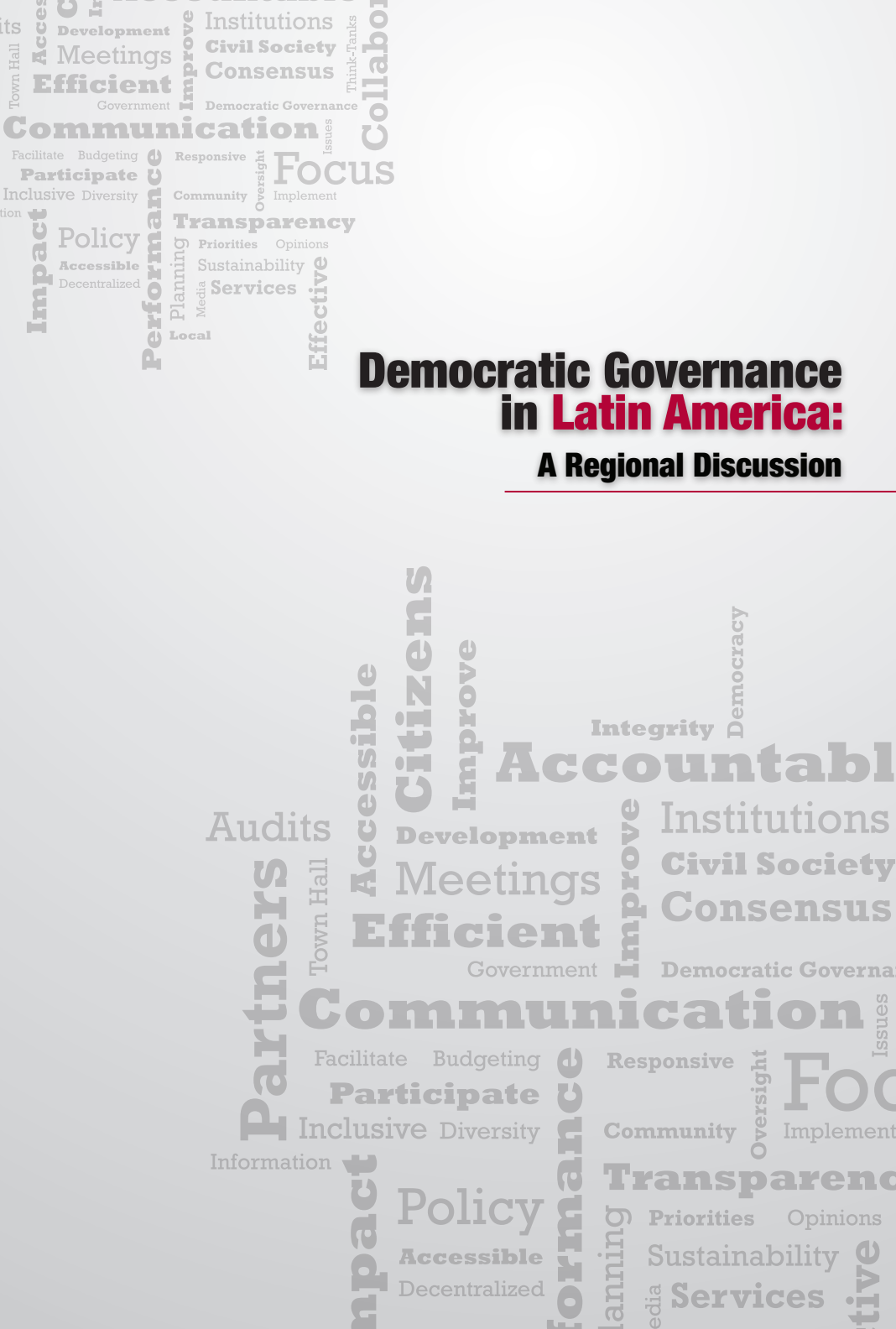
Democratic Governance in Latin America:

A Regional Discussion



Democratic Governance in Latin America: A Regional Discussion
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Cover Design by: Julian Peterson

ISBN: 978-0-615-75766-7

Democratic Governance in Latin America: A Regional Discussion

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Foreword

For nearly three decades, the International Republican Institute (IRI) has worked throughout Latin America to deepen and strengthen the region's democratic development. In the 1980s, IRI's work focused on assisting nascent political parties become representative organizations, while also lending expertise to the government institutions that began the arduous work of adopting new electoral systems.

Because democracy is about more than elections, IRI has focused its assistance in Latin America on working alongside local actors to consolidate democratic governance. Although elections have become commonplace throughout Latin America, true participatory democracy cannot be claimed by holding elections alone. In "ballot box democracies," as seen in some Latin American countries, the institutions of democratic governance have often failed to perform to their potential. These institutions remain weak and have become increasingly vulnerable to the pressures of organized crime, drug trafficking, corruption and non-democratic trends, among other forces. To help combat these pressures, IRI's work focuses on strengthening democratic institutions, building their capacity to deliver on the benefits

of a democratic political system. Success in this field largely depends on working alongside elected officials to ensure proper administration of the institutions of government to deliver an array of services and meet the needs of their citizens, while also working with civil society so that local actors have opportunities to participate in shaping their own democracy and, equally important, their country's future.

Despite the many contemporary challenges and occasional setbacks in its democratic history, Latin America offers interesting experiences, perspectives and best practices in its regional portfolio of democratic governance efforts. Having worked in the region for nearly 30 years and supported the implementation of numerous innovations in the field of democratic governance, IRI thought it timely to gather the voices of prominent partners, academics, innovators and leaders so they might contribute ideas and perspectives to the ever-growing global conversation on democratic governance. IRI seeks, through this publication, to stimulate broader discussions on democratization and governance in Latin America, to develop insights that can inform policy development and to promote the replication of best practices. It is through the work noted and conducted by the prominent partners, academics and innovators featured herein that democratic governance is alive and ongoing throughout the region.

To IRI, democratic governance is a system in which citizens participate in government planning and decision-making, while those in office respond to citizen needs with accountability and transparency. It involves the participation and leadership of many actors and institutions within a society; accordingly, this collection of essays has been structured to examine the role and responsibilities of government, civil society, the media and think tanks, exploring how these institutions can work independently and collectively to further consolidate and institutionalize democratic governance in the region. The authors expound upon and evaluate best practices and common challenges in Latin American democratic governance, allowing readers to gain an appreciation for a range of strategies and associated mechanisms that can protect and advance democratic gains while bringing government

closer to its citizens and citizens closer to their government.

The investigations and recommendations found in this book lend new perspectives on democratic governance to practitioners, elected officials, government staff and civil society actors who seek to further democratic change, improve governance and understand key issues that influence that process. Through this publication, IRI hopes readers are able to gain new insight into existing discussions of democratization and governance in Latin America. The authors' experiences show that despite daunting challenges and precarious political environments, there are opportunities and prospects for reform, transformation and success.

This collection begins with an analysis by Georges A. Fauriol, Vice President for the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), in which he deconstructs democratic governance and provides a regional overview of the state of governance in the region. Fauriol begins his contribution with a concise historical overview of the dynamics that have characterized interactions between governments and citizens and continues with an analysis of the fundamentals embedded in contemporary governance, concluding by pinpointing the political returns and benefits provided by democratic governance.

Taking a close look at the state of democracy and democratic governance in Latin America, Joel D. Hirst, Principal for Cordoba Group International and formerly Human Freedom Fellow at the George W. Bush Institute, notes the challenges that have led to the contemporary decline in democratic institutions in the region. While taking heed of historical antecedents that allowed setbacks to occur in the democratic advance of many Latin American nations, Hirst also pinpoints pressing challenges that are undermining governance in the region today. He concludes by highlighting a series of initiatives adopted at the local or municipal level in several countries throughout the Americas that have successfully countered these challenges and led to strengthened democratic performance.

Following the panoramic view of the state of democratic governance in Latin America today, the book examines the role that private and public institutions play in the intricate governance equation. Bettina Horst, Atlas Fellow for Latin American Programs and former Deputy Director at *Libertad y Desarrollo* (LyD), illustrates the important role that think tanks play in the policy development process and their ability to influence decision-makers through data and information, noting the recent proliferation of think tanks in Latin America. Finally, reflecting upon her many years working with LyD, Horst shares LyD's experiences with and contributions to the policy process in Chile.

Pedro Afonso del Pino, Director of Training and Development at the Christian Democratic Institute for Training and Development (IFEDEC), explores the values and indivisible traits of meaningful citizen participation. He reflects upon the ability of citizen participation to bring government and citizens together to work collectively and responsively, and its capacity to deepen democracy. Del Pino goes on to examine samples of participatory activities from Latin America and contrasts effective participatory models designed to influence policy makers and the policy process with participatory exercises that distort the democratic elements of participation in many countries in the region.

Exploring the roles and responsibilities of media within the governance equation, Luis H. Nájera Castillo, an independent investigative journalist from Mexico, begins by highlighting examples of effective media oversight of government through investigative journalism. He identifies and examines many of the constraints to free and reliable media in contemporary Latin America, noting recommendations for how these challenges might be overcome in the future. Specifically, Nájera pinpoints best practices that have thus far enabled media to fully participate in the governance process and regain citizen trust in the power and importance of media.

Culminating in potential policy options for governments seeking to ensure the longevity and institutionalization of democratic governance

in their country, IRI Vice President for Policy and Strategic Planning and a former U.S government official involved in Latin America, Daniel W. Fisk , connects the need for partnership between those who govern and the governed. Focusing on the roles and responsibilities of government, he explores ways in which officials can perform more effectively and more responsively through partnerships with think tanks, civil society and the media. Effective and consistent communication between government and its citizens that allows for continual citizen input into policy and governance processes, he argues, will ensure deeper democratic cultures and positive returns for those willing to innovate and embrace reform.

The final contribution to this collection is an in-depth exploration of an oversight tool, the Index of Open Government, designed and implemented by the Government of Colombia. Carlos Augusto Mesa Diaz, Deputy Solicitor General of Colombia and Juan Pablo Remolina Pulido, Deputy Attorney Advisor for Decentralization and Territorial Entities outline the structure of this best practice and details its application and outcomes throughout the country. When implemented effectively, the tool has worked to improve open government practices and mitigate the risk of corruption, thereby providing both a monetary benefit to government as well as a deeper systemic benefit to the overall democratic system.

IRI is pleased to have gathered these voices for this study and notes that the opinions expressed are those of the individual authors, not necessarily those of IRI or anyone else involved in the publication of this book. This publication was generously funded by NED, a private, nonprofit foundation dedicated to the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world.

Introduction

The International Republican Institute (IRI) recognizes that democracy is more than elections. Lasting democratic systems require leaders that govern in an accountable, responsive manner and an active civil society regularly in communication with elected officials.

In the arena of democracy assistance, we have seen that a country's ability to govern—and govern democratically—is the key factor influencing a nation's ultimate success or failure, particularly if it is a new democracy. We have also seen, in this time period, a consistent desire by citizens for democratic governance and the more effective delivery of governmental services.

Throughout IRI's 30 years, the Institute has looked to practitioners and academics for analysis of the democratization experiences in countries across the globe. IRI has incorporated those experiences into programs designed to improve the effectiveness of governing institutions and the lines of open communication between the public and their government.

As part of IRI's effort to enhance the understanding of democratic governance in Latin America, we brought together elected officials, academics and practitioners to share experiences. I hope readers of this book will come away with a better understanding of the challenges Latin American countries and their citizens face in their political evolution towards a genuine participatory democracy, as well as a stronger understanding of the key drivers of political change: citizen participation, transparent government, responsive political leadership and an independent media.

Lorne W. Craner
President
International Republican Institute

The Political Returns of Democratic Governance

Georges A. Fauriol

A significant characteristic of modern governance is an ever-changing interaction between citizen and government. This relationship has been in motion since the dawn of civilization with an endless search for a workable calibration of the fundamentals of how governance is created. This calibration remains very active today: The locus of modern governance centers on accountability and in turn highlights the role of individual citizens. How does this develop? Why are some experiences more successful than others? Ultimately, what lessons can be gleaned from these experiences?

We can pick up the story with the various renditions of the Magna Carta in Britain that emerged between 1215 and 1225.[1] These undertook to formalize a political discourse between the monarchy and its feudal constituents regarding their respective duties and responsibilities. In effect it placed an elementary but emerging form of governance in a wider institutional matrix. Five centuries later, an American response was born in a political process that underscored the very idea of revolution against state authority – in this case, independence from the British Crown. An approximation and less consistent variant of

this form of local rebellion also appeared some years later in Hispanic America against the Spanish Crown.

What Kind of Governance?

The wider institutional matrix that was only hinted at by the Magna Carta has blossomed in the early part of the 21st century into a discourse highlighting a somewhat simpler language yet no less significant focus – the people versus government. In fact, the discontinuities are not new; whether today or in 13th century Britain the general citizen conception of authority and government is usually that it is big and distant. A focus section of *The Economist*, "Taming Leviathan," summarized the situation plainly: almost everywhere today, the state is big, inefficient and broke.[2] Somewhat startlingly, it then quotes a Chinese bureaucrat who suggests that "we are in a transition from a big state to a small state, and from a small society to a big society." She notes that the relationship between government and civil society has changed from that between master and servant to a need to become a "partnership" between people and government. It is a significant observation coming from an autocratic society. This also highlights the challenges for those in the business of promoting governance programs.

The epithet good is often attached to governance in a clear reference to a qualitative feature of what is expected – but not always provided by government. This draws attention to the competency, effectiveness, and capacity of benefits and services provided to citizens. In its contemporary context governance also assumes the existence of a network of institutional relationships that make it possible for citizens and government to entertain a dialogue regarding specific preferences, not just policies. And recent experience points to the notion that citizens, motivated by knowledge of local issues and likelihood of being the preferred beneficiaries, are often efficient partners to government; this in part explains the observation above by the Chinese bureaucrat and her notions of public-private citizen partnership. But this also implies that if governance is primarily defined in terms of the efficient use of human citizen capital jointly with the state, the procedural

aspects of that partnership may not be democratic – even if the results are good. In other words, good governance does not ensure democratic governance although it is an important component. Conversely, the realities of democratic governance can translate into varying inefficiencies or worse, confounding any sense of good governance.

Regional Performances

The addition of "democratic" does not fundamentally alter the circumstances of good governance except for the political environment which is, obviously, democratic. For Latin America and the Caribbean the concepts span the varying experiences of the region. It ranges from what is generally regarded as the most successful contemporary example of democratic governance in the region, Chile, all the way to Haiti whose experience sheds light on the frustrations of establishing governance, let alone good and democratic governance. There is the outlier, Cuba, where governance is misleadingly democratic and certainly not good.

Although the methodology is open to some questions, a recent approximation or composite index of democratic governance covering the 1992-2006 period provides a snapshot of the region. Brazil and Chile are the sharpest examples of sustained transitions to democracy. If Chile by far has the best record, a second group brings in Costa Rica, Uruguay and Panama despite some bumps on the road of their own. This is followed by several countries with significantly lower records, Argentina, the Dominican Republic and Mexico. Laggards include Guatemala, Paraguay, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Honduras and Ecuador. If the 1992-2006 time span was segmented, Colombia would rank initially low but score higher beginning with the Alvaro Uribe presidency.[3]

The Latin American experience points to the fact that democratic governance does not ensure a higher qualitative outcome. Yet, the open character of democratic society does invite citizen gripes regarding government, with the knowledge that elected leadership can be voted

out. Elected leaders tend to be more attentive. The region's experience also draws attention to the uneasy interaction between democratic governance and development – economic or political. The conventional wisdom begins with the failings of public governance as the root causes for ensuing economic and political crises – for example, Alan Garcia's staggering 2,000,000 percent cumulative five-year inflation increase in Peru in the early 1990's which destroyed individual citizen livelihood. The corruptive excesses of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) governments in Mexico by the late 1970s or Peronism in Argentina during an approximately similar period underscore experiences where government in the end did not deliver. None of these experiences were very democratic either.

In contrast, the democratic wave that accompanied free market reforms in the 1990s delivered a continuum of good governance, also generally more democratic, operating in tandem with trends toward growth in income and welfare – in other words, development. This generated a substantial boost in democratic institutions gaining local ownership of the development process, leading to economic growth. A significant indicator was the rise of civil society and demands for more responsive government. Multi-party democracy was institutionalized in some of the larger countries – Chile, Brazil, Mexico – but has not responded as well elsewhere – Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Central America. But the vibrancy of civil society in its many forms and particularly at the local level has had two repercussions.

First, in cases where there were democratic reversals – Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala – or simply weak governance – Bolivia (1997 - 2006) – civil society enabled a political process to avoid the normal patterns of the past, notably military interventions. It also temporarily supplemented where the instruments of democracy – political parties in particular – essentially failed. This has all been far from perfect, Venezuela being a highly visible case in point. Second, what was perhaps prematurely dubbed "Pink Tide," framed by the electoral successes of left-of-center governments over the past decade, has largely avoided the excesses of populism and instead highlighted the fundamentals of

good, democratic governance. The contrasts have been glaring: Chile and Brazil vs. Venezuela, Ecuador, or Honduras under Manuel Zelaya.

The Components of Governance

What explains these differences? First, there is the difference between the scope of state or government activity, and the strength of state power or its institutional capacity, a distinction highlighted by Francis Fukuyama.[4] In this context one can visualize much of Latin American governance since the mid-20th century as ambitiously expansive in scope. It attempts to construct a role for public governance in all the nooks and crannies of societal life, assumes wide mandates, generates layers of bureaucratic control, invokes a top-down rather that a bottom-up notion of governance, and is misleadingly homogenous with its centralized sense of regulation and enforcement. Most often it desensitizes the role of the individual, let alone a role for local communities in governance. Worse, by and large it dries up the concept of accountability by elected officials. In practice, the strength of the state to actually plan, execute, support and enforce mandates is alarmingly weak.

This contrasts, for example, with U.S. political culture emphasizing limited government and local control. While limited, the scope of the state is accompanied by strength of governance, a capacity for the enforcement of laws, and in tandem, citizen and community input. Unlike a state with a wide scope of governance and a weak capacity or strength, in the U.S. case there is an institutionalization of the capacity to "do things" by people rather than always expecting government to step in.

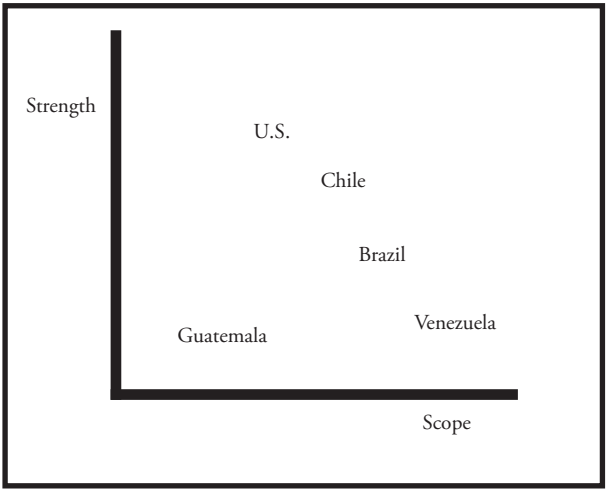
Another dimension beyond scope and strength relates to effectiveness and success (or successful) governance.[5] Success draws attention to the outcomes of governance. Its more qualitative character suggests a relationship between the success of governance and its open, competitive, accountable and democratic character. However, effectiveness and efficiency of governance is another matter, and

analytically more subjective. How *effective* governance may be is in part bound by the checks and balances of democracy and the outcome may therefore be uneven. How *efficient* that process is can also be associated with *democratic* governance, but not necessarily so. This is implied in the Chinese bureaucrat's comment noted earlier. The danger of efficient governance unencumbered by democracy is that it is a short-cut toward the emergence of populist and authoritarian tendencies. And the first to suffer are at the local level – individual voices are not heard, agreed-to mandates are not met, contradictory political and economic priorities are imposed, limited resources are wasted, and corrective local initiatives are smothered.

Fukuyama graphs approximations of the *scope-strength* matrix and it is useful to visualize; the United States has a less expansive state or public sector role (scope) than Brazil but the quality (strength) of its bureaucracy or public management is perceived as substantially higher than Brazil's. Both have federal structures, including strong state and local governance institutional roles, so the comparison has some value. A roughly similar measurement might be made of the *effectiveness-success* matrix, which draws on the Mainwaring-Scully analysis. One can argue that the United States ranks high on the strength of the state scale, which combined with its limited scope, provides it with good odds for success. On the other hand, effectiveness is a less predictable variable. Alternatively, Brazil's relatively weaker state strength limits its success, and the broader scope of its public sector undermines overall effectiveness. The same exercise could be repeated with other Latin American examples. In an adaptation of Fukuyama's graphic representation, figures 1 and 2 visualize the relationships of the two matrices.

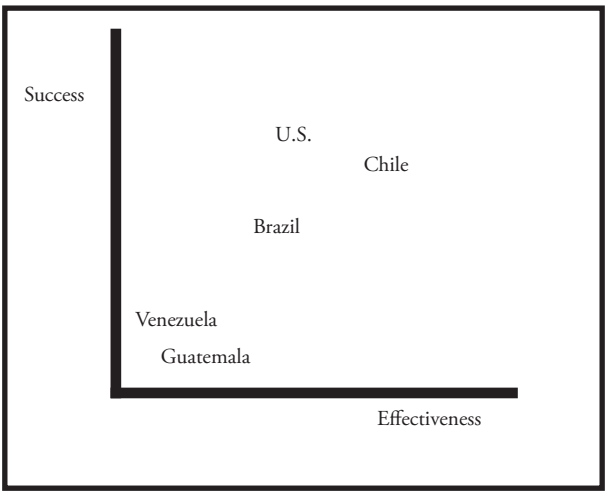
What this analysis only imperfectly addresses is the citizen component of governance. Much of the governance literature is framed as though it is only a derivative of government, less so of citizens. Yet, in democratic governance the balance of influence or power rests with citizens. Government is constructed by, representative of, and accountable to the needs of its citizens. This is encapsulated in the IRI operating

Figure 1: Scope - Strength Matrix



Adapted from: Fukuyama, Francis, *State-Building: Governance and the World Order in the 21st Century*, (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 2004).

Figure 2: Effectiveness - Success Matrix



Adapted from: Mainwaring, Scott and Timothy Scully, eds., *Democratic Governance in Latin America*, (Standford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010).

definition of democratic governance—a system in which citizens participate in government planning and decision-making, while those in office respond to citizen needs with accountability and transparency. Contrast the emphasis between citizen and the state with the following definition of democratic governance that anchors the Mainwaring and Scully study mentioned earlier: "Democratic governance refers to the capacity of democratic governments to implement policies that enforce citizen well-being and rights."[6] The latter is perfectly credible but inverts the relationship between citizen and government.

Governance Programming

The literature points to a packet of drivers or dimensions that frame democratic governance. This is generally confirmed by the practitioners in the field. This initial measure includes the degree to which the practice of governance is democratic, both nationally and presumably at the local level. Three additional dimensions are part of this packet of drivers: Rule of law, crime/security, economic growth/jobs. Another three measurements arguably constitute prevalent issue-measurements of democratic governance: Education, poverty, corruption.

1. Level of democratic practice
2. Rule of law
3. Crime/security (of community and of the individual citizen)
4. Economic growth/jobs (unemployment)
5. Education
6. Poverty
7. Corruption

These generally conform also to survey research. Latin America is relatively rich in such data, notably Latinobarometro and the Latin American Public Opinion Project out of Vanderbilt University. There is also more select survey data that can be extrapolated from IRI's governance programming. One virtue of this programming is that it focuses primarily on *local* governance. It is anchored by data that captures citizen and community interests as well as begins to outline

preferred government responses and performance – in other words, the demand and supply sides of governance.

IRI's approach to democratic governance programming is inherently dual focused, recognizing a supply as well as a demand side to the governance equation and focusing on building the capacity of each side to fulfill roles and responsibilties. The *demand* side of programming promotes local demands for governance, while the *supply* side strengthens the capacity of local government. The project components are defined in large part through initial base-line surveys of needs and opportunities. How these are addressed becomes the foundation for a creative interplay between civil society and local government structures. Achievements are based on positive performance from both constituencies.

In practice, what does this look like? Figure 3 provides specific programmatic examples. These underscore: 1) the detailed work that is involved in local governance, 2) the level of direct engagement by citizens and their government, 3) the scale of effort required to achieve results, 4) the particular role that communications in all forms play in modern governance, and 5) the measurable impact on communities that sustained initiatives can demonstrate. In short, here lie the political returns of democratic, local, governance:

- The more *local* focus reinforces the momentum for *accessibility* of government by citizens.
- This strengthens the impetus for greater *accountability* of those elected by the people.
- It is likely to encourage a wider circle of citizen engagement, in effect, broader *inclusiveness*.
- More accessible and accountable governance means a more *responsive* government and leads to a more *transparent* one.

The Bolivia case study shows increased government responsiveness to citizen priorities. In the Colombian case, attention is drawn to ensuring greater transparency in the manner government delivers services. In the

Guatemala case the emphasis is on increased government accountability and accessibility. And in the Yautepec, Mexico example, the initiative suggests a link between improved citizen knowledge of government roles and the latter's effectiveness in fulfilling those roles.

The case studies highlight the role of communications in all forms, including social media. This is not entirely new but does have a special edge to it to be singled out. This entails the role of information communication technologies (ICT). IRI's survey of ICT initiatives points to an environment with a pervasive penetration of these technologies.[7] Access to mobile telephones has spread quickly, with citizens in urban and rural areas reporting having one or more cellular phones per household and internet penetration growing steadily. In fact, IRI's public opinion surveys highlight significant household access to broadcast media, television and radio alike, and registered citizen use of these for obtaining news, entertainment and other information. An important conclusion is that ICTs have a significant impact and serve as tools for improved governance. Experience appears to suggest that ICTs can better serve citizens by improving institutional capacity and efficiency, and by engaging citizens more effectively in dialogue, decision-making and communication at large. But technology remains a tool and cannot substitute for content, let alone people. There are therefore significant caveats, including: What works in one place may not work in another; the Internet only goes so far; and technology does not replace hard work.

Eight Lessons

What lessons can we draw from these vignettes and the broader context of democratic governance in Latin America?[8] First, the IRI case studies suggest that the path toward good, democratic governance is an arduous one. The corollary is that effective democratic governance takes time to mature. The mix since the 1980s of more openly competitive political environments and varying levels of free market economies has generated uneven results. Yet, a critical virtue is that the more democratic character of this environment ultimately sustains progress.

Figure 3: Local Governance Case Studies

Bolivia	In response to a citizen petition to address environmental degradation in the Yungas valley, the local government of Coroico created the Environmental Defense Committee to craft strategies that reduce pollution and promote conservation. Made-up of public officials, civic leaders and representatives from civil society organizations, the committee also worked to obtain public and private funds for public works and projects that respond to environmental public policies. This initiative responded to efforts adopted by local officials to increase government responsiveness to citizen needs and priorities.
Colombia	The municipal government of Cartagena worked to digitize government services such as tax and utility payments, phone installation requests, and electric service issues that simplify procedures for more rapid and efficient response to citizen transactions and requests. These services are to be housed within the *DeUna* one-stop shop and also made available through the city's website. These efforts are part of an institutional strategy to bring government closer to citizens while ensuring greater transparency in the delivery of services.
Guatemala	The municipal government of San Cristobal Totonicapan hosted a live weekly local cable television show. During the program the mayor and town council members report on the work performed by their institution and elicit citizen feedback on government services or particular issues of concern, such as public safety. In an effort to increase government accountability and accessibility, the programs allow citizens to call-in and ask questions of the public officials. This media initiative is the first of its kind in the municipality and has since been adopted by other municipal governments in the country.
Mexico	A volunteer trainer, a city manager from California, visited the municipality of Yautepec in Morelos state to discuss strategies for how the government and citizens can take back public spaces. The municipality had lost a number of public parks and streets as a result of drug-related activity. After several meetings and site visits, the mayor of Yautepec decided to introduce an ordinance that: Defines the lawful use of public spaces and sanctions for improper use; establishes an internal regulation that prohibits graffiti from being up for more than 24 hours; encourages community activities in public parks; and works to ensure that the city maintains public spaces effectively.

Source: IRI, Democratic Governance Division, 2011

In the past the absence of democratic governance mechanisms and civil society meant that there were no brakes on political swings toward populism and authoritarianism. That has changed and the fact that it is particularly vibrant at the local level gives democratic governance a deeper and more organic grounding.

Second, strong and effective instruments of governance are anchored to the institutionalization that occurs at the local level. There is a direct relationship between the successes outlined in figure 3 and the likelihood that governance nationally will be influenced. Or to put the argument in the reverse, national government directives or broadly themed civil society initiatives can energize efforts toward democratic governance, yet grassroots citizen engagement and sustained, effective, local democratic governance allows the process to build roots and strength. In environments where national institutions have been skewed by populist and anti-democratic machinations, such as Venezuela under Hugo Chavez, the only recourse for the reconstruction of a democratic society is through a bottom-up process. Autocratic governments are fearful of localized citizen initiatives as well as corresponding examples of effective governance that respond to local interest, not dictates framed by the central government.

Third, although not easy to operationalize programmatically, the success of one community becomes a model to another—there is a *demonstration effect* at play. This is a key to the conundrum faced by those engaged in governance programs where replication across dozens or hundreds of communities is impractical. The Colombian and Mexican cases outlined in figure 3 are anchored to effective networking, communication, and monitoring of the work done in one community so that it spreads to others. Civil society plays a key role in this regard, particularly in an environment where communications technologies are becoming more widely accessible. More broadly, the successes of democratic governance nationally can alter the image positively of an entire nation. And arguably, this can have an impact on the region as a whole. For all of the significant imperfections of their respective records of governance since the 1980s, Chile and Brazil, and the more

recent experience of Colombia, generally carry on their shoulders the public perceptions that South America has better governance than many other regions of the world.

Fourth, a corollary to the above point draws attention to the specific role of ICTs, including social media. This feeds into a growing expectation among citizens in Latin America and the Caribbean for government to use technologies as a means for improved governance. ICTs are able to offer an effective set of tools for governance program execution, which can perhaps be categorized into four areas of work: 1) institutional efficiency, 2) improved government communication with citizens, 3) improved government customer service, and 4) professional development. This offers innovative approaches to increase institutional efficiency and effectiveness, accountability and transparency while also providing innovative approaches for improved communications between government and citizens. The fact that authoritarian and populist regimes target media is an indication of the degree to which ICTs operating in a competitive environment are such a threat to them. Venezuela under Hugo Chavez, Argentina under the Kirchners, and Ecuador under Rafael Correa come to mind.

Fifth, while improved standards of citizen participation energize local governance and empower civil society actors, they are not total substitutes for a distinct role by other key actors in a democratic society. The success of democratic governance is not just anchored to an electoral calendar; it relies on the transformational capacity of political parties to act as intermediaries with citizens and organized interest groups. The absence of a competitive political party environment will undermine the ability of civil society to transform its interests into focused instruments of public action. A challenge that several Latin American countries face – in different contexts, Bolivia, Peru and Venezuela for starters – is a weak or unstable political party environment often tied to personalities rather than issues. Ultimately, this often deteriorates into the path of less than democratic governance.

Sixth, democratic governance is a critical component to sustained

economic and social growth, in other words, measurable material development. The participatory aspect of democratic governance alters the dynamic of how priorities are decided and who does so. This generates a window through which alternative ideas are proposed and openly debated and resources possibly allocated. The process also fosters a key distinction in the development process between government and private initiative and ownership. In some cases a formal partnerships can ensue to achieve broader common goals. Real-world experience tells us that the interaction between democratic governance and development is not an automatic one; democratic governance is by nature a somewhat unpredictable process, and its absence draws attention to the proposition that development may be possible without democratic governance. The Soviet Union and its current residual byproduct, Cuba, proved that notion wrong; today China is the most visible alternative example, but most likely a misleading one in the long run. There is a tinge of democratic fervor in the commentary by the Chinese bureaucrat quoted in the opening pages of this paper and an implied admission that citizen opinions and interests do matter in order to fulfill the country's ambitious economic growth targets. But that limited conceptualization of citizens' role in governance suggests that the current Chinese model of economic and social development is probably unsustainable politically.

Seventh, the Latin American context of democratic governance also generates ancillary developmental benefits in transitional peace processes and post-conflict environments. For starters, this produces a structured, non-violent context for debate, a respect for open communication and procedures, and encourages a more transparent adherence to the rule of law. The same participatory attributes of democratic governance that engender development become the fragile backbone that enlarges political and economic space. The experience has been uneven, notably in Central America, but points to the significance of local governance programming to reenergize that space. Colombia's more successful evolution after the late 1990s underscores this point even if there is much still to be achieved.

And eighth, last but not least, the international community can play a key role in promoting democratic governance but that can only succeed if it is anchored by indigenous leadership and institutions. The democratic character of governance is most closely associated with a domain defined by activists, citizens, civil society actors and governance structures. It is, after all, their environment; and the prioritizing of interest and the ensuing working consensus that is implied by democratic governance, cannot be driven from the outside.

Endnotes

[1] Fukuyama, Francis, *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution*, (New York, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

[2] "Taming Leviathan," *The Economist*, 17 March 2011.

[3] Mainwaring, Scott and Timothy Scully, eds., *Democratic Governance in Latin America*, (Standford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010).

[4] Fukuyama, Francis, *State-Building: Governance and the World Order in the 21st Century*, (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 2004).

[5] Mainwaring, Scott and Timothy Scully, eds., *Democratic Governance in Latin America*, (Standford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010).

[6] Mainwaring, Scott and Timothy Scully, eds., *Democratic Governance in Latin America*, (Standford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010) p. 13.

[7] *The Use of Information and Communication Technologies* (ICTs) *in Democratic Governance Programs in Latin America*, International Republican Institute (2010).

[8] See also extensive literature with varying opinions, including three recent comparative studies, *Mainwaring and Scully* (2010), a more critical view by Katherine Isbester (ed.), *The Paradox of Democracy in Latin America* (2010), and in a different vein, Francis Fukuyama (ed.), *Falling Behind* (2008).

Declining State of Democratic Institutions and the Implications for Governance

Joel D. Hirst

Much has been written and said in recent years about the state of democracy in Latin America. There is a certain irrational exuberance which suggests a sentiment of "mission accomplished" and time to "move on" for the region. "Remember from 1930 to 1980, 40 percent of all changes in Latin American governments were through *coup d'états*," Arturo Valenzuela, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs has said. "This is the longest period in the entire history of the Americas … of continuous constitutional rule. We are in a very good time now."

Nevertheless, the democratic advances sustained in Latin America over the last generation remain tenuous. As former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sanchez stated in his farewell speech in 2010,

> "Despite the speeches and applause, the reality is that our region has advanced little in the last decades. In certain areas, it has marched resolutely backwards. Many wish to board a rusted wagon to the past, to the ideological trenches that divided the world during the Cold War. Latin America runs the risk of adding to

> its astonishing collection of lost generations. It runs the risk of wasting, yet again, its opportunity upon the earth. It falls to us, and those who come after, to keep this from happening. It falls to us to honor the debt to democracy, to development and to the peace of our peoples, a debt that came due many centuries ago. Honoring the debt to democracy means much more than promulgating political constitutions, signing democratic charters or celebrating periodic elections. It means building trustworthy institutions, well beyond the anemic structures that today sustain our apparatus of state. It means guaranteeing the supremacy of the rule of law, that some insist in pole vaulting."

The issues that have led to the recent decline of democratic institutions in Latin America have historic antecedents. These have not only hurt institutionalization but have impeded the advance of professional, well organized, responsive, dynamic democratic governments and eroded the legal framework which would facilitate economic growth in all sectors of society, and thereby decrease income inequality. They emerge in large part from idiosyncrasies in Latin American culture and administrative organization; and some date back even to the colonial period. While tomes could be – and have been – written on the subject, for the purpose of this practical discussion this article will focus on two clear challenges: Excessive personalization of leadership and corruption. Overcoming these challenges will, in large part, remedy some of the underpinning causes of in-governability and go a long way in laying the foundation for a just and modern society based upon rule of law and that is responsive to the needs and demands of its citizenry.

Before discussing these challenges in more detail, there is an important caveat to highlight. The threat to democratic institutions in Latin America is often a matter of practice, not design. On paper, Latin America maintains some of the most advanced constitutions, some of the most sophisticated mechanisms for citizen participation, and generally speaking a tax code which would allow sufficient resourcing

of local and national government.* However, the anti-institutionalism advanced by a nouveau *caudillismo* (as described below) has rendered these structures and laws irrelevant, with the corresponding anti-institutionalism making it difficult to respond to the real needs of citizens. The populist demagoguery of many leaders around the region portrays these laws and institutions as inventions of the West or the North. Far from institutional governance being championed as the solution to poverty and injustice, in too many countries it is portrayed as the roadblock to a more responsive, social justice. This has harmed democratic government in too many countries in the region.

The challenge of excessive personalization of leadership has impeded democratic institutions from consolidating in Latin America. Throughout its history, Latin America has suffered under the weight of *caudillos*, strong feudal overlords who ran their countries as fiefdoms. Rule of law always rested upon the final word of these strongmen. Their names are oft and energetically repeated, and they have established their place as legendary figures in the annals of Latin American history; people like Juan Vicente Gomez, Anastasio Somoza, Juan Velazco Alvarado, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo and many others.

During the last half of the 20th century the governments of these countries rapidly shed their *caudillos* and embraced an increasingly established, yet still delicate, democracy. This transition to democracy was rife with abuses of power, and the institutions meant to protect the nascent democracies of the region remained feeble. All too content to continue to consolidate power, wealth and prestige in the executive, and without the investment from governments in institutions, newly created governments continued to fall prey to a renewed authoritarianism. In the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st, this authoritarianism began to take a new form. Elected presidents – many times good presidents – began to see themselves as irreplaceable. They consolidated power in their already strong presidential systems and continued the pattern of weakening the

* An exception may be Venezuela and other Bolivarian Alliance countries, which have recently rewritten much of their legislation to allow for an ideological takeover of the institutions.

legislative and judicial powers. This was done through the extension of presidential mandates or the modification of term limits and the use of emergency legislation to consolidate national agendas. This has, in turn, obstructed the emergence of a more diverse, representative political class. While many of these have been excellent leaders, some would argue that the unending presence of the same people in national political life has weakened democratic governance.

Anti-institutional authoritarianism is most heavily felt in the countries that are members of the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas (ALBA) – a regional political alliance supported ideologically and economically by President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela. In this alliance, political constitutions are changed as part of a package to weaken the other branches of government and extend term limits and authority of the executive. This project with its veneer of legality represents a return to the feudal days of the previous century. Under this model, strongmen such as Hugo Chavez, Daniel Ortega, Evo Morales and Rafael Correa (and of course the Castro brothers), bring the institutions of government under their control and eliminate the separation of powers in order to set themselves up as the new *caudillos*. They exert control through a new radical demagoguery which they have poetically dubbed "participatory democracy." This new form of "mob rule" demands that people surrender to the *caudillo* the very idea of basic, inalienable civil rights in order to "participate" in broad areas defined by the government – most importantly the vote. The model is propped up by the almost-constant referenda and elections which provide a questionable legality to the authoritarian project. For the poor, who heralded the advent of democracy with the hope that it would improve their wellbeing, this model is welcomed. The underprivileged segments of society, which have been disappointed by the lack of upward social mobility provided by representative democracy in Latin America, have been able to participate, albeit superficially, in their own governance and receive economic benefits from this new "participatory democracy." The fact that they must follow the ideological line of their *caudillos* is seen, at least at the beginning, as a small price to pay. The model has been wildly successful, allowing Chavez to extend political influence over

five countries, with a population of more than 80 million and a gross domestic product of more than $600 billion.

The second challenge, which has led to an institutional crisis in Latin America, is the issue of corruption. According to the Latinobarometer survey of 2010, only 37 percent of respondents believed that there was improvement in fighting corruption over the last two years, and 11 percent of the population admitted that they or their families participated in corruption within the last 12 months. This perceived corruption is blamed for an increase in violent crime with 31 percent of respondents (the majority) stating that police corruption was the cause of violence. There are several reasons for this corruption. The first are weak controls on acts of corruption by government ministers, and the politicization of the fight against corruption. For example in the case of Venezuela, the government uses the fight against corruption as a mechanism for political persecution of the opposition. The second problem causing corruption are the bureaucratic hurdles required to accomplish anything administratively. Highlighted by Hernando De Soto's famous examples in his book *The Mystery of Capital*, De Soto outlines the bureaucratic hurdles to conducting legitimate business in Peru. For example, it took De Soto's team six hours a day, 289 days to register their business; the legal cost for this was $1,251.00, a prohibitive amount for the average Peruvian citizen.

In Venezuela, birth certificates expire every six months and must be renewed. In Nicaragua, it can take up to three years and 10 trips to a person's home village for a renewal of the *cedula*, the national identification card. All of these problems create an environment that is ripe for corruption as "enablers" spring up to assist in processing documents which would otherwise be free.

Probably the most significant cause of corruption which has laid waste to many institutions is the drug trade. Drug production and transport is by far the most significant illicit business venture across Latin America. Venezuela has become a major drug transit route. According to the 2009 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report, Venezuela

was the source country for 50 percent of drugs seized in Europe, where drug consumption has doubled in a decade from 63 to 124 metric tons. Venezuela is also the source country for a great majority of the drug flights between the Americas and West Africa, where the drug trade has influenced local politics and funded instability. In Bolivia, coca production has reached endemic levels under President Evo Morales, former head of the coca growers union. Currently there are 50,000 hectares under cultivation in Bolivia, producing 113 metric tons of cocaine which is fueling the rapid rise in consumption and violence on the streets of Brazil.[1] Despite real attempts to curb production, Peru has become arguably the largest producer of cocaine – overtaking Colombia. The most significant problems generated by the drug trade are in Mexico and Central America where in the latter case the governments of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador are unable to adequately cope with the violence and corruption resulting from drug trafficking – and where drug money has polluted political campaigns, purchased judicial decisions and has impacted the highest levels of elected and administrative government.

Despite this somber assessment, the return of national level authoritarianism and the creeping cancer of corruption – as well as the corresponding rise in insecurity and collapse of institutionalism – can be arrested by the ongoing commitment to strengthen local democratic governance. True believers in the promotion of representative democracy have understood for many years that the closer government is to the people it represents, the more responsive it is required to be to constituents and the easier it is to ensure accountability, and even a change in political leadership when required. As former Speaker of the U.S. House Tip O'Neil famously stated, "All politics is local." Local governments are often proving grounds for new generations of leaders who are able to gain credibility and create a platform by demonstrating success in responsive governance. Equally, when people feel democracy working at the local level they are increasingly discerning when faced with pseudo "participatory" democracy – and they are more committed to the real thing.

As we have seen in the ALBA countries, democratic governance is the only mechanism by which to challenge the increasingly authoritarian rule of the nouveau *caudillos* as people vote for local level leaders who are able to reduce violence and solve some of the myriad of problems that exist in their communities.

As these votes in favor of strong technocratic governments add up, they are eventually able to challenge the ALBA *caudillos* not only on rhetoric and debate but by the merit of their work as displayed through their responsiveness in municipal governance. This is the case, for example, of opposition leaders in Venezuelan municipalities such as Chacao and Baruta in greater Caracas, as well as from some regional governors such as in Lara state.

This is also the case in non-ALBA countries such as Colombia, Peru and Mexico where the mayors of the respective capital cities have launched bids to national level leadership based upon platforms of successful local governance.

Over the past several decades, there have been enough local initiatives that a pattern of best practices has started to emerge. There are inexpensive and effective initiatives and activities that local governments can carry out which go a long way in building trust among constituents, combat corruption, and demonstrate an alternative to populist authoritarianism. I have chosen as examples initiatives that are focused on what Latinobarometer found are the greatest concerns of citizens in their 2010 survey: Corruption, insecurity and unemployment.

Corruption/Transparency

Silence and secrecy breeds mistrust, which is the death knell of democracy. A citizenry who are informed and well versed in the activities of their local municipal government has the ability to discern whether their local elected leaders are carrying out the tasks they were designated to achieve through their election to office. As their confidence increases, the citizens will take an increasingly active role in

defending and protecting what they have come to understand as good governance. In the case of authoritarian power grabs from the central government – a community content with its local leaders will defend them. And in the case of corruption and abuse of power, citizens who are accustomed to a responsive local government will feel empowered to seek a change in their leaders in order to return the situation to where it was during a good government.

There are many mechanisms to inform individuals of the activities of local government. In Venezuela, the municipal government of Baruta held citizen's assemblies in the *barrios* to discuss issues. Local government staff and office directors explained the purpose of proposed interventions to community representatives. For example, with the creation of nurseries for working single mothers, the office director for children and families held assemblies in the areas around where a nursery was to be set up and explained the role of the community and the community's required contribution to the initiative.

In Guatemala, IRI supported the production of print materials and television programs for the municipal governments of San Cristobal Totonicapán, Cantel, El Palmar and San Cristobal Acasaguastlan. These products succinctly demonstrated to citizens the status of ongoing projects, activities that were completed and important upcoming issues to ensure communities were better informed. In San Cristobal Totonicapán, this included a bi-weekly television show where the mayor addressed the municipality and issued progress reports and then fielded telephone calls from citizens with questions or comments. In Cantel, this included the development of a website for the municipal government where information is made available to citizens. In Acasaguastlan, the municipal government developed a monthly newsletter which was distributed widely informing the residents of government activities.

In Nicaragua, IRI is assisting with the setup of independent radio stations for use of the community – including the mayors – to disseminate information and updates on the activity of the municipality.

Another excellent way of sharing information within communities is regular town hall meetings where citizens can discuss their concerns in person with the mayor and his or her technical staff. A mayor could also use new SMS technology to deliver short, timely messages regarding information of concern to citizens. Finally, local leaders can use social media such as Twitter and Facebook to maintain contact with citizens. These social media tools have spread throughout Latin America quickly where there is a population capable of accessing and using communications equipment that is no longer prohibitively expensive.

All these tools and strategies help in creating a link between those governing and the governed. The fostering of a sense of citizen ownership of their local leaders, their municipal government activities, and the direction of their town creates a bond which can be used by these leaders in the case of authoritarian reprisals against local government. In Venezuela, the natural connection that Baruta's mayor Capriles Radonski developed with the inhabitants of the municipality served to increase pressure on the central government of Venezuela to release him after four months of illegal detention. Good governance and a connection with the community has also allowed former mayor of Chacao to create a movement to support him in taking the Venezuelan government to the Inter-American Human Rights Court after he was unconstitutionally declared ineligible to run as a candidate in the next elections.

Citizen Participation and Security

The best way to empower local citizens to engage in the defense of their democracy and security is by offering opportunities for them to meaningfully participate in activities in support of municipal governance. For those strict adherents of representative democracy, the idea of citizen participation could be a difficult pill to swallow. In the strictest sense of the word, citizens should participate in the act of voting, paying taxes, attending jury duty and following the laws (and conversely reporting on those who do not). For many people the idea

of citizen participation may seem much more a chore than a privilege. The thought of coming home after a long day of work, only to go out again to attend a meeting or a planning session or a budgeting session or to do community service can be considered burdensome.

The first step in the process of building an engaged citizenry is to educate them on the roles of government. It is often surprising to see that the roles and responsibilities of the various levels of government are unclear to most people. This causes people to reward the central government for any small benefit in their lives, while showering blame upon local government for everything that goes wrong. This plays directly into the hands of populists and is largely responsible for propping up authoritarian leaders in Latin America. For this reason, good civic education programs such as those carried out by Costa Rica's Inter-American Institute for Human Rights (among others) have been able to change perception as to the role of government and the responsibility of citizens.

When the local government's role is clear to the citizens, they are then able to participate with a realistic understanding of what this participation can achieve. In few other areas is citizen participation as critical as in that of personal security. In Mexico, IRI worked with civil society organizations and local partner *Movimiento Pro-Vecino* (MPV) to develop strategies to address the key issue of public safety, engaging citizens and government alike in the design and implementation of new initiatives aimed at addressing this challenge. IRI worked with MPV to hold community safety seminars with the theme of Together for our CommUNITY in the three most crime-ridden districts of the municipality of San Jacinto Amilpas in Oaxaca state. Over the course of three months, localized action in a block-by-block strategy resulted in local buy-in of the program with citizens implementing community safety activities that included enrolling members of every street into a neighborhood safety committee which focused on cleaning streets and painting over graffiti, and maintaining contact with members of the police force. Through the civil society activities, the citizens actively advocated on behalf of their needs before the municipality. Citizens

also took the lead in implementing crime-prevention initiatives. For example, as part of the campaign More Light - Less Crime, citizens were encouraged to install lighting on their front entrances and encourage other citizens to do the same.

The results of these programs have been outstanding. Close to 1,000 neighborhood residents have so far participated in analyzing and finding solutions to local public safety problems. Many of the neighborhoods placed new, or replaced deficient, public lighting and installed community alarm systems. Some spent weekends painting over graffiti and holding substance abuse talks with high school students, while others created neighborhood watch councils. The program is still being carried out in all these neighborhoods; and mayors are trying to adapt this model to other neighborhoods in their municipalities.

In Venezuela, the law of Local Councils for Public Planning (CLPP) was passed to give citizens in the communities the ability to participate. These councils were made up of civil society members, the local council people, and the mayor's office. These councils were organized to support the local mayor, help prioritize needs, help with the participatory budgeting process, and help with "social control," an activity related to municipal financial transparency and citizen oversight of the work being done. Along with this, the central government set up a fund called the Inter-Governmental Fund for Decentralization (FIDES) which reviewed proposals developed by the community and signed by the mayors offices and passed on to the central government. The CLPP's were also allotted the management of 20 percent of the non-recurring capital expenditures of the municipality. With support from United States Agency for International Development (USAID), local organizations participated in the training of more than 50 CLPP's with 3,000 members through a set of manuals titled Participatory Visor. In these manuals, the CLPP law was explained as well as related topics such as citizen participation, local conflict resolution, needs assessments, participatory budgeting and others.

In the city of Valencia, in Carabobo state, the CLPPs were so successful

that major rehabilitation of the physical infrastructure of this large city was attributed to them. The mayor, an opposition figure, was so successful that his party went on to win the state governorship. The increasingly authoritarian central government responded to the success of the CLPPs by defunding FIDES and bypassing the CLPP law. The central government realized (too late) that in the empowerment of the communities, bringing them to work together with their elected leader to solve real problems, they were enabling local democracy. These CLPPs were replaced with the communes, a partisan committee responsible to the Venezuelan Socialist Party and with membership and benefits exclusive to party loyalists.

Employment/Economic Growth

Finally, one of the most significant continuing issues of concern identified by local citizens in the region has been the lack of employment and economic opportunity. Addressing this issue is especially important given that it is the inherent responsibility of local government and those who govern to spearhead local economic development. This work, while improving citizens' quality of life, also allows public institutions to proactively create local revenue which bolsters institutions and promotes the development of the municipality. In many instances this can be challenging, since so much of economic activity can depend upon conditions set by the central government.

In the municipality of Potosí in Bolivia, IRI carried out a municipal diagnostic which identified the potential for tourism of the old town. Potosí is a town of immense historic importance, not only for Bolivia but for Latin America. At its peak in the 1500s, Potosí was the wealthiest and largest city in the Western Hemisphere. IRI helped the municipal government develop the plan *Potosí 365 Days and Nights* to establish Potosí as an important center for national tourism. The municipality organized a forum with universities, hotel chains and small artisans to diversify the economy by creating a silversmith school whereby local artisans create items out of the silver mined in Potosí.

In San Cristobal Totonicapán, Guatemala, IRI and the mayor worked together to inaugurate that country's first Municipal Office of Local Economic Development (OMDEL) in 2009. This office was designed to have a multifaceted role in promoting long term development and small business growth through a variety of initiatives, including providing trade and investment information to local farmers and entrepreneurs, matching labor supply with producer demand, promoting the formation of key public-private partnerships and attracting local and outside investment to develop unrealized potential in areas such as tourism. Three more OMDELs were opened in Guatemala in 2009 and 2010 in the municipalities of San Cristobal Acasaguastlan, Cantel and El Palmar. Importantly, IRI also worked with the municipal governments to devise strategies through which to effectively engage the private sector.

In each of the municipalities where IRI worked to develop the OMDELs, local government leaders were quick to see the potential of these offices and each has acted to institutionalize them. The offices have seen concrete results beyond the expectations of the mayors who worked with IRI to inaugurate them, including successes in fostering employment, promoting job creation, encouraging tourism, stimulating commerce, and attracting investment.

Conclusion

As can been seen by the examples above, there is sufficient experience in the region to make the case that a deft municipal government can overcome the challenges of anti-institutionalism. Strong, institutional leaders committed to interacting with their constituents according to the letter of the law are able to effectively guard against authoritarian regimes. And commitment to transparency and accountability helps them to convince drug dealers to find other places in which to carry out their nefarious activities. Just as democrats and businessmen vote with their feet, so do drug runners and criminals.

It is true that in countries with no commitment to national institutional

democracy and affected by institutional entropy, this approach may create "pockets of paradise." But, if the world has learned anything from popular movements over the last 30 years, it is that they will not endure authoritarianism and corruption forever, and when they finally rise up they will need tried and true leaders who have demonstrated, by their actions, that they can build a more just world.

Endnotes

[1] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *2009 World Drug Report.* New York: United Nations, 2009. Print.

Collaboration Between Think Tanks and Government in the Development of Public Policy

Bettina Horst

There are endless examples of countries that have lost decades of progress as a result of poor design and implementation of public policy. This, unfortunately, has condemned millions to a life of poverty. Recovery from poorly written and ill-conceived policy is costly and time consuming, often taking decades to regain what was lost in the process. Incomplete policies put in place or beneficial policies not implemented have a significant effect on future generations. The effects of public policy or the lack of it cannot be ignored. Even though it is government which acts as the main source of design, implementation, and execution of public policy, gone are the days when citizens could afford to shrug off the importance of their role in the policy process and ignore the actions of government. In this regard, think tanks have played an important role in empowering civil society with a sense of responsibility in the policy process. As institutions dedicated to the study and analysis of public policy, think tanks provide tools and information to government and civil society to help them make well informed decisions. In many instances, think tanks have been able to create a space for civil society to influence policy processes which otherwise would have been monopolized by the government. The

capacity of government to formulate and implement effective public policies does, undoubtedly, directly affect a nation's governance. It is in this sense that think tanks play an important role in strengthening the governance of a country. Although think tanks can be helpful in building and strengthening governance, their existence alone is not enough to do so. The capacity of a think tank to affect governance is determined by the work they do and the extent to which they are able to influence government to adopt well-designed policy. Undoubtedly, the political context and political maturity of each country significantly affects the capacity of civil society to contribute to the debate and the design of public policy. Despite the limitations present, the work of think tanks must have a long-term focus, certainly beyond the administration currently in power.

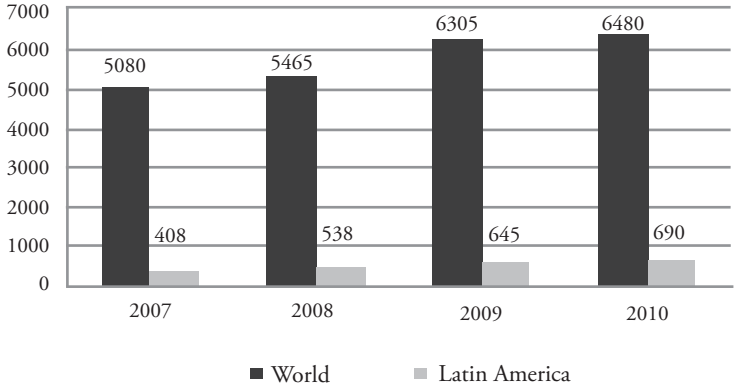
Evolution of Think Tanks in Latin America

The existence of think tanks worldwide is a new phenomenon. The second half of the last century was the boom period and by 2010 there were 6,480 think tanks in the world. Of these, half were created in the 1980s and 1990s. In recent years, the number of think tanks in Latin America has increased at a faster rate than any other region, with a total of 690 think tanks in 2010. This represents 11 percent of the total number of think tanks in the world, which rose from eight percent in 2007.

This trend in think tank creation is assumed to have facilitated a more active role of civil society in matters of public policy formation. Yet, there is doubt as to whether this has actually been the case and whether the existence of more think tanks in the region has indeed translated into better public policies. Unfortunately, it is difficult to measure the impact that think tanks have had in the public policies adopted throughout the region.

Despite the difficulty of measuring the impact of think tanks on a country's governance, attempts have been made to correlate the presence of more think tanks with better governance. To evaluate this

Figure 1: Think Tanks in the World and Latin America, 2007-2010



Source: McGann, James G., Ph.D., *The Global "Go-To Think Tanks" 2008, 2009 & 2010* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2008-2011), Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program. <http://www.go-to-thinktank.com/global-%E2%80%9Cgo-to-tanks-leading-public-policy-research-organizations-world/>.

correlation, we used the governance index developed by the World Bank and the Brookings Institute. The index defines governance as "The traditions and institutions through which authority is exerted." Conceptually this definition is based on three areas: the process through which governments are chosen, replaced and monitored; the capacity of a government to formulate and implement effective public policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for institutions that rule the economic and social interactions between them. Although think tanks can be involved in all of these areas, their main role and focus is within the formulation and implementation of sound public policies. The index provides information that measures *government effectiveness* and *regulatory quality*. Government effectiveness is understood as the perception there is regarding the quality of public services, civil services, and the degree to which the government is capable of formulating and implementing public services independently from political pressures. Likewise, it considers the credibility of a government regarding the commitment to such policies. Regulatory quality is understood as the capacity of a government to formulate and implement robust policies

and regulations that enable and promote the development of the private sector.

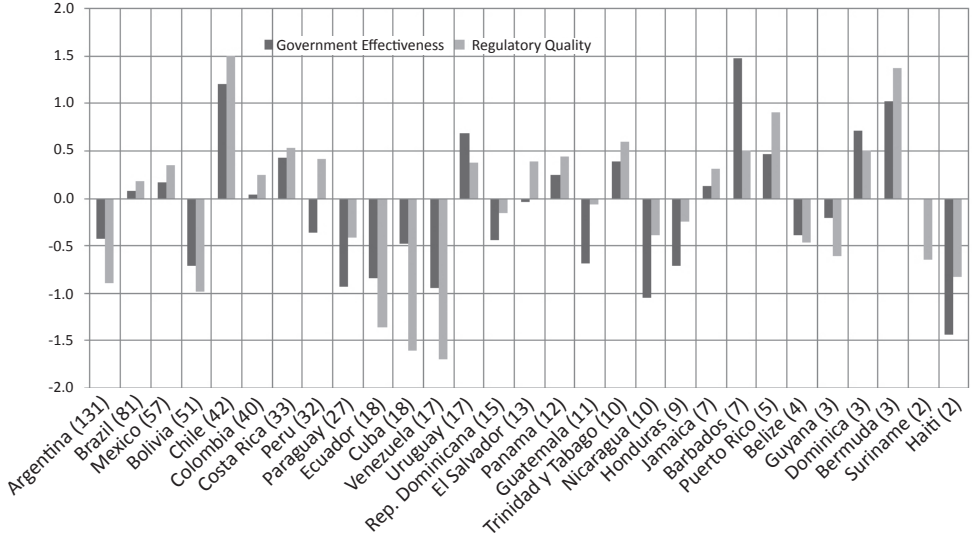
In figure 2, the government effectiveness and regulatory quality indexes are displayed for 29 countries in Latin America. The countries are organized in relation to the number of think tanks they have, which is indicated in the horizontal axis in parenthesis together with the name of the respective country. The government effectiveness and regulatory quality indexes have values between -2.5 and 2.5, which means, the higher the score on the index, the better the governance of a country.

Argentina is the Latin American country with a greatest number of think tanks, with a total of 131 organizations, however, the country scored low in both government effectiveness and regulatory quality on the index as compared to countries with fewer think tanks, such as Brazil. A similar situation is seen in the case of Bolivia, a country that has more think tanks than Chile, but a lower index in both areas.

Although the size of the country and size of the population have a significant relationship to the number of think tanks in a country, what this graph clearly illustrates is that the simple creation and presence of think tanks does not result in better governance. The capacity of individual think tanks to contribute to the development of a country and strengthen democratic governance is dependent not only on the strategic and concrete actions taken by think tanks, but also on the political reality of the countries they operate in. Although think tanks are not immune to pressures of the political environments in which they operate, the public policy focus of these organizations should be for the long term and reach beyond the government in power.

In sum, we need to go beyond thinking of ways to create more think tanks in Latin America. The more relevant question to consider is how to improve the capacity of the many think tanks already present so that these organizations strengthen democratic governance in their respective countries.

Figure 2: Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality and Think Tanks in Latin America†



Source 1: Kaufmann, Daniel, Aart Kraay and Massimo Mastruzzio, *Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) Project*, World Bank. <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp>.

Source 2: McGann, James G., Ph.D., *The Global "Go-To Think Tanks" 2010* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2008-2011), Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program. <http://www.gotothinktank.com/global-%E2%80%9Cgo-to-tanks-leading-public-policy-research-organizations-world/>.

From Thinking and Ideas into Action

It could be inferred that the main role of think tanks is to analyze and develop public policy. However, the true relevance of these organizations is determined by their ability to influence those actors responsible for the design and implementation of public policies. A think tank that limits itself to policy formulation and analysis and does not have the capacity to exert influence in order to affect the implementation of policy is ultimately an irrelevant organization. Depending on an organization's mission, different think tanks may choose to focus on influencing specific groups or sectors of society as part of their advocacy efforts.

†For figure 2, only countries covered by the Governance Index and have at least two think tanks were considered.

Although it is important to keep in mind that think tanks are not synonymous with traditional university research centers or academic institutions, it is not uncommon to see think tanks that have emerged from one of the aforementioned institutions. In creating their own think tanks, these institutions seek to transform their traditional academic work into concrete and direct means of influencing national events.

One of the most significant challenges a think tank faces is maintaining a balance between the strict academic rigor required of a think tank and ensuring the issues are understood by the non-academic actors involved in the policy process. The work done and the documents developed should be in language that is understandable and accessible to citizens and policymakers, while at the same time adhering to the highest academic standards and integrity in research and analysis. This balance between the quality of analysis and ease of understanding is what helps a think tank achieve credibility and establish a presence in society. It is also important for think tanks to be able to contribute to discussions on issues that come up daily, and to understand the timetables and deadlines associated with these discussions. Delivering a policy analysis late is equivalent to having not submitted anything, and may ultimately undermine the credibility of an institution if it is viewed as out of touch with the policy discussions of the day. However, the ultimate goal of think tanks is not to develop timely and rigorous policy proposals, but to influence the policy making process so that the developed proposals are accepted and implemented.

The success of a think tank is not measured by the number of published works but by the overall influence the institution has in three specific environments: government, legislature and media. The importance of influencing government is perhaps the most obvious of the three, as it is the most relevant player in determining and implementing public policies. The legislature is also important, as most, if not all, public policies are discussed and must be approved by that body. Indeed, it is the legislative branch that defines the general framework in which policies are designed and implemented. The role of media in the public

policy process cannot be ignored. Although media does not design or implement policies, it plays a significant role in terms of influencing public opinion regarding policy.

Another relevant issue in determining the level of success of think tanks is their institutional capacity to remain financially viable and maintain their independence over time. The management and financial structure of a think tank influences the degree of independence with which the organization operates, thus affecting the organization's agenda in working toward a given policy outcome. In many instances, the funding source of a given organization is the sole determinant of what issues and policies the institution will focus on. For example, in the case of think tanks linked to political parties, whether through financial dependence and/or management, the party will influence the degree of independence with which the organization approaches certain discussions. A strong link to a political party may also mean that the organization is affected by political cycles. At the same time, think tanks financed by specific economic groups could have their credibility and impartiality called into question when discussing certain topics. These influences could very well lead to think tanks being instruments for negative change if the policy changes that their benefactors seek are not carefully conceived. This potential for think tanks to become armed branches of specific interest groups or political parties can undermine the positive affects this system can have on the effectiveness of governance and the development of sound policy.

However, this potential should not be taken to mean that think tanks should never be linked to specific groups or parties. Quite the contrary, as long as think tanks maintain their objectivity and quality, these organizations can serve as mediators and refiners of policies that might otherwise be purely ideological and ungrounded. Going back to the example of political party think tanks, these organizations can and should help political parties develop better policy proposals that are based on serious analysis and not solely on political considerations.

Spaces for Collaboration Between Think Tanks and Government

Think tanks that have built their reputation as a resource in matters of public policy through rigorous research and their ability to influence policy, can find multiple areas of cooperation with government. The potential to build these collaborative relationships exists despite the fact that great ideological differences may exist between the government and the institution.

Governments must take note of the benefits that can be attained from working with think tanks. One of the challenges to collaborative action is the tendency for a government to view a think tank as an obstacle to their potential and actions. However, by bridging these separate institutions and involving civil society in matters of common action, policymakers can better accommodate and consider a wider range of views. This cooperative effort and establishment of friendly relations allows the problems of the country to be assessed and addressed simultaneously by various groups allowing for a wider variety of solutions to choose from. This helps the government adopt policies that are better suited to solve the problem at hand.

There are endless spaces for collaboration between government and think tanks. Here we mention four of the most common:

First, we should be mindful of the fact that governments often have limited resources for policy research and proposal development. Think tanks serve as a source of reliable information that can contribute to the development of ideas and can allow for deeper analysis. Thus, think tanks should serve as significant contributors to the policy process by generating ideas and contributing to the debate necessary for policy development.

Second, think tanks play an important role in encouraging a longer term approach to the country's policy agenda. The dynamics inherent in democratic governments, which are subject to electoral cycles, often significantly impact the policies that are proposed and ultimately

adopted. The nature of electoral politics often creates incentives for policies that will produce benefits in the immediate future but may have negative effects in the medium to long term. As long as they are not affected by these election cycles, think tanks often have a much broader evaluation and analysis focus than that of government administrations. Without doubt, to the degree that think tanks are able to build awareness and influence public opinion regarding policy matters, the temptation of government to propose populist policies will be reduced.

Conversely, and in third place, certain policies may have a significant degree of opposition from certain sectors of organized civil society. In these cases, think tanks can play an important role in raising awareness of the positive benefits that would otherwise be ignored as a result of the cost that overshadows them. By serving as a positive voice for policies that may otherwise be perceived negatively, this allows the think tank to be a tool for both citizens and government.

A fourth area of collaboration between think tanks and government is to reach technical agreements on policy issues before the political debate with the legislature begins. In many cases, it is likely that political actors will reach agreements on many of the technical issues involved in a proposed policy. Through participation and open discussion with government, both sides can reach greater levels of technical consensus in policy proposals, so that by the time the proposal is submitted to political debate, all sides feel ownership over the process. Using a think tank to help shape policy allows government to find areas of agreement among different sectors of society. This approach can help speed up the policy debate process and result in quicker policy approval and implementation.

The Experience of Libertad y Desarrollo

Founded in Chile in 1990, LyD is a private independent think tank dedicated to research and analysis for the promotion of liberty and furthering the principles of a free society. Since its founding, LyD

has understood the value of seeking and promoting collaboration with government. LyD's approach can be understood by examining the three strategic pillars on which LyD was founded. The first pillar is defending the principles of a free society. This is defined as the promotion of individual freedom, and ensuring that the ultimate goal of policy is to the benefit of the individual as regards democracy, the market economy, rule of law and limited government. The second pillar is building solid technical capacity and endowing individuals with the knowledge and ability to identify problems and design public policies that contribute to the development of the country. This means pulling together a group of technical experts capable of meeting different policy challenges with the speed and rigor required by changing political agendas and shifting public debates. The third pillar is developing close working relationships with the institutions responsible for public policy formulation. This concept is based on the recognition that in order to influence public policy, it is essential to build direct relationships with nationally relevant institutions such as the current government administration, the legislature, the judicial branch, media, universities, and civil society organizations.

One of the characteristics of LyD that differentiates it from other think tanks is the work done with the Chilean Congress. While independent of political parties, LyD maintains a constant presence at congressional discussions and provides assistance to all members of congress open to defending the ideals that LyD stands for. This means providing exhaustive reviews and analysis of policy proposals, as well as providing assistance in the drafting of legislation and amendments. LyD also provides constant capacity building and knowledge support to legislators who share LyD's guiding principles, enriching and strengthening the debate to defend shared ideals. Of course many times the work done in Congress is not successful, and one has to keep in mind that elected representatives do not always follow the same agenda a think tank may have.

Additionally, a permanent presence in Congress has created opportunities for closer collaboration with those in the executive branch

of government who are also present at the legislative debate. Forming a relationship with key government officials has created a means for a constant flow of ideas and greater spaces for dialogue before and during the policy design process. This open dialogue means a more successful approach to the process.

Another important aspect for LyD is the work conducted in collaboration with other think tanks – from independent organizations, to political party think tanks to universities. For example, in 2008, LyD worked with more than 10 other think tanks, aided with funding from the Inter-American Development Bank, to develop a joint proposal for state modernization with broad consensus. In seeking to develop a state modernization plan of the size and magnitude required in Chile, the government recognized that extensive collaboration between government and think tanks would be required. The wide array of institutions contributing ideas and proposals allowed for the development of an all-encompassing proposal that transcended the administration currently in office.

During the first 20 years of LyD's existence, Chile had governments with political ideologies that were mostly contrary to those espoused by LyD. While the relationship with government was not always one of collaboration, it was always one of positive interaction. Thus, although LyD and the government did not always agree on policy, LyD was nevertheless able to build relationships and spaces for honest discussion with government representatives and policy experts. While it was clear that on many occasions no consensus would be reached, the discussions were always open and based on technical analysis, which allowed both sides to enrich their perspective regarding the debate.

Although the debate did not always produce agreement, those familiar with the policy process understand that policy proposals can take decades to come to fruition. For example, at the beginning of the 1990s, Chile had an average of 15 percent duty on imports. LyD proposed lowering this rate to six percent. The idea slowly spread to various sectors and policymakers. Several election cycles produced

governments in favor of free trade agreements, but LyD maintained that this would not be enough and continued to push for the lowering of import duties. Today, not only does Chile have multiple free trade agreements, but has also continued to unilaterally lower tariffs to the current rate of 1.2 percent.

A similar experience resulted when tackling the issue of building new prisons in the country. The idea of contracting the private sector to build new prisons was first proposed by LyD in 1991. Ten years later, the government finally announced that concessions would be provided to private companies to build prisons. By 2010 there were six prisons functioning as a result of this effort.

LyD also collaborated with various government administrations that were not ideologically aligned with LyD's core principles. For instance in 2008, the Chilean government at the time submitted a significant public education reform bill to Congress. The bill was rejected by the opposition in Congress, which presented an alternative reform bill that was largely created by LyD. The initial rejection of the bill by Congress opened space for dialogue between government officials, legislators and LyD professionals who had worked on the alternate bill. The discussions that resulted from this effort allowed for a more comprehensive conversation to occur and as a result more proposals were included in the final piece of legislation. A similar situation also occurred when a draft bill was submitted to reform the country's environmental laws.

Collaboration between think tanks and government is not limited to the government currently in power. Links can also be made with future government administrations. During the last electoral campaign, LyD played a significant role in making recommendations for then-presidential candidate Sebastian Piñera's proposed platforms. As a result, more than 25 experts from LyD were called to work for the administration of President Piñera as ministers, advisors and deputy secretaries, after he won the election. This ultimately meant that many of the proposals LyD has worked on throughout the years finally have

a good possibility of being implemented.

With the January 2010 election of President Pinera, LyD is, for the first time in its existence, working with a government that ideologically espouses the principles that LyD works to defend. Despite this, there have been more than a few cases in which LyD has disagreed with the administration on policy proposals. For example, in the first few months of the Pinera administration, LyD opposed the transitory tax hike proposed by the new government.

It must be understood that government will often make decisions based on political considerations instead of long-term benefit. As such, the current administration may face opposition from LyD. Independence from government influence is what allows LyD to maintain legitimacy in the public eye while still positively affecting change for the future. LyD's research and analysis has contributed to helping the administration keep a focused eye on its policy priorities and ensure that each proposal is backed by solid reasoning. By serving as a check on government, the LyD model has shown the importance of think tanks in a democratic society, where technical experts and analysts act as key contributors to healthy and sustainable democratic practices.

Final Notes and Challenges for the Region

There are many diverse think tanks in most countries in Latin America. Unfortunately, it is difficult to measure the impact these think tanks have had on governance in different places. Ultimately, the subjects these organizations broach and the effort they commit to their causes will determine their contribution to the development of the region. Providing universal recommendations for success is difficult. However, one of the greatest challenges that think tanks must overcome is elevating public policy debates beyond ideological differences in government. Latin America is ever-changing, and countries must develop new proposals to meet the new and dynamic challenges now faced in the region. Thus, think tanks must be able to elevate the policy discussion beyond the shortsighted populist considerations that

some governments in the region are favoring, and help government and citizens focus on adopting substantive reforms that will ultimately put their countries on a path toward sustainable development.

To accomplish this, it is essential to generate ideas and concrete policy recommendations in collaboration with different sectors of society and provide these to government. These recommendations will help inform government action and serve as tools upon which those in government that are truly interested in sustainable development can build. In this effort, collaboration and the exchange of best practices with other think tanks in the region is extremely beneficial. Concrete ideas and policies are often shaped by sharing experiences and networking with other organizations, which often produces tremendous benefits.

Participation as an Essential Element of an Active Civil Society

Pedro Afonso del Pino

Jacques Maritain stated that the tragedy of modern democracies is that they have not yet become a reality.[1] He put forth a call to all democrats that we would not forget that the best political system in the world is imperfect, but perfectible. This perfection is possible as long as there are constant efforts to rethink democracy, adapt it to the new demands of our societies and continually improve it, maintaining respect for human dignity and fundamentally, that of our communities.

In Latin America, democracy has developed considerably in the last decades. The political geography once revealed that the majority of our countries had dictatorial systems or were immersed in violent conflicts with high costs to development. Today, the majority of Latin American nations have democratic models that are continuously improving. Unfortunately, the situation is not the same in all countries. The notable exceptions include Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua which have ever increasing deficiencies in their political systems.

In this brief article we analyze citizen participation as a fundamental element of an active and efficient civil society, which can help strengthen

and consolidate democratic systems in Latin America. We shall present the basic tenets of participation as well as the characteristics of the so-called participatory democracy. Subsequently we will review two examples of citizen participation from the continent, Venezuela and Bolivia. We aim to show examples of both a successful participatory model, as well a model that represents a distortion of democratic principles.

What Does it Mean to Participate?

According to the *Essential Dictionary of the Spanish Language*, participate has the following meaning: "1. To take part in something. 2. Receive a part of something. 3. Share, have the same opinions, ideas, etc., of another person. 4. Have a share in a society or business or be partners thereof. 5. Report, communicate."[2] According to the *Dictionary of Judicial, Political and Social Sciences*, participation "is the action and effect of participating; of one having part of something or having a share thereof."[3]

To participate is to be a part of something, but a part of what exactly? To truly understand this concept in its various forms, we must define how one participates, through which processes and with what results. Participation in the field of politics or citizen participation demands a change in the attitude of citizens who choose to participate, as well as the promotion of social organization spearheaded by society and the state to facilitate civic processes.

Enrique Pérez Olivares, quoting Arístides Calvani, says that participation is an existential situation and also implies an existential disposition to be part of something, and take part of a larger whole. In other words, being, having and taking part of a larger whole, results from the adequate conjugation of personal and social attitudes; on one hand of mental and subjective structures and on the other, of forms of organization, and as a result, of material or objective structures.[4]

These subjective and objective structures contribute to the development

of civil society. We understand civil society as a compound of social practices – with its relations, processes, values, perceptions and attitudes, institutions, organizations, ways and movements – that are not framed as economic or political.[5] That is to say, civil society must be independent from the state structure, understood as entities of the public force such as a ministry or a component of the national armed forces. Independence does not mean there are no relationships and dialogue; it signifies autonomy to display all of its liberty and creativity in the defense and fulfillment of human rights, as a protagonist of its own transformations, rather than as a mere spectator of political and social occurrences.

When we further explore citizen and community participation, we find there are many pre-requisites to consider it authentic. Consequently, participation must be active, conscious, free, responsible and organized. Olivares makes the following deliberation regarding the active nature of participation:

> "Participation must be active. That is, it supposes an effort, an action directed towards inserting itself in common tasks, a giving and delivering of one's self to the rest. This entails taking the human tendency towards generosity, stimulating it by all possible means, and making it ever more conscientious. But it also requires institutional mechanisms that assume the fact that men are inserted in multiple societies, and that in them and through them participation must be channeled."[6]

On conscientious and responsible participation, the same author adds:

> "It cannot be purely superficial agitation. It demands that the population be sufficiently informed of the elements involved in their participation, and this information must be objective, complete and comprehensible. Also, the population must be able to evaluate the information it receives, weigh it according to present human values,

> and insert their personal or group efforts and interests in an orderly manner, for the common good."[7]

Freedom is fundamental to participation. Participation that is managed, guided, or tied to the interests of government or any determined political group is no longer participation but rather an orchestrated partisan manifestation foreign to the citizenry. Creative freedom allows for the authenticity and success of citizen participation and respects the dignity of people and communities in addition to prompting the development of people. False participatory processes transform conscious people into masses that are creatively sterile. They transform citizens into fanatical militants of political causes that are exclusive in nature.

Participation is not possible if a population is not organized. Only through formal organizational processes, including the specialization of tasks and activities, is it possible for a plurality of people with a multiplicity of interests and inherent diversities to rally around a common purpose without distorting the content and profound desires of a population.

One must understand too, the reach of citizen participation. For example, an organized community may be capable of administrating a sports facility, but not able to direct the processes of a country's armed defense. On the premise of citizen participation, a state cannot excuse itself from fulfilling determined functions that only its structure can conduct. Likewise, participatory processes should not be used to hinder or delay government decision-making. This means, on the one hand, that participation is not a subterfuge to frustrate decision-making. It also means that the institutions of a state, which are specialized in the administration of the common good, maintain authority to make and execute decisions required for the common good and, in some cases, act under exclusive responsibility in matters that are of a reserved nature (for example, national security).[8]

Characteristics of Participatory Democracy

Democracy, in the modern and general sense, is a system in which citizens have sovereignty, and use it to choose their government and their governors.[9] Democracy has improved since its first manifestation in Ancient Greece. The success of popular sovereignty, the implementation of universal suffrage, the creation and modernization of political parties, respect for minorities, the declaration and guarantee of human rights, as well as the universal vigilance to promote and strengthen democratic systems, are some of the achievements of mankind's struggle. There is a key element missing in this list, however, which vitalizes and strengthens democratic processes all over the world: citizen participation.

Citizen participation is critical to strengthening democracy, to activating or reactivating the relationship between the state and civil society, with the objective of deepening democracy. It allows individuals to have a say in public activities and guarantees the defense of collective interests. Participation allows citizens to be a part of decision-making, resolutions and voting processes related to issues that affect them.[10]

Citizen participation must be integral, and made up of many stages, including: participation in decision-making, the implementation of decisions (or public policies), and participation in the enjoyment of the resulting benefits.

Regarding participation in decision-making, this may take place through a large group of individuals or through a specialized entity. In the former there are situations that are fundamentally associated with public affairs, such as choosing or selecting government officers, whereby all citizens are consulted in an electoral process. The latter case is more complex and interesting given that it requires a specialized entity to adopt a decision, although citizens must necessarily be involved in making that decision.

In this order of ideas, participation in decision-making is a process that must include preparation, study and the identification of problems and

possible solutions, up until the moment a concrete decision is made. The diversity of interests and opinions that exist within a community and the hierarchy of values and principles held by citizens will all play a fundamental role in the decision-making process.

Participation in the implementation of decisions often results in the reduction of state paternalism, and generates responsibility among citizens, thus stimulating creativity and increasing solidarity. By means of decentralization, communities can take on concrete responsibilities and tasks related to the implementation of programs and public policies, as long as they have the financial and technical means available. Participation at the time of implementation also entails social oversight to evaluate progresses and the proper functioning of what has been accomplished. This will reduce administrative corruption and increase the efficiency of public decisions. Participation in the implementation of decisions implies that every entity of civil society has a special vocation to lend in a field depending on their specialization. The rich social fabric of the intermediary entities (civil society) creates an added value that can aid the resolution of public problems. For example, religious institutions have made great contributions in the fields of education and health. Associations and chambers of commerce can lend their expertise in the design and implementation of public policies to increase production or foster small and medium-sized entrepreneurs. Other entities such as universities, academies, civic associations, neighborhood associations, unions, media and environmental groups can similarly enrich the policy process. The contribution of any one entity will ultimately depend on the nature and function of what entities of civil society are present in a country.

Participation in the benefits implies that people, the individual and the collective alike, must benefit from the public policies that were crafted as a result of their participation. In this sense the individual is both the author and the beneficiary of their own creation. Research from the *Centro Gumilla* in Venezuela indicates that "one of the most important factors for the development of a sense of community is related to the availability of opportunities for people to solve and meet

their individual needs through mechanisms and processes that allow resolving and satisfying community needs. In other words, when the members of a community share common problems and they work collectively to resolve these, each individual satisfies their own needs."[11]

Citizen Participation at the Local Level

Civil society's demand for democratic governance is easier to achieve at local or municipal levels than at the national level. The proximity of people to the seat of power enables citizens to exercise better control over public authorities and influence the design, implementation and evaluation of local public policies. After all, it is at the local level where we find most of the models and experiences in citizen participation, from the famous municipal participatory budgeting practices to economic development initiatives and local employment programs.

In this field, the participatory budgeting experience that rose from an initiative of the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil stands out. In 1989 this city had more than one million inhabitants and was facing serious social problems. A decentralized system was established which allowed all residents full access and input into budgetary decisions by integrating them into neighborhood groups and other levels of representation.[12] This activity has enabled the community to express their opinion on important issues facing the city; establish priorities from among the issues that require immediate attention; select priorities and generate practical solutions; have an opportunity to compare solutions with those proposed in other regions of the city and in other thematic areas; decide, with the support of technical staff from the municipal government, to invest in programs that are the least expensive and most feasible; make final decisions regarding the investment plan; and finally review the successes and failures of the investment plan in order to improve criteria for the following year.[13] The success of this experience has enabled the model to be replicated in hundreds of cities throughout the continent.

The Rural Water Project in Paraguay is another initiative that

demonstrated that big social problems can be solved at the local level. In this case, a government agency was strengthened, one which was responsible for promoting the creation of community boards and working with these boards to determine contracts for the construction and maintenance of water systems. The inclusion of communities enabled these to contribute 21 percent of the total construction costs (six percent more than the original estimate) and the project served 20,000 more people than was originally estimated. The community boards had great motivation, managed the systems satisfactorily, and complied with the financial commitments.[14]

The Villa El Salvador Project in Peru is a successful participatory effort of an impoverished community working to build a city with basic services. In the 1970s, 50,000 squatters settled the property currently occupied by this municipality. The area had no resources of any kind and lacked access to roads. The population of the area soon increased to 250,000 inhabitants. Citizen participation played a key role in the adoption of a peculiar urban design that was highly decentralized. The municipality is organized by blocks and every set number of blocks has its own central park and areas designated for community meetings, entertainment and culture. Citizens used a model that was highly participatory, establishing a board for every set number of blocks and more than 1,000 designated areas where the Villa's basic activities are conducted.

Over the course of two decades, even under very difficult socio-economic conditions, most of the physical infrastructure was built through community efforts. They built 38,000 households, 60 community centers, 64 schools, 22 public libraries, 41 health centers with integrated services that included education and nutritional recovery centers, four health centers and pharmacies. Important social goals were achieved through their community efforts. The illiteracy rate is 3.5 percent, much lower than the national average. Nearly all children attend elementary school and the percentage of those enrolled in high school is much higher than the country's average. Child mortality is markedly lower than the national average, as are general

mortality rates. There were significant projects in agriculture and an industrial complex of micro-enterprises was established. Despite very intense economic adversities, a solid productive, social and cultural life unfolded, with results that were very different from other marginalized populations.

Their experience has continually received worldwide recognition. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized the Villa El Salvador project as one of the most defining experiences in popular education. The United Nations acknowledged it as an exemplary form of community life. Spain awarded it with the Prince of Asturias Award as a model experience in social development. In Peru it was awarded with the National Award for Architecture for its urban design. Recently, with support from civil society organizations, it has become one of the region's first municipalities to integrate information technology into democracy. Public computer terminals and a closed circuit television network have been installed. Through these, residents receive information about the matters to be discussed by the municipal council and use these channels to continuously deliver feedback.[15/16]

In Colombia, the Network of Cities *Cómo Vamos* (How We Are Doing) is an initiative that groups the programs *Bogotá Cómo Vamos, Cali Cómo Vamos, Cartagena Cómo Vamos, Medellín Cómo Vamos and Barranquilla Cómo Vamos*. These programs are led by the social sector, businessmen, media and academia and work to evaluate changes in the quality of life in each city, as well as assess the contributions made by the district and municipal administrations. While this is an initiative where many actors come together, including all levels of government, private enterprise, social organizations, academia, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and the general citizenry, a special emphasis is placed on the performance of local governments because these are responsible for the design and implementation of development plans and budgets.[17] Citizens perform oversight of the cities in the following areas: poverty and equity, public finances, education, health, public services, culture, participation, road mobility, public space, the

environment, decentralization, citizen responsibility, public safety, public administration, economic development and housing. Currently, the program is implemented in many cities in Colombia, as well as some municipalities in Brazil.

A Poor Example of Citizen Participation: Failures of the Socialist Communal Councils in Venezuela

Communal councils are social organizational structures created by the Venezuelan government in 2006. They were legally institutionalized that same year through the adoption of the Law of Communal Councils,[18] and defined in the following manner:

> "Within the constitutional framework of participatory and protagonist democracy communal councils are mechanisms for participation, articulation and integration for the different communitarian organizations, social groups and citizens, which allow the organized citizenry to directly manage the administration of public policies and projects designed to respond to the needs and aspirations of communities in the construction of an equitable and socially just society."[19]

Pedro Dávila Fernández warns that "the communal councils, as new entities of a decentralized system, have risen anarchically since 2006. They burgeoned without a legal base that was adequate to the magnitude, importance and transcendence they should have. They spread out throughout the national landscape as experimental mushrooms. Initially, they crept up from within the confines of conspiracy. Nuanced with excluding and partisan criteria they violated constitutional principles."[20]

Research carried out by the Venezuelan Economic Legislation Editorial highlights the following:

> "Communal councils are, above all, private associations that group the members of a community. When we say they are private associations, we mean to highlight that the communal councils are not part of the state, nor are they state entities. Communal councils are associations created by citizens to interact with the state, making use of their right to political participation. This is why they are autonomous associations that cannot be ruled nor led by the state. To the contrary, they must be oriented by the independent will of the members of the community, expressed through the citizens' assembly."[21]

The great handicap of the communal model is that it has always been tied to the figure of the president, making it a dependent of the central government of Venezuela. Manuel Rachadell denounced the dependence of communal councils on the President, and its total disassociation from municipal government entities, which they seek to substitute. This reconfirms that we are beholding a new centralism, adopted under the guise of decentralization, because it consists of bestowing decision-making powers to bodies that depend, ultimately, on the leadership of the executive branch.[22]

In this sense, we must note that despite the difficulties in the formulation of this social organization, and aside from the official partisan interests in controlling the new structures and the exaggerated centralism, an intermediate stability was reached, which fostered the organizational consciousness of communities toward the development of participatory processes.

Many legal and social research studies demonstrate that the new law of communal councils is unconstitutional. The non-governmental organization, Venezuelan Education Program – Action on Human Rights, highlighted in its annual report dated October 2009 through September 2010, that the new legislation established an excluding and discriminatory disposition that threatens plurality, freedom of organization and resources that communities might want to have.[23]

Not only are they placed above all other forms of participatory entities, but they are delegated and allowed to administer public policies which are the duty of the state. Joint responsibility cannot be an excuse for suppressing obligations, let alone those that deal with fundamental rights, like public services.[24]

Overall, there is an increasing consensus around the opinion that communal councils no longer belong to civil society, given they do not have the required autonomy.[25] Additionally, some warn that these organizations are now subject to the integrated defense committees, which are controlled by the militia, the new component of the Venezuelan national army.[26]

In short, the Venezuelan example demonstrates how a good idea regarding citizen participation was seized by government and partisan interests and today, can no longer be regarded as a positive model for the region. The qualities of conscious and free participation have disappeared from these organizations because they follow the socialist political model, constituting state entities of a partisan nature. Autonomous and efficient participation is nonexistent, given that these entities are dependent on the state, and have been overloaded with numerous functions beyond their purpose, such as in the field of military defense.

A Successful Example of Citizen Participation: Alliance Roundtables in Bolivia

Alliance roundtables represent an innovative methodology of citizen participation initiated by IRI in Bolivia more than six years ago. According to an informational manual, "the objectives of the alliance roundtables is to debate subjects of common interest, gather a considerable variety of stakeholders in a neutral environment and collaboratively work on a project. This work has an even larger objective which is to: improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of a city, region or country."[27]

It is important to note that Bolivia is currently experiencing a particular political process, charged with a political polarization that has divided the country regionally and has provoked setbacks in its democratic development. The challenges to democratic governance have grown and the work environment for community organizations and civil society is becoming more challenging every day.

Despite these challenges, the participatory initiatives developed in Bolivia took place at both the national and local levels. At a national level the work allowed for dialogue and alliances among congresswomen, councilors and leaders from all the political parties; in other cases there was collaborative work among youth activists from all political forces. The interaction achieved at the local level proves particularly interesting given that in various Bolivian municipalities, IRI gathered actors as diverse as universities, the private sector, neighborhood associations, schools, professional associations and representatives of governments from the local, state and national level.

The alliance roundtables work with a number of participants that can range between eight and fifteen people, with twelve being the ideal number. They are organized into four sessions, or tables: the first consists of identifying and prioritizing a community's issues; the second identifies the causes and effects of the issues previously identified, as well as their possible solutions; the third creates an action plan which seeks to tackle the issues identified; and the fourth evaluates progress and any pending issues.

The participatory model of the alliance roundtables represents the traits of true participation: it is completely free and voluntary, there is no institution—neither governmental nor private—controlling the work of the roundtable. The roundtable is organized, because it offers an outline of disciplined meetings with a working methodology that flows into an adequate action plan. The roundtables are efficient given they are not simply creating talking points without concrete outcomes but rather achieving results and benefits that seek to build a common good. Additionally, the roundtable optimizes the potential of each of

the participants gathered at the table, engaging and enriching the social capital present in Bolivian civil society.

Successes of the Bolivian Model

The experience of the alliance roundtables has increased citizen participation at the national, regional and local level. The local level experiences stand out given they produced concrete and tangible results in the short-term. Two illustrative examples from the municipalities of Potosí and Coroico are provided.

The city of Potosí, located more than 4,000 meters above sea level at the base of the legendary Cerro Rico, which was once filled with silver that lined the vaults of the Spanish Crown, is one of the places where this innovative methodology of citizen participation is working. In this locality, the alliance roundtables managed to gather representatives from the municipal government, the state government, the president of the neighborhood associations, the president of the craftsman's association, the coordinator of the tourism operators association and representatives from the University Tomás Frías of Potosí. For the first time representatives from the municipal government and state government, who were from different political parties, engaged in dialogue, and for the first time, an encounter between various representatives of the municipality took place.

The problem identified was a lack of alternative revenues to those generated by mining. It was determined there was much opportunity in the field of tourism and they decided to take action and created the following:

Tourism plan *Potosí 365 Days and Nights*: The municipal government and local tourist operators met to design a plan to improve tourism services, placing an emphasis on the dates when there is a low influx of people, setting up events and festivals that encourage tourism during those periods of time. The plan also provided incentives for night-time activities to encourage tourists to stay overnight in Potosi, and

consequently, generate more income.

Crafts circuit: Craftsmen and the local university signed an agreement that would generate internships, tourism students would fulfill their academic practicums at the workshops of local craftsmen, becoming familiar with their products and the explanations of such products (including technique and history). These students would also work as tourist guides at the workshops, which would be open to visiting tourists. In addition, the municipal government agreed to promote the crafts circuit.

Municipal smelting oven: The municipality built a smelting oven exclusively for craftsmen in order to give them an incentive and reduce their production costs.

Alliances: The primary objective of the roundtables was achieved given alliances were generated between public and private entities and the university.

Coroico is a small town located a short distance from La Paz that receives many tourists because of the beauty of its landscape. This municipality was characterized by a fairly inactive civil society and a powerful coca growers association which controlled the socio-political agenda. The alliance roundtables gathered members of the association of the municipal market, the president of the association of tour guides, elementary school teachers, the president of the association of local restaurants and representatives of the municipal government.

The local problem identified by the participating actors was an abundance of trash in the municipality, which was affecting public health and tourism in the city. Through the previously mentioned methodology, the roundtable achieved the following results:

Permanent waste commission: Members of the roundtable formed a permanent committee that would deal with the issue of trash. This committee meets periodically to conduct new initiatives that allow for

a sustainable and coherent policy. As a first initiative, the committee drafted an agreement with a soft drink company that would provide trash cans throughout the entire city. In exchange, the company would be allowed to post advertisements on every trash bin. Additionally, the commission has worked with waste management experts to create opportunities for recycling.

Educational campaigns: Discussions to launch awareness campaigns at schools took place for the first time.

Collaborative urban-rural tourism planning: The municipal government conducted meetings with the associations of urban and rural workers to create a coordinated tourist plan.

Re-activating civil society associations and local leaders: Both the alliance roundtable and the permanent waste commission incorporated other civil society associations into their planning process which had been dormant for a long time, due to the social control exerted by the coca growers' unions. This platform also allowed for a member of the roundtable to enlist as a candidate for councilor in the municipal elections.

Conclusions

Through citizen participation we find the key to strengthen and further consolidate the democracies of countries in Latin America. Political democracy, where citizen's participation is limited to the exercise of voting, requires deep changes. By no means though, should changes be aimed at reducing or eliminating democracy. These changes should not disguise ulterior motives in the name of a new democracy. Rather these are constant changes to improve and perfect the best system of government that mankind has ever seen.

With the noble spirit and sizeable mission that our societies entrust us, we must determine what is understood as participation. One must not abuse the term to establish demagoguery and unattainable goals. In

the name of participation the state cannot be emptied of the elemental functions it needs to provide in the delivery of services and national defense. Participation must be free, conscious, responsible, organized and efficient.

Citizen participation must be extended to diverse arenas, geographically and to different sectors of society. That is to say, participation can be applied at the local, regional and national level as well as in different thematic fields: labor, tourism, agricultural production, commerce, housing, health, education, women, sports and ecology, among others.

Government and social-political actors, like political parties, must be seen as promoters and motivators of a community's social organizations, without trying to take control of the process and impose political colors. One must not seek to nationalize nor create partisanship within all parts of society because it would put an end to its innate creativity and autonomy, both of which are necessary conditions for the construction of a more inclusive democracy.

Civil society's commitment and the state's role in the promotion, strengthening and consolidation of a government of the people, by the people and for the people, as Abraham Lincoln noted at Gettysburg, will ensure that this system of government does not vanish from the face of the earth.

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The Role of Media in Improving Democratic Governance

Luis H. Nájera Castillo

"A popular government, without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce, or a tragedy, or perhaps both."
James Madison, fourth President of the United States of America

In 2001, as part of his efforts to increase government transparency in Mexico and fulfill his campaign promise of using austerity in public spending, Vicente Fox Quezada, the first opposition president in 70 years, launched the *CompraNet* website to make federal government purchases transparent. The website was launched among much fanfare with a grand publicity campaign in the media.

In June of that same year, the *Milenio* newspaper made it known that based on the information obtained from the aforementioned website, the Office of the President had spent $440,000 remodeling two cabins on the grounds of the Los Pinos presidential residence. The newspaper reported that among the items purchased were towels costing $400 each and bed sheets costing approximately $1,500 per set.[1]

The so-called *Toallagate* (Towelgate) led to the resignation of Carlos Rojas, head of purchases for the president and Fox's personal friend, as well as three more members of his staff. At least three other staff members who were involved in the obviously overpriced, or inflated, purchases were also suspended.

This episode, according to *Miami Herald* columnist Andres Oppenheimer, offers only a glimpse of the government squandering of public resources which occurs in Latin America. According to Oppenheimer, in 2001, purchases by the public sector in Latin America reached $250 billion per year without taking into account military expenses. Oppenheimer notes that up to 20 percent of that figure represents wasteful spending: "…in other words, $50 billion a year. That is equal to 70 times the financial aid that the United States provides to the region."[2]

Alongside these figures, money squandering, and corruption scandals, *Toallagate* is also an example of the complex dynamics in the relationship and responsibilities of the media and governments in Latin America. On one hand, the journalism industry is becoming more professional, making use of better tools and improvements in access to information and publishing more investigations of higher quality which expose government failures as well as acknowledge government actions. In addition, the combination of social networks and cutting-edge technology at fairly accessible prices has ignited what is known as citizen journalism, introducing a new player into the relationship between society and government. These citizen journalists, who operate to report repression, encourage voting or demand accountability, have a worldwide reach and audience.

On the other side of the scale is government accountability. While some Latin America governments have become efficient, democratic and transparent, others have failed to live up to their potential and have squandered public resources, as was the case in Mexico with the purchase of towels and sheets. Michael Shifter, president of the Inter-American Dialogue, explained it as follows:

> "A more pragmatist and centrist policy has been increasingly consolidated (in Latin America). However, in the 90s, after the end of the Cold War and the democratic transitions of many countries, there were high expectations to go beyond elections, and build

> institutions such as coherent political parties and efficient and independent justice systems. In this regard, progress has been more disappointing. It seems rather stagnant, and has included some setbacks."[3]

Thus, Latin America has in countries such as Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia or Mexico a combination that has proved to be extremely volatile: a more proactive media, more technical and with a global reach, coexisting with a democratically elected government whose performance is usually characterized by omission, negligence or the abuse of power.

Within this dynamic of coexistence, mass media faces repression and censure, directly or indirectly, from government and non-government agents, particularly from organized crime, which in some regions of the continent has even developed into parallel or *de facto* governments.[4]

However, in the exercise of traditional journalism, which seeks to depict and describe as many faces of the truth as possible, it is necessary to acknowledge that the media (notwithstanding its challenges) has an opportunity to consolidate itself as a promoter and auditor of democratic governance in Latin America through the professional and ethical use of freedom of press and speech.

A Difficult Coexistence

According to political philosopher Robert Dahl, freedom of speech* and access to alternative sources of information† are two of the six basic requirements for the existence of a "polyarchic democracy," or modern representative democracy with universal suffrage.[5] The other four pre-requisites are: Elected representatives; free, fair and frequent elections; alternative autonomy; and inclusive citizenship.

* Dahl defines freedom of speech as, "citizens' right to express themselves, without having the risk of a severe punishment, upon political matters, widely defined, including the criticism to public office, government, political regime, socio-economical order and the prevailing ideology."

† Defined as, "citizen's right to request alternative and independent information sources from other citizens, pundits, newspapers, magazines, books, telecommunications and the like."

Under this model, a third of the institutions necessary to efficiently govern a country are directly related to the media. In the Latin American historical context, where governments and regimes have been marked by corruption and abuses, the media carries an even greater value as a natural counterweight to the excesses of power. Silvio Waisbord, then assistant professor at the Journalism and Public Information Department at Rutgers University in New Jersey, stated:

> "As in other regions of the world, the main value of investigative journalism for Latin American democracies is that it contributes to increasing political accountability. This is particularly important considering that the weakness of accountability mechanisms has been identified as one of the most serious problems that the democracies in the region are confronting. Institutional lethargy, ineffectiveness, and lack of responsiveness to legitimate public needs have often been cited as major weaknesses."[6]

Unfortunately, in the spectrum of Latin American countries, this governance formula is also frequently altered, as in Brazil where journalists have faced legal charges of "offending the honor" and "invasion of privacy" for having singled out officials and politicians in the local press for alleged acts of corruption.[7] In Ecuador and Venezuela, it is the presidents themselves who direct insults towards media that is critical of government acts. In Bolivia, an ambiguous law was enacted which favors censorship.[8] In Argentina, the government has direct confrontations with the main newspapers of the country. In Nicaragua, the discretionary allocation of official publicity and the infusion of public resources into media outlets friendly to the government are common, while at the same time more stringent guidelines are enforced on organizations critical of the administration.

In places such as Mexico and Colombia, the relationship between government and media is broken because officials cannot guarantee minimal security conditions for journalists to perform their jobs

freely. In addition, most of the attacks on or murders of journalists go unpunished, and in areas with high levels of violence related to drug trafficking, it is criminal gangs that determine what is published.[9]

Regionally, journalist censorship in 2010 reached one of its highest levels in the past 30 years, according to the annual report of the Committee to Protect Journalists.[10] "Violation of the right to freedom of speech and press does not punish journalism, it punishes society as whole. Without this right, which is innate to human beings, democracy is, evidently, fiction," surmised Alberto Bailey, president of the National Tribunal on Journalism Ethics of Bolivia, during the Hemispheric Forum on Freedom of Speech which took place in early 2011.[11]

The Dark Side of the Force

On a continent where distrust reigns, it is no wonder that media is losing its credibility among society – in some cases with just cause. This loss of credibility furthers the erosion of governance.

In an analysis of public opinion research data obtained between 1995 and 2010, Latinobarometer concluded that only two out of 10 people said they could trust others.[12] This level of distrust, perhaps encouraged by the crisis of public insecurity of the last few years, is particularly evident in relation to the trends seen in electoral participation since 2006. In that year, 44 percent of respondents said they would not vote for a political party; by 2010 that number had reached 54 percent.[13]

In addition to the disenchantment with and the low levels of credibility in democratic institutions (only 45 percent of respondents throughout the continent said they trust their governments, 23 percent expressed trust in political parties, 32 percent in the judiciary and 34 percent in their members of congress), there is a decline in the use of mass media to become informed about politics.[14] The Latinobarometer survey showed that in 2010 fewer people used television, radio and print media to become informed of political issues, while family and friends —that is to say those in whom trust is vested—marked a rising trend.[15]

In 1996 only 25 percent said family and friends were their main source of information on public issues, while in 2000 this number was up to 44 percent.[16]

Why are citizens distancing themselves from media as a source of information on the domestic operations of democracy? And, what impact could this have on governance? The answer to both these questions can also be found in trust. Since 2004, the Organization of American States' (OAS) rapporteur for freedom of speech has warned of the incompatibility between monopoly and oligopoly in the ownership of media and the development of a democratic society that enjoys freedom of speech. The report concluded:

> "The continuous complaints received by the Office of the Special Rapporteur in relation to monopolistic and oligopolistic practices in mass media ownership in the region indicate that there is grave concern in several sectors of civil society with respect to the impact that concentration of media ownership may represent where it comes to ensuring pluralism as an essential element of the freedom of expression."[17]

Complementing this report, researcher Giselle A. Deiró studied the increasingly influential role that large media groups have on the continent. She explained:

> "In a market where entry costs for new players are high and where there is a natural tendency towards concentration, the number of broadcasters becomes limited, which then results in less pluralism. This in turn threatens citizens' freedom of speech and the right to be informed, given that the market of ideas will only have a few gathered voices: Those with enough capital to expose their ideas and opinions."[18]

An emblematic example of the existence of monopolies in the media and their favoritism towards groups in power was highlighted in Mexico, when Emilio "The Tiger" Azcárraga (1930-1997), president of *Grupo Televisa*, the largest worldwide producer of Spanish-language television content, declared himself a "PRI soldier" in candid acknowledgment of his loyalty for the then-governing PRI. This resulted in a long and lucrative relationship of mutual benefit for the magnate and the government, which on many occasions included manipulating news to influence public opinion on issues related to governance and democracy.[19]

Unfortunately, this business model—in which monopolies, politics and the media become inter-related—has become a constant trend throughout the continent.

Monopolies, however, do not just happen as a result of private initiative. Through patronage, governments can foster the creation of media monoliths. In Ecuador, the government has 19 media sources among television channels, radio stations, magazines, tabloids, newspapers and news agencies, as reported in the annual report of the organization *Fundamedios*.[20] In Nicaragua and Venezuela, in addition to an injection of government resources into media outlets friendly to the regime and the purchase of media sources, radio and cable television broadcasting are suspended during presidential broadcasts on national television. Moreover, during the 12 years of Hugo Chávez's government there have been more than 2,000 national broadcasts with up to eight hours of airtime each; five government television stations have been created; and the government controls 243 community radio stations and two newspapers of nationwide distribution, as denounced by the president of the Venezuelan newspaper *Tal Cual*, Teodoro Petkoff.[21]

Clearly, if sources of information, opinion and debate are controlled by one group or individual with a personal or specific agenda, these are not likely to allow opposing voices any opportunities for expression. Catalina Botero, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Speech of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, stated the following in

an article published by Harvard University:

> "The public debate in Latin America often suffers from a lack of participation by social groups that have suffered discrimination or marginalization. Such groups lack access to institutional or private channels for the serious, robust and consistent exercise of their right to publicly express their ideas and opinions or to be informed of the issues that affect them."[22]

As a result, it appears society has turned its back on traditional media and has turned to cyberspace to become informed and participate actively. Perhaps this has been a response to having been manipulated by private interests that are not necessarily linked to democracy – which eventually reduced the influence of media on public opinion – in addition to the social network boom and the rise of citizen journalism. At a recent marketing forum in Venezuela, political marketing consultant Gabriel Reyes highlighted the new role of social media in governance: "Governance has one foot in social networks. These are mechanisms for debate, not just for political parties, but for movements and organizations; it is a vehicle for the rendering of accounts and a guarantor of our democracy and transparency."[23] As we have seen, media, trust, plurality, and transparency are all components in the formula which produces good governance. But how to mix these elements?

A Gamble to Recover Trust

In a region like Latin America, with broad challenges to governance and media, IRI has developed a strategy to strengthen democracy by means of radio shows that are designed to positively impact regional audiences, seeking to promote interaction and community participation through the responsible and transparent exercise of authority. As part of this strategy, local journalists received training to strengthen their professional skills. Emphasizing ethics and investigative reporting, trainings are designed to help journalists fulfill their role in the

governance equation, which depends equally on efficient public services, a robust civil society and an active media.

In Bolivia, IRI has been working since 2004 to "promote improved relations between elected leaders and citizens."[24] After working alongside local officials to strengthen their capacity through trainings on best practices in local governance, they launched the *Sábados Vecinales* (Neighborhood Saturdays) radio show in the municipality of Sucre and *Transparencia* (Transparency) in the municipality of Potosí in 2008. These programs were aired during peak times in the areas covered by the broadcasters.

The broadcasts came as a result of institutional strengthening initiatives provided to the local governments and were part of a multi-faceted citizen engagement strategy, which also included the creation of local transparency offices and institutional websites that provide online services to citizens. The radio shows have since been continued by new municipal administrations and similar programs have been developed in Mexico, Colombia and Guatemala.

According to Mexican intellectual and first counselor of the president of the Federal Electoral Institute, Jose Woldenberg, in modern democracies it is impossible to operate a system of government without media. Woldenberg stated:

> "Actually, it can be said that there are no mass politics (in other words, modern politics) without media. On the other hand it can also be said that there is no mass media not related somehow to politics. This situation begets the search for new relations between what could be labeled the desirable power of the media and democratic institutions."[25]

In Colombia, this media platform is used to encourage competition among local governments, rewarding innovative government practices that improve quality of life in 1,102 municipalities across the country.

Since 2006, local civil society organization *Colombia Lider* has evaluated and awarded prizes to local governments for initiatives that reduce poverty and improve public administration. *Colombia Lider* also works with local governments to help them meet the Millennium Development Goals. These practices are developed alongside a media strategy to ensure continual diffusion of best practices and broadcasting of local achievements through two of the most important media outlets in the country: RNC Radio and Television, and the news magazine *Semana*.

For Karem Labrador, general coordinator at *Colombia Lider*, the active participation of media is vital to the process of improving municipal democratic governance. Media allows the sharing of best practices among local leaders and informs the citizens of the good things that are going on in their communities. "At *Colombia Lider* we are convinced that good local governors make the country shine," said Labrador at the Regional Summit on Democratic Governance and Best Practices, which took place in Bogota in August 2011, funded by the NED and IRI.

Another good example of the relationship between media, civil society and government that has been successfully replicated across the hemisphere is the *Cómo Vamos* project. Founded in 1998 in the Colombian capital of Bogota, this project is focused on ensuring government accountability, evaluating the results of local government initiatives and promoting citizen participation by providing access to information on government activities. The project also ensures citizen voices are heard by eliciting citizen feedback through public opinion research. The *Cómo Vamos* project has partnered with national media outlet *El Tiempo* to facilitate the sharing of information and ensure that citizens are informed of government activities, and government is informed of citizens' opinions on topics of local interest. By reporting and sharing information regarding government activities, the project ultimately builds citizen trust in local institutions.

The *Cómo Vamos* program has been so successful that this model has

now been replicated in more than 50 cities in 10 countries across Latin America, which are now part of the *Cómo Vamos* Network of Cities.

Piecing Together the Puzzle

Daniela Arbex is one of the most important investigative journalists in Brazil. Among the things that make her unique is that her work, for which she received the Knight International Journalism Award in 2010, is conducted from a newspaper with local circulation, the *Tribuna de Minas*, which prints 15,000 copies daily and is distributed in a city of 600,000 inhabitants.

Though far from the big metropolises of Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro or Brasilia, and although her paper does not have the support of major national media outlets, Arbex has achieved much more than simply denouncing irregularities or exposing abuses of power through her investigations. From this modest public tribune, this reporter has united with society and government officials to carry out what can be considered a successful model for the role of media in governance in Latin America – a model that many can learn a lot from.

The first component of this model is a professionally trained journalist and a dedicated media outlet, both with a sense of service, and motivated by the common good and social justice. Together these create an ethical, responsible and quality news product, which is clearly defined in its function as a source of information rather than a source of judgment, a trait which both must strive to closely guard. Daniela Arbex documented and the *Tribuna de Minas* exposed, in different instances, the lack of public policies and government neglect of rape victims who were seeking preventive help for HIV/AIDS; the abuse and disregard that scores of mentally ill patients experienced while hospitalized at a government run hospital; the unpunished sale of drugs to students at a local school; and the network of corruption and impunity in the allocation of building contracts by one of the most influential politicians in the city.

After media exposés of injustice and abuse, a second component in the governance process is an efficient and professional corps of civil servants. These are individuals trained to efficiently fulfill their mandates, and are honest and transparent in the use of their powers. These civil servants acknowledge the value of ethical journalism, accept their own deficiencies in service and seek real solutions to real problems.

In response to the investigations by Arbex and the *Tribuna de Minas*, public officials acknowledged the existing failures and modified laws having to do with the services provided to victims of sexual abuse; they changed the system of services for mentally ill patients to ensure proper treatment and punishment for misconduct; and the government created school programs to help prevent drug addiction. In addition, 17 city employees were fired for their involvement in a network of corruption at the municipal level and the head of this dismantled network was arrested and is currently serving time in jail.

The third component of this successful formula for good democratic governance is civil society. In this case, throughout the exposés and accusations of public wrongdoing – and the reactions of local authorities – it was civil society that continued to support media outlets and encouraged government to address the highlighted problems. The local government was open in addressing the shortcomings exposed, and this in turn increased civil society's trust in government. All of this came about as a product of Arbex's investigations.

In a kind of domino effect the stories reported by Arbex encouraged journalists Amanda Rossi, Fabio Oliva and Jamila Venturini to develop a project to educate citizens to access and share information on public expenditures in the city of Januaria, in the State of Minas Gerais. The project was designed to promote citizen awareness of the allocation of public resources as a way to prevent corruption in the municipal government, which has had seven different mayors since 2004 as a result of constant accusations of mismanagement of public funds.[26]

Skilled journalists who are well trained in investigative reporting,

efficient and transparent civil servants who are trained and willing to serve, as well as proactive citizens that participate – in everything from turning on the television to learn the news to being the face and voice of a tragedy, injustice or abuse – are the three components that are indispensable to building better systems of government.

Conclusion

Governance in Latin America has to be understood as a journey, not a destination. Along the way, media and government officials must act as if they were the two oars of a boat that is sailing on the waters of democracy, which are not always easy to transit. In order to advance they must move together, though independently; each performing their own work in the best possible manner in their own respective place, with society guiding them along the way.

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Conclusion: The Role of Government in Institutionalizing Democratic Governance

Daniel W. Fisk

During the last 30 years, Latin America by and large witnessed the acceptance of elections as a regular exercise to select leaders and legitimize governmental authority. While countries in Latin America continue to define their respective democratic models, there is a growing appreciation for—and value placed upon—democratic institutions and broader citizen participation. Accompanying this is an ever-increasing demand for democratic governance and effective administration. Citizens throughout the hemisphere have shown their willingness to participate in the development of their countries and to organize around issues of common concern. The region's citizens are interested in knowing what their government is doing. More citizens of the hemisphere are today participating in the political and economic decision-making process of their respective countries than ever before.

In response to this new culture of citizen participation, and recognizing the maxim that "the true test of a good government is its aptitude and tendency to produce a good administration," many regional governments have taken measurable steps towards deepening their country's democratic culture and have worked towards institutionalizing

best practices in responsive, democratic governance.[1]

The government of Brazil, for example, adopted *Bolsa Familia*, a conditional cash transfer program aimed at curbing poverty and responding to the needs of the country's poorest citizens. In Colombia, the National Procurator has designed performance tools that gauge the effectiveness of local governments and increase institutional transparency as a means of fighting corruption.[2] In Peru, the capital city of Lima has been recognized for the work of several civic-minded mayors to address some of the city's most pressing challenges.

These vignettes are but a glimpse into the evolving government-citizen relationship today, a relationship largely absent prior to the wave of democratization that swept through the region in the 1980s and 1990s.

While the overall trend has been and remains positive, some very noteworthy challenges to democracy and democratic institutions remain throughout the region, as highlighted by Joel Hirst in his chapter, "Declining State of Democratic Institutions and the Implications for Governance." Today, organized crime and its accompanying violence, continued acceptance of cultures of corruption, and strands of authoritarian populism pose threats to the region's democratic progress, especially in countries where institutions are weak and citizens do not have confidence in the authorities.

Despite these very real challenges to the generally positive growth of democratic practices in the region, democratic processes are at the base of citizen expectations, regardless whether individual leaders genuinely support or fully implement such practices. The spirit of democratic citizen participation reached a high-water mark with the Inter-American Democratic Charter, unanimously approved by the 34 member state of the OAS on September 11, 2001. While adherence to the Charter remains uneven, the principles of the peoples' "right to democracy" and of the region's governments' "obligation to promote and defend it" are the normative standards for this hemisphere.

Democratic governance, as noted by each contributing author in this collection, connotes an effective and meaningful interaction among government, citizens, think tanks, civil society and media. It also requires the adoption of basic democratic tenants, including accountability, inclusiveness, accessibility, efficiency, responsiveness and transparency.

Other contributors to this collection have explored the roles and responsibilities of the "demand side" of governance: the expectations of citizens, think tanks, civil society and media as regards the performance of government. "The institutions of a democratic government must work with the demands that the public makes of them."[3] To better understand the status of democratic governance in Latin America however, it is necessary to explore how the institutions of government can best engage with the many actors on the "demand side." What, then, is the extent to which the "supply side" of governance can be made successful?

Collaborative Policy Processes

At their very essence, the institutions of government are fundamentally tasked to design and implement policies that ensure the well-being of the citizenry. Keeping with the construct of a government-citizen relationship based on supply and demand, as outlined by Dr. Georges Fauriol in "The Political Returns of Democratic Governance," government can be understood as an apparatus that supplies or delivers services and enforces the rule of law, while citizens and organizations are those entitled and enabled to demand specific services or a particular quality of services. While each should strive to fulfill its respective role and responsibilities, there are areas where, together, these otherwise distinct actors can drive processes and achieve outcomes. Such a collaborative process can be especially meaningful and produce greater returns in the design of public policy than if done in isolation from the other.

Amid the conduct of its daily business, it is common for government officials to find little time to design policies. This reality makes it vitally important for government to enable the flow of information from interested citizens and to ensure adequate mechanism for collaboration with outside sources of expertise. In addition to keeping policies attuned to the needs and demands of citizens, public-private collaboration can heighten transparency and serve to build stakeholder consensus for new initiatives. Outside perspectives can play a fundamental role in innovation.

As noted by Bettina Horst in her chapter, "Collaboration Between Think Tanks and Government in the Development of Public Policies," think tanks can play an important role in the field of policy innovation. Dedicated to the study and analysis of a variety of issues, think tanks have the ability to collect data and develop policy alternatives which can be recommended to the larger citizenry as well as governmental institutions. Government officials can then apply this information to make informed and timely decisions. It is important to note, however, as Horst does, that "although think tanks can be helpful in building and strengthening governance, their existence alone is not enough to do so."

Civil society organizations (CSO) have burgeoned throughout the region in the past decade. These entities can play a fundamental role in the policy development process as well as in areas of policy implementation. In addition, CSOs perform a potentially significant oversight function. Through both advocacy and outreach, CSOs can serve as a mechanism to streamline and magnify the articulation of citizen needs and priorities, regardless of the geographic remoteness of an interested community. This information can then be supplied to government. Efforts such as these can ensure that the government is aware of the demands and expectations of constituents, and thereby help inform official decision-making processes.

While think tanks and CSOs can play an important and vital role in informing and influencing the development of public policy, it should

not be forgotten that it is the responsibility of a democratic government to adopt and implement policies aimed at the general well-being of the citizenry as a whole. As one set of analysts noted in the case of the U.S. government "…if governing institutions are not to lose the confidence of a public frustrated with their performance, they must not simply reflect the specialized pressures and every change in public opinion, no matter how short-sighted and inconsistent. They must govern on behalf of the common good."[4] Government should therefore ensure the use of multiple sources of information throughout the research and development of public policies. To this end, government must develop and implement its own mechanisms and capacity to gauge citizen needs and priorities. Government can both utilize the expertise of the civil service and the many access points available for citizen input throughout the governmental structure to collect and analyze data for application to policy development that both reflects the needs of and benefits the nation as a whole.

Collaborative Participation in Policy Inplementation

Public opinion research conducted by IRI throughout Latin America has revealed that, in general, citizens are interested in having opportunities to engage with their elected representatives and governing institutions. This polling also reveals that citizens are interested in playing a more active role in decision-making processes at all levels of government. While citizens understandably want to feel they have a role to play in improving their communities, their participation can also be leveraged to reveal enlightening perspectives on issues, especially issues present in their own communities.

In effect, government has an invitation to engage citizens in order to collect local perspectives on issues and, thereby, more effectively foster local buy-in for new policies. Government also can use these opportunities to identify ways to best engage local stakeholders in the implementation of policies. Fostering local partnerships can generate greater ownership of public actions and determinations as well as improve the chances of success and the impact that any one policy may have.

Some interesting examples and best practices in citizen participation and public-private collaboration can be found in the field of public safety or citizen security, for example. As data from the region demonstrates, public safety is a growing concern among citizens, more so than any other issue, a reason why it appears worthwhile to expound on this theme. Using IRI's polling data as a reference, countries such as Honduras, Venezuela, Guatemala and selected Mexican states reveal that more than 50 percent of citizens describe their environments as unsafe or very unsafe. In Caracas, the data is more worrisome as more than nine out of 10 citizens characterize their city as being dangerous. Interestingly, though perhaps not surprising, survey after survey conducted across countries demonstrates that 75 percent of crime victims do not report those crimes. Of those who do report crimes, less than 25 percent of citizens have ever had their cases addressed or solved by the relevant authorities.

When citizens are asked what they would like to see done to reduce crime and increase security, the common and not unexpected response is to add more police. However, other common responses are to add more jobs and more opportunities for youth. These responses are notable given the popular perception that the public defaults in favor of *mano dura* (strong hand) policies and heavy police action. What the data points to, however, is that citizens are also asking for social-based answers to their community's crime and insecurity problems.

It has been IRI's experience that this data is often a revelation to elected and other government officials. Time after time, while a mayor or city councilmember understands the threat that youth gangs pose in their municipality, these same officials may not be aware of other issues contributing to citizen insecurity. These other factors include things like the lack of street lighting or the absence of community anti-crime watch groups. This gap in awareness is what IRI addresses in its initial programming. Whether at the local or national level, the Institute exposes officials to data on public expectations and opinion and then helps create institutional mechanisms that can bring government closer to citizens. Through these direct engagements, government is able to

work alongside citizens, think tanks, civil society groups and local media to solve challenges and pressing issues.

In the field of public safety, IRI has, by way of example, lent assistance to municipal governments to conduct town hall meetings and public-private working groups where local actors can come together with government officials to analyze vulnerabilities that are conducive to crime and other manifestations of insecurity. Meetings often begin with participants conducting diagnostics of the issue at hand and then identifying initiatives that can deter insecurity. The results of these interactions has seen the deployment of community alarm systems, such as the creation of whistle-carrying neighborhood watch groups, as well as the implementation of anti-graffiti campaigns. Another consistent result has been improved relations among government officials, local police authorities and residents, with the most significant outcome being a collaborative effort to reduce crime and heighten public safety.

In the city of Cucuta, Colombia, for example, polling demonstrated that distrust of the police was a deeply held perception among citizens. Consequently, IRI worked with the local government, a community police unit, the University of Rosario, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and *Corpovisionarios*, a local CSO, to design a public awareness campaign and a series of educational workshops focused on discouraging the ownership of illegal weapons among school-aged children. In addition to the campaign, this collaboration served as a foundation for enhanced communication and improved working relationships among public institutions, citizens and civic groups. Today, these actors continue to actively collaborate in crime prevention efforts.

In Mexico, IRI works with *Movimento Pro-Vecino* a nation-wide NGO focused on citizen security, to create and implement a program called Together for Our CommUNITY. This one initiative currently spans three states and 15 wards. The program brings local residents and civil society organizations together with a mayor's office and police officials to analyze and develop solutions to local safety concerns. Thus far,

governments and local actors have begun cleaning the city, replacing streetlights and forming block committees that share responsibility as neighborhood watchdog personnel. All of these initiatives have contributed to a deterrence of criminal activity.

As to how citizen participation can be used as an effective mechanism to foster collaboration between government, average citizens and other local actors, it is relevant to reflect on an observation made by Pedro Afonso del Pino in "Participation as an Element of an Active Civil Society" about "authentic participation." Del Pino points to the distinction between "authentic participation" which is used as a means to influence policy processes and other participatory activities that are, in reality, used to create a "democratic" appearance for a specific, governmentally determined outcome. He states "participation that is managed, guided, or tied to the interests of government or any determined political group is no longer participation but rather an orchestrated partisan manifestation foreign to the citizenry." This masquerade can be detrimental to citizen confidence in governmental processes and institutions.

When looking at Latin America in search of participatory models, especially best practices to be replicated, it is increasingly important to take heed of Del Pino's observation. As local and international actors work to deepen the democratic culture of the Americas through increased collaboration between governments and constituents, it is ultimately the distinction between meaningful participation and artificial participatory exercises that can and will play a fundamental role in the success of these efforts.

The Relationship Between Government and Media

Media plays an important role in any society, often serving as a primary vehicle for the exchange of information while also operating as a watchdog over the actions of a variety of actors in a given community. Making use of the many different platforms that exist in this contemporary age for the exchange of information, media has

a significant ability to play a fundamental role in promoting and advocating for greater democratic governance, as noted by Luis Nájera in "The Role of Media in Improving Democratic Governance."

While any and all actors in a society can potentially use the media to generate greater public interest in issues and actions and communicate more effectively, government can especially use media to generate greater institutional transparency and accountability. Media can play an instrumental role in transmitting updated and frequent information on the work of government to citizens. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways and can serve a variety of purposes. Government can, for example, invite media to attend and give coverage to events and activities, frequently organize press conferences, or conduct regular media programs where officials speak on the work of government. While ensuring that citizens are well informed of the work of government, which is an important aspect of transparency, these opportunities can also ensure that citizens are equipped with sufficient information to hold their official representatives accountable for official actions.

It has been the experience of IRI that these types of initiatives generate positive feedback from the community while also fostering greater citizen buy-in for public policies and actions. In Guatemala, for example, IRI worked with the municipal government of San Cristobal Totonicapán to create a weekly television program during which the mayor and members of the municipal council report to citizens on the work that their local government is performing. Over the course of one hour, officials discuss topics that range from budget expenditures to public safety measures to public school renovations. Importantly, the program has embedded a time slot for citizens to call in so they can both provide feedback on what is being reported on and ask questions. This measure helps to ensure that government is held accountable by its constituents, as officials often have to respond to tough questions on pressing issues in the community.

This weekly television program has been underway in San Cristobal Totonicapán since 2009 and is now fully funded by the local government itself. Given the constructive impact it has had in its community and the positive feedback it has generated from citizens, IRI replicated this initiative in other municipalities in Guatemala as well as in several cities in Honduras. IRI has also modified the format of these programs for countries where radio broadcasting has a larger audience. In countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia, IRI has therefore worked alongside municipal governments to launch and institutionalize weekly radio programs such as the *Sabados Vecinales* program mentioned in the earlier chapter by Nájera.

As a watchdog of the actions of local actors, including government, print and broadcast media can steer reporting towards holding government accountable for decisions made or programs conducted in a community or a nation. Through their everyday reporting, journalists can generate attention and apply constructive pressure on government officials and elected representatives to follow through on campaign promises or other commitments made to the public. Further, media can, and often does, serve as a fundamental vehicle through which citizens can more effectively voice concerns or priorities, regardless how pressing or critical an issue may be.

In an effort to bolster the ability of media to serve as a watchdog, IRI has conducted programming in the region geared towards equipping journalists with a greater understanding of the work of government and how to effectively conduct oversight through reporting. In Colombia and Bolivia, for example, IRI has conducted several workshops tailored to enhancing the capacity of local journalists to play an appropriate role in demanding improved democratic governance. In the city of Valledupar, Colombia, IRI worked with a local NGO and radio station to create a weekly radio program titled *Voces de la Transparencia*. A renowned local broadcaster hosted the hourly program which helped to generate an audience, especially as the program was in its early days of broadcasting. The broadcaster and NGO worked in close collaboration to convince government officials and civil servants from

the state and municipal government to participate on the show. As this particular radio show was geared towards the subject of transparency, the dialogue and debate that ensued over the course of each weekly program was aimed at providing government officials a means to outline their work and for citizens to ask about performance and the resources involved. This approach allowed the public one avenue through which to hold their government accountable while developing a greater understanding of what was involved in the implementation of the policy. The program generated greater interest and demand for government transparency and made citizens more aware of the need to understand the roles and responsibilities of public institutions.

Conclusion

Cooperation, whether initiated by governments or civil society, is essential to successfully integrate democratic governance mechanisms into the political landscape. Bridging the divide between government and those they govern allows for a virtuous cycle of trust, policy setting and decision-making. While citizens have to choose to engage and be a force for change within their own society, governments can and should undertake initiatives to create an environment amenable to true democratic processes where citizens are empowered and valued as constituents, not subjects.

Governments looking to provide authentic methods of participation should look for input from constituents early and often. Unidirectional methods such as opinion polling, citizen surveys and suggestion box initiatives can be effective ways to hear concerns and prioritize issues; however, lasting positive impact fully emerges when the conversation is two-sided. Roundtable discussions, interactive town halls and television or radio shows with call-in segments all permit government officials to converse directly with constituents. Governments can inform citizens about initiatives and policies, describing the opportunities and limitations within, allowing for realistic expectations, fuller understanding of implications and provide opportunity for feedback. Citizen participation can extend

past issue identification and discussion; as projects are implemented, governments can utilize citizen oversight mechanisms, both formal and informal, to ensure proper execution. Mechanisms can be simple and low-cost, such as tip lines where citizens can report improper actions or use of resources. Citizens can also monitor and report conditions like broken municipal signage, road or sidewalk damage and graffiti by submitting SMS or email based images, allowing governments to stay informed and prioritize responses. At the end of project cycles or fiscal years, citizens can be included in the evaluation process through public rendering of accounts or public works audits, initiatives that allow citizens to understand where and how public money was spent. By increasing citizen knowledge of government functions, including them in the discussion about the municipalities' future and providing mechanisms for feedback, governments can increase citizen confidence in the accountability and capability of government.

Developing partnerships and relationships with external organizations, particularly media outlets and think tanks, can be an effective way for governments to better understand citizen priorities, make better policy decisions and publicize their efforts to fulfill citizen needs. Think tanks can serve as an independent research tool, encouraging consideration of divergent points of view when drafting legislation or making policy decisions and enable both a long-range perspective of the past and view of implications into the future that is unrelated to political cycles. As an independent voice, think tanks can speak for unpopular but important initiatives and as a bulwark against populist arguments that emanate from within or outside of government, benefitting both citizens and governments. Partnerships with media and think tanks can take many forms: public town halls, radio or television shows and op-ed placements are all ways for governments to interact with these actors in transparent methods that can instill governmental confidence in citizens. Media can play a watchdog role, ensuring accountability of public officials and projects. They also can serve to highlight government achievements and encourage citizen participation in governmental initiatives. Governments wanting to inform and involve citizens should look to media personalities and outlets as facilitators.

In creating these types of partnerships, governments wanting think tanks or media outlets to remain independent institutions should keep both at arms' length, making them a partner in the policy process but not using undue influence, financial or otherwise, to compromise impartiality.

In sum, authentic democratic governance requires governments to bridge the gap between themselves and those they govern. Many of the measures described will result in increased scrutiny and allow constituents to view the inner workings of their government. If properly implemented, governments can create an informed citizenry – a constituency that values the information it receives and uses it to improve conditions. Openly accountable and transparent governments will benefit – both by being returned to office by their citizens and by substantially improving the cities and towns in which they also live.

Endnotes

[1] Hamilton, Alexander, "The Mode of Electing the President," *The Federalist Papers*: No. 68, (14 March 1788).

[2] See Appendix I, *Open Government Index*.

[3] Chubb, John E. and Paul E. Peterson, *Can the Government Govern?*, The Brookings Institution, (Washington DC, 1989), p. 2.

[4] Chubb, John E. and Paul E. Peterson, *Can the Government Govern?*, The Brookings Institution, (Washington DC, 1989), p. 2 -3.

Appendix

The Index of Open Government: A Tool for Strengthening Oversight and Territorial Democratic Governance

Carlos Augusto Mesa Diaz and
Juan Pablo Remolina Pulido

"Collaborative public management is a concept that describes the process of facilitating and operating in multiorganizational arrangements for solving problems that cannot be achieved, or achieved easily, by single organizations."
-Agranoff and McGuire [1]

According to the World Bank, from 1996 to 2009 the basic elements of governance decreased in Latin America relative to other regions of the world. The greatest declines were seen in regulatory quality (-27 percent) and the rule of law (-20 percent). This directly impacts the capacity of government to formulate and implement policies and regulations that enable the promotion and development of the private sector and the quality of compliance to regulations by different social players. Faced with these results, and taking into account that Latin America still cannot surpass an average of four out of 10 points in the Perception of Corruption Index, demonstrates that the region suffers from a generalized behavior which tends toward neglecting regulations. Within this framework, there are shortcomings in the oversight of public institutions.

An organization is only efficient and effective if it can optimally fulfill the four basic functions of administration: planning, organizing, directing and controlling.[2] If one of these functions fails, there will be an improper use of available resources and a poor provision of goods

and services. This premise applies even more to the great organization of the state that is mandated, by means of its structure, to guarantee and protect the rights of the population. Otherwise, the level of governance deteriorates and the democratic stability of states is placed at risk.

When the Colombian government codified its political organization into a united decentralized republic with autonomous territorial entities (Article 1 in the 1991 constitution), the exercise of the duties related to the administration of these territories was not entirely conceived or implemented. While the constitution prescribed for the creation of internal and external controls, the entities responsible for these mandates did not have the necessary technical and financial capacities to manage the territories efficiently. Thus the resources managed by the territories significantly increased (from 32 percent to 46.5 percent of the country's basic revenues between 1992 and 2001)[3] and their mandates expanded (education, health, water sanitation and potable water) but the lack of capacity, regulation and control led to the so-called "territorial fiscal crisis" between 1994 and 1998.[4] As such, the investments directed towards operations (overstaffed payrolls) exceeded the revenues (a fiscal deficit of -0.2 percent to -0.6 percent of GDP between 1990 and 1999) generating a spiral towards excessive debt (of 1.1 percent to 3.5 percent of GDP between 1990 and 1999)[5] and a poor provision of public goods and services.

Between 1995 and 2000, the situation in the territorial institutions increasingly deteriorated, and the controlling entities imposed low levels of fiscal and disciplinary sanctions and existing regulation revealed deep gaps in relation to transparency and discipline in the management of public resources. Consequently, these gaps were exploited by organized crime and unscrupulous characters that contributed to major corruption scandals throughout the country. To counteract this problem, the national government adopted a set of laws especially aimed at cleaning up public finances.[6] Although great institutional weaknesses still exist, these laws have generally been applied rigorously and have helped to provide stability to the fiscal structure of the territorial entities.

In the last few years, the national government has gone beyond strengthening regulations and tracking systems for public administration and has expanded its mandate to include the ability to impose administrative sanctions when there are irregularities in the use of royalties (Decree 416 of 2007) and resources yielded through the General System of Shares (Decree 028 of 2008).[7] In this way the national government not only conducts audits, performs oversight and sets up performance plans, but also administers sanctions that range from the suspension of financial transfers to the expansion of municipal mandates dictated by a state government and the national government. This means that the Department of the Treasury (Office of Fiscal Support) and the Office of Royalties (DNP) are added to the existing entities that perform oversight: National Prosecutor General, Controller General, General Procurator, territorial controllers and legal representatives.

Under this lens, one can identify two types of sanctions. On one hand, one finds *intuitu personae* (personal) sanctions for matters related to disciplinary, fiscal and penal issues which are administered by the Public Ministry, Comptroller and Public Prosecutor. These individual sanctions correspond to a model focused on the conduct of a public servant. On the other hand, there are administrative and financial sanctions imposed by the national government which can be perceived as a punishment to the community, entailing the suspension of investments, in response to the unwillingness of citizens to exercise a no confidence vote against corrupt and inefficient officials. These administrative sanctions focus on protecting public resources and aim to ensure they are spent correctly.

Considering the many oversight models available to analysts it is worth evaluating the Colombian methodology in order to reflect on its success and possibilities for improvement. It is hoped that this process will help establish an improved policy for administration that allows for the strengthening of democratic governance, meaning the consolidation of a society's capacity to build its own development and well-being in a participatory and legitimate fashion.[8] In this sense, the

following questions arise: How much does the Colombian government spend on oversight and which forms are most effective? What type of relationships should exist among the different oversight entities, what should their responsibilities be and how should they be distributed? Should the national government continue to strengthen oversight mechanisms on its own or alongside external oversight entities? Which entities are responsible for providing training and technical assistance to territorial entities, and to what extent?

Guided by the aforementioned questions, and with the intent of leveraging and optimizing the functions of the many oversight entities, the National Solicitor General (PGN), has sought to adopt modern tools that allow it to optimize its mandate. In doing so, the PGN aims to compensate for a historical weakness in the administration of oversight, implementing a system of preventative monitoring of territorial administration lending its competitive advantage: the vigilance and promotion of the adherence to norms.[9] This system, embodied in the Index of Open Government (IGA) aims to conduct a systematic monitoring of the fulfillment of strategic norms related to the fight against corruption in local public office and achieve three objectives: generate early alerts; promote legality and best practices; and primarily, prevent irregular acts and disciplinary sanctions.

Thus, in the first section of this document the theoretical and operational methodology of IGA is set forth. In the second section, the results of a pilot application of the IGA are presented. In the third and final section, the primary conclusions are discussed, including challenges that arose from the exercise. Each one of the points briefly presented in this essay can be further studied in *Index of Open Government 2009-2010* pilot program report measuring anti-corruption regulations in municipalities in the State of Santander.[10]

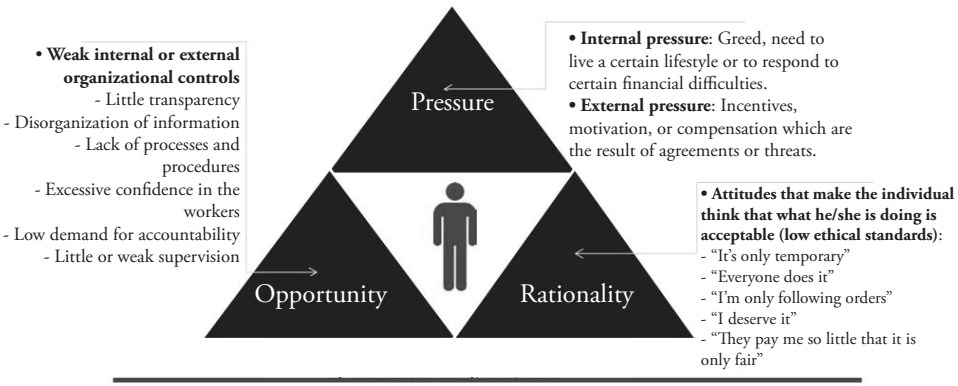
The IGA Theoretical Framework: The Triangle of Corruption

The PGN is the highest entity of oversight of the Colombian government apparatus and its mandate is to "ensure adherence to the

constitution, laws, judicial decisions and administrative acts" (Article 277 of the constitution). To ensure adherence, the PGN primarily performs disciplinary functions (sanctions) and preventative functions (warnings). But which regulations should be enforced? Given that the National Procurator, Alejandro Ordoñez Maldonado, prioritized the fight against corruption[11] within the strategic plan of the PGN, this was taken as a starting point for the analysis on the issue.

Using the triangle of corruption (figure 1) as a reference, three determining factors for the occurrence of an act of corruption were identified. The *pressure* factor consists of those incentives that influence an employee to commit corruption; for example, bribes coming from the private sector or debts or financial commitments that an employee incurs. The *rationality* factor accounts for those ethical standards held by the employee that in a moment of reflection allows them to reject any inappropriate activity (e.g. receiving a bribe). The opportunity factor refers to the likelihood of committing an act of corruption given a lack of transparency and control mechanisms.

Figure 1: Triangle of Corruption



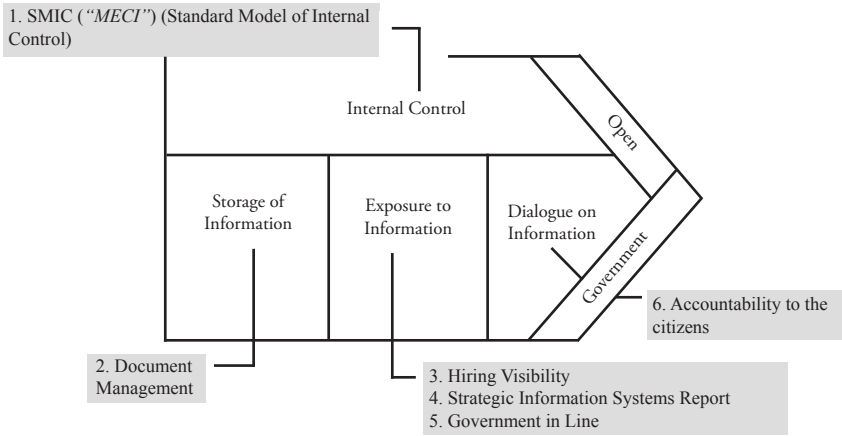
Source: Fraud triangle model developed by criminologist Donald Cressey

Upon analyzing the Colombian panorama under the triangle of corruption, it is evident that the state has adopted different international instruments in the fight against corruption,[12] which have found their way into multiple laws within the Colombian legal framework. Nonetheless, the ability of the territorial entities to fulfill these norms shows critical deficiencies.[13] Shortcomings in the opportunity factor have allowed for conditions that are conducive for public servants to act irregular. For this reason the PGN decided to design and implement a monitoring system to review the strategic norms of the fight against corruption and applied a system that would facilitate vigilance and control.

The application of the triangle of corruption in Colombia allowed for the identification of difficulties in the opportunity vertex because a critical situation existed regarding the fulfillment of anticorruption norms. In order to deal with the problem it was necessary to adopt a framework for analysis that would clarify and unite the very spirit of the existing objectives. Founded on international instruments tailored to the fight against corruption, which have been adopted by the state (particularly those dealing with preventative measures in the public sector), and managerial methodologies for evaluation the information management value chain (CVGI) emerges.

The CVGI aims to foster open government, that is, a government that is transparent, accessible and receptive, according to the definition set forth by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.[14] The CVGI determines that to achieve transparency it is necessary to carry out four basic processes: internal control, data storage, exposure to information and dialogue on information. The implementation of these processes will enable the optimal administration of information, within the framework of the constitutional principles of administrative functions,[15] meaning information is handled to generate a high degree of fluidity of information within the organization and among interested parties (board of directors, employees and the citizenry, among others),[16] without damage to the restrictions established by law. Founded on the CVGI, the IGA emerges.

Figure 2: Information Management Value Chain



Source: The Chain of Value of Michael Porter and the methodology of evaluation Public Service Value from Accenture consulting firm.

The IGA Operational Methodology: Compliance Indicators for the Fight Against Corruption

The IGA measures compliance of specific regulations related to each component of the CVGI by means of secondary sources affiliated to the state and experts in each subject matter. The first component, internal control, is measured through the implementation indicator of the standard model for internal control (MECI),[17] which is administered by the Department for Public Administration. The second component, data storage, is measured by compliance with the Law of Archives[18] as determined by information provided by the Colombian National Archives.

The third component, exposure to information, incorporates three sub-components: First, contractual visibility,[19] which is measured by cross tabulating information provided by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies (MinTIC), as found within the Portal for Contracts, and territorial controllers. Second, the report on strategic information systems,[20] measured by the level of reporting

through four information systems: the System for Identification of Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programs managed by the DNP's social development office, the Sole Information System subject to the Superintendence for Public Services, the Sole Territorial Form (FUT) managed by the DNP's National Royalties Office and the Office of Fiscal Support of the Department of Treasury, among other entities, and, the information system for reporting on budget expenditures (SICEP) managed by the DNP's Office for Territorial Development. The third sub-component measures the implementation of the e-government strategy[21] (the information phase) according to information provided by the e-government program managed by the MinTIC.

Finally, the fourth component, dialogue on information, measures two sub-components. First, rendering of accounts, measures key aspects of the implementation of public hearings by means of information registered into the SICEP by each territorial entity. The second sub-component, customer service, measures the implementation of the e-government strategy (the interaction phase) managed by the e-government program of the MinTIC.

Within the IGA, each of the four components carries a relative weight (figure 3) determined by its level of importance as established through an analysis that applies multiple criteria. The internal control component therefore represents 20 percent, the data storage component represents 20 percent, the exposure to information component represents 40 percent and the dialogue on information component another 20 percent.

Mechanisms for the Socialization of IGA's Results

Once the IGA for each territorial entity is calculated, the results are diagramed through a model inspired by the British methodology for administrative oversight. This oversight model is characterized by introducing techniques for private sector management into public administration.[22] The model was implemented in the 1970's by prime ministers Margaret Thatcher and John Major, who were pioneers in

Figure 3: IGA Indicators

Component	%	Indicator	%	Source
1. Internal Control	20%	1.1. Level of implementation of the Standard Model of Internet Control (MECI): Score of implementation of the MECI	20%	Administrative Department of the Public Function (DAFP)
2. Storage of Information	20%	2.1. Level of compliance of the Archives Law: Number of variables fulfilled/Total number of variables	20%	General Archive of the Nation (AGN)
3. Exposure of the Information	40%	3.1. Level of Visibility from the Recruitment: Number of contracts published in the PUC/ Number of contracts subscribed and susceptible for publication in the PUC reported to the respective territory Comptroller	20%	Ministry or Technology, Information and Communication (TIC) General Comptroller of Santander Municipal Comptroller of Bucaramanga Municipal Comptroller of Floridablenca
		3.2. Index for Compliance with the Government Strategy on Line (Information Phase)	10%	Ministry of Technology, Information and Communication (TIC)- Government Program online
		3.3. Level of reports for the Strategic Systems of Information	10%	DNP, Min of Finance and SuperServices
		3.3.1. Level of reports for the SISBEN	2%	DNP (Direction of Social Development)
		3.3.2. Level of reports for the FUT	2%	Ministry of Finance (Direction of Fiscal Support-DAF) and DNP (National Direction of Royalties)
		3.3.3. Level of reports for the SUI	4%	Superintendence of Public Service (Delegate for water, sewerage and cleanliness)
		3.3.4. Level of reports for the SICEP	2%	DNP (Direction of Sustainable Territorial Development)
4. Dialogue about the Information	20%	4.1. Level of Quality for the Process of Rendering of Accounts and of Attention to the Citizen	20%	DNP and Min. TIC
		4.1.1. Level of Quality for the Process of Rendering of Accounts	10%	DNP (Direction of Sustainable Territorial Development)
		4.1.2. Attention to the Citizen according to the TIC-Government Index Online (Interaction Phase)	10%	Ministry of Technology, Information and Communication (TIC)-Government Program online

Source: *Index of Open Government 2009 - 2010* pilot program report.

the use of performance indicators as instruments for comparative measurement in public administration.

In this regard, results are placed in descending order within a bar graph and an average of the entities being analyzed is calculated with a standard deviation. The standard deviation enables the identification of relative performance patterns, and as such allows for the identification of the territorial entities that obtained a higher or lower score according to their conditions (ex: location, institutional and financial capacity, etc.). Thus, the average plus the standard deviation {average (μ) + 1

sigma (σ)} determines the highest benchmark, and the average minus the standard deviation sets the lowest benchmark. As such, the entities located above the high benchmark (the atypical higher range) reveal a relatively high performance while those below the lowest benchmark (atypical lower range) reveal a relatively low performance. The municipalities that are located between the high and low ranges reveal a typical or medium performance. Within this criteria, each range - high, medium or low - in the bar graph is coupled with maps so as to geographically identify areas with relatively high, low and medium performance (figure 4).

This oversight model has several advantages. First, it is a simple tool that amasses all the entities under evaluation. This way the PGN is able to survey all local administrations and allow it to obtain a panoramic view of all the aspects measured by the IGA. Second, the model enables the comparison between entities being observed. As a result the PGN is able to learn which entities are performing better than others and to what extent, which promotes healthy competition between entities to obtain better results. Third, the fact that the entities under observation are able to identify, among their counterparts, who is performing better allows them an opportunity to become familiar with and replicate best practices. Fourth, along with other entities responsible for oversight and control, the PGN will be able to target interventions, trainings, audits or sanctions, as needed.

After the results are published, these are shared with the entities that have been evaluated as well as the entities that provide information by means of a particular methodology. The PGN then organizes in-person events in government offices, known as anti-corruption regulations compliance roundtables, to which it invites all the mayors from the evaluated municipalities, local and national government entities that participate in the IGA and the governor of the corresponding department. During the event, the PGN shows the results of the IGA. Subsequently, representatives of the national government present the methodology for measuring the corresponding indicators and offer capacity building to the territorial entities. Finally, mayors

explore the reasons why they had a high or low level of performance as regards fulfilling regulations. This technique is applied to each of the components.

IGA Results: Pilot Project in the Department of Santander

The IGA approach was applied in 2010 as a pilot project in the 87 municipalities of the department of Santander. Santander was chosen because the department registered the largest number of disciplinary sanctions over the course of 2009. The consolidated data proved that all municipalities presented deficiencies in the compliance of these regulations. The average was 53 points out of a total of 100, and the gap that exists between municipalities is significant (58 points between the highest and the lowest score), which is not necessarily due to a lack of financial resources. Entities of the first and sixth category are located as often in higher ranges as in lower ranges.

The results of the internal control component reveal that the average in the implementation of the MECI is 67 points and many municipalities are not complying, according to the parameters established by the governing entity on this matter, the Administrative Department of Public Administration. The results of the data storage component evince that it is the second most critical deficiency with an average of 37 points. Despite the existence of the Law of Archives, which is in effect since 2000, more than 95 percent of the municipalities have not received approval and application of the assessment tables for documents, or the application of tables for document retention and general archiving.

Regarding the exposure to information component, the contractual visibility sub-component proves to be the most critical aspect. The average is only 26 points. Fifty-one percent of the municipalities (in other words, 44 municipalities) obtained less than 20 points and 33 percent (29 municipalities) do not register a single contract published in the PUC over the course of 2009. The results on the report on strategic information systems sub-component show better results.

Figure 4: Index of Open Government 2009 - 2010, Information Archiving

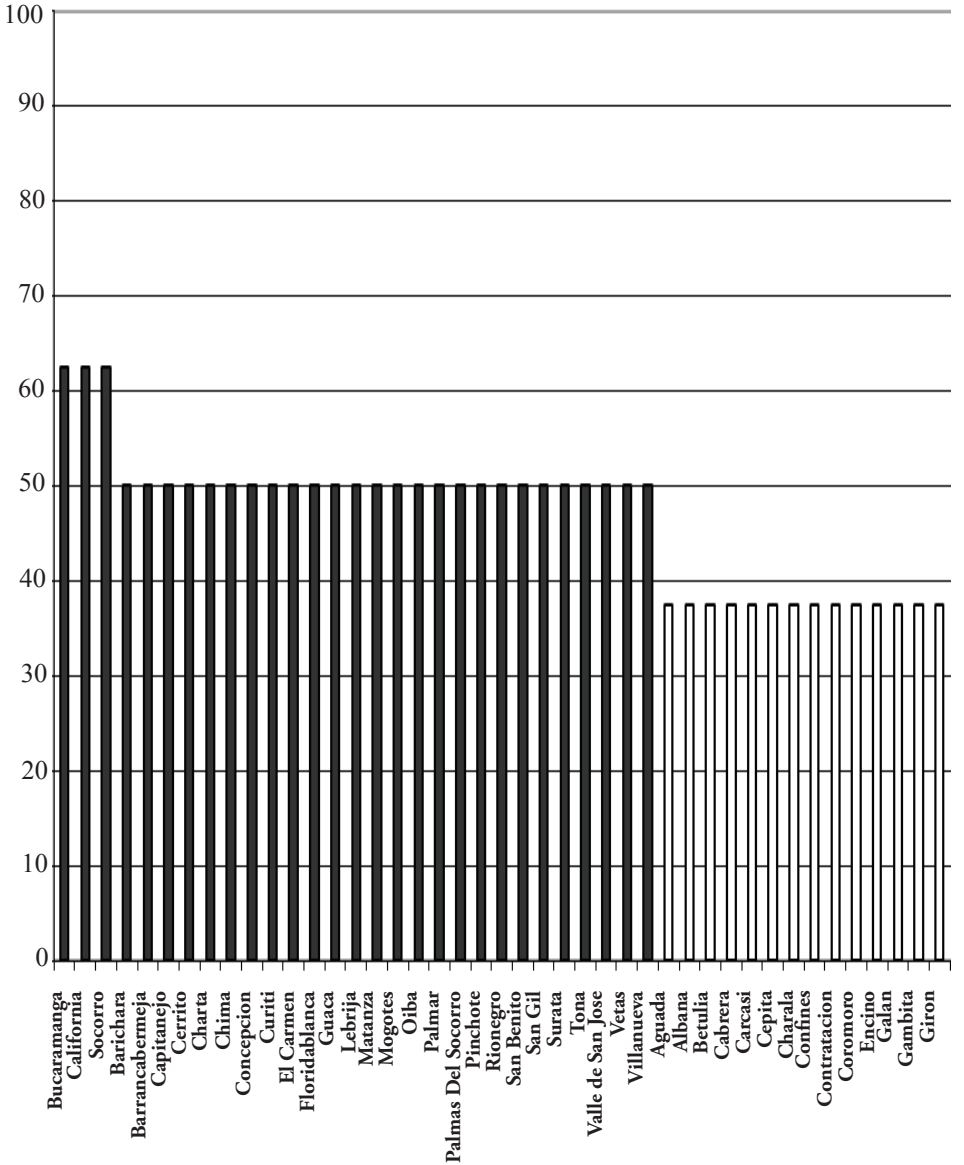
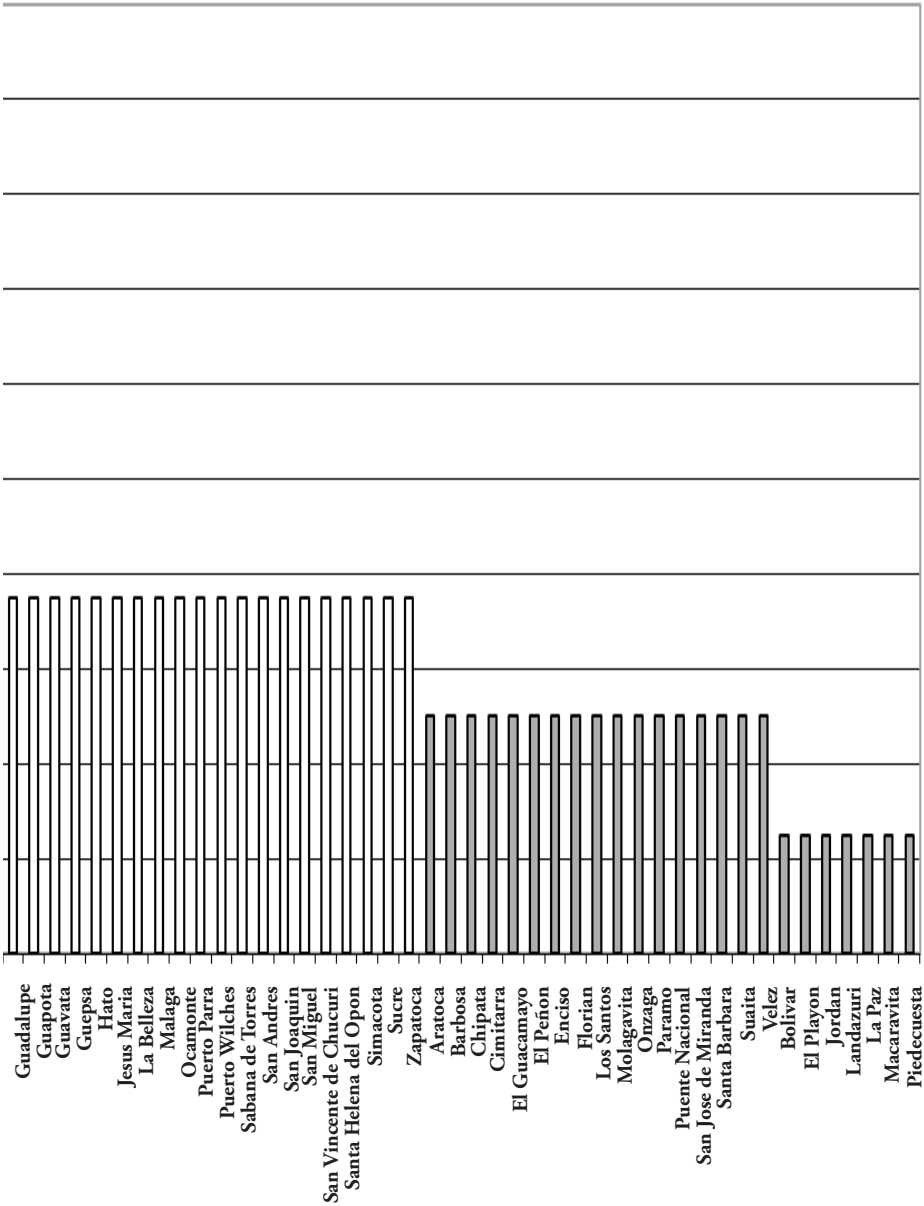


Figure 4: continued



The average is high, 87 points, despite difficulties in the quality of information, primarily the reports prepared about royalties by the FUT. The second best results are seen in the implementation sub-component of the e-government strategy (the information phase). While the average is 71 points, it is located in the medium range (< 80 points) of performance according to the parameters of the e-government program, despite the fact that the deadline for fulfilling this phase of the project was in November of 2008.

Regarding the rendering of accounts subcomponent of the overarching dialogue on information component, the average was 54 points, which highlights that though 96 percent of the surveyed municipalities expressed they had conducted one or two public renditions of accounts that year, only 17 percent carried out public hearings. This data suggests that it is prudent to revise the methodology that municipalities are implementing to carry out their rendering of accounts. Regarding the customer service sub-component, 87 percent of the municipalities evaluated demonstrated low levels of compliance in the e-government strategy (the interaction stage) despite the fact that the deadline for implementation was December 2009.

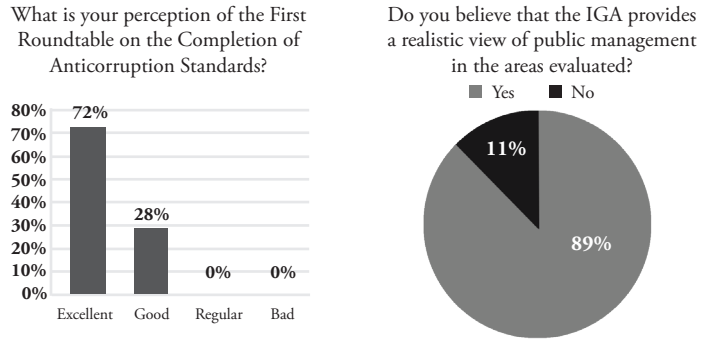
Results of the First Anti-Corruption Regulations Compliance Round Table

For the PNG, what is most important are not the results in and of themselves but rather their socialization, pedagogy and the subsequent actions that are adopted. In this regard, on February 15, 2011, the first anti-corruption regulations compliance roundtable was carried out in the city of Bucaramanga. Eighty-two of the 87 mayors (95 percent) that were evaluated participated, as well as the governor of the department, five territorial attorney generals, three territorial comptrollerships and nine entities of the national government.

Despite the sensitivity of the subject, the mayors showed a good receptiveness to the event. Seventy-eight percent classified the event as excellent, and 28 percent as good. Eighty-nine percent believed that

the IGA reflects a real picture of the evaluated aspects (figure 5) and 96 percent believed that the IGA would allow mayors to correct weaknesses in the compliance of anti-corruption regulations. One hundred percent agreed that this exercise should be replicated throughout the entire country.

Figure 5: Results of Survey on the IGA



Source: 1st Anti-Corruption Regulations Compliance Roundtable, exit survey, IRI, February 15, 2011; Number of polled: 53 (47 Mayors and nine others).

However, the PGN is not only visible during the results sharing phase, but rather, it is also present during any follow-up that ensues. In this sense, the PGN by means of the provincial Attorney General of Vélez, the National Archives, the Governor of Santander and the general comptrollership of Santander actively participated in the follow-up by conducting a training workshop on document management. This training was carried out on May 27, 2011, in the municipality of Vélez because the province of Vélez of Santander comprises 50 percent of the municipalities with the greatest difficulties according to the results of the IGA. One hundred and fifty-two civil servants from 20 municipalities attended the event.

Conclusion

The IGA is a preventative and innovative tool that seeks to contribute to the improvement of oversight in local public administration by means of systematic compliance monitoring of strategic regulations

in the fight against corruption. Given the existence of diverse oversight mechanisms in Colombia, the IGA allows for each of these to be leveraged in order to guarantee one single objective: optimal administration of information by territorial entities. For this reason, IGA depends on the information provided by secondary sources, requiring close cooperation and understanding between the different entities that provide the information and are responsible for oversight and control. This way it is feasible to perform an exhaustive oversight of local public administration that leads to improved public services and as such, increased public trust in institutions.

The IGA presumes that to the extent that there is an improved fluidity of information available to interested parties (citizens, civil servants, oversight entities and public entities) will perform better and democratic governance quality will increase. For these reasons, it is necessary to follow-up on the evolution of the IGA with impact indicators such as the unsatisfied basic needs index, the quality of life index or indicators on trust in institutions. With the end goal of measuring impact of the latter, surveys from the National Statistics Administrative Department will be fielded to civil servants and citizens.[23] This will be done so as to ensure the community has greater participation in decision-making, and that their demands are responded to more effectively by the state.

Thanks to contributions from national and international experts, the PGN has been able to confirm the importance of this exercise. According to Daniel Kaufmann, worldwide expert in governance and the fight against corruption:

> "IGA is a good and interesting initiative; it demonstrates a systemic focus that has as a primary objective the mitigation of risks for corruption. In addition, it improves open government and the control of corruption is very important because it provides a world average of 300 percent in development dividend. In other words, if there is a realistic improvement in participatory and open government and in the control of corruption, in the long

> term, a country's per capita income is increased three-fold. At the same time, child mortality is reduced, literacy is increased and competitiveness greatly increases."[24]

One of IGA's greatest challenges is to contribute to empowering citizens through timely, complete and accessible public information, ensuring that citizens and civil servants have access to the same information. While information may be available, if citizens do not have the capacity to demand accountability or be critical of public administration, the goal is only achieved halfway. This implies designing and implementing strategies aimed primarily toward citizen groups that are active in local public affairs and by doing do, shed light on the different channels and types of information to which they have access.

One must not lose sight of the integrity of the three factors that influence the likelihood of an act of corruption as established by the triangle of corruption (opportunity, pressure and rationality). While the IGA tackles the *opportunity* factor, it is necessary to reinforce strategies that seek to close the two remaining factors. The PGN is currently working on these points.

IGA is a tool that contributes to measuring compliance of anticorruption regulations in Colombia. Following IGA's protocol Colombia has helped to more accurately implement and monitor the Inter-American and United Nations Conventions Against Corruption and the Andean Plan Against Corruption. The Republic of Colombia, alongside other state signatories to these international instruments must systematically conduct reports on actions taken to fight corruption. Thus, the IGA intends to not only facilitate the reporting to the different multilateral organisms on progress made in this matter, but above all, to extensively learn the status of key elements in every state entity.

Endnotes

[1] Agranoff, Michael and Michael McGuire, *Collaborative Public Management: New Strategies for Local Governments* (Washington,D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003).

[2] Fayol, Henri, *Administration industrielle et generale*, 1916.

[3] Ministry of Treasury and Public Credit. Department of Fiscal Support. Diez años de transformación fiscal territorial en Colombia 1998-2008. Bogotá: Ministerio, 2009. P. 11.

[4] Ibid. P. 7

[5] Ibid. P. 16

[6] For example: Law 358 of 1.997 about controls of excessive debt, Law 549 of 1.999 about administration of pension liabilities, Law 550 of 1.999 about restructuring liabilities, law 617 of 2.000 about the rationalization of public expense and the law 819 of 2.003 about fiscal responsibility.

[7] The resources coming from the General System of Shares and of royalties represent 63% of departmental income and 53% of the municipal income. See DNP. Fiscal performance of the departments and municipalities 2009. Bogotá: National Printer of Colombia. P. 26

[8] DNP. Laboratory of institutional development and public territorial governance. Methodology for measuring the state of the governance in the municipalities of the laboratory of peace. Bogotá, November of 2009.

[9] In agreement with article 277 of the Political Constitution of Colombia, the "National Procurator, by itself or through its delegates and agents, will have the following functions: 1. Watch over the

fulfillment of the Constitution, the laws, the judicial decisions and the administrative acts."

[10] Download publication at: http://www.procuraduria.gov.co/html/territoriales.htm

[11] In agreement with the index of governance of the World Bank, the index of competitiveness of the World Economic Forum and the index of Perception of International Transparency, the corruption has been consolidated in the last five years with the more relevant problem.

[12] Ex. Convention of United Nations of the fight against Corruption, the Inter-American Covention of the Fight Against Corruption and the Andean Plan for Fighting Corruption.

[13] Some examples: According to a survey carried out in 2010 by PGN, 91% of 225 territorial entities evaluated fail to fulfill the Law of Archives. In agreement with the Municipal Index of Transparency 2008-2009 of the Transparency Corporation of Colombia, more than 70% of the bids were not published in the Unique Portal of Hiring (PUC). According to the DNP, in 2009 44% (2008: 71%) of the municipalities were incomplete and inconsistent with regards to the management of the General System of Shares (c. COP 20 billion). The Accountant General of the Nation declared that 62% of the 750 entities that receive royalties did not report them through the Unique Territorial Form (FUT). A survey conducted in 2009 and 2010 by PGN showed that 75 percent of 1141 entities evaluated show partial implementation of the Standard Model of Internal Control. According to the Min. TIC, by December 31st of 2010, 93% of the territorial entities were found in a low or medium level in the implementation of the information phase of the National Governments online strategy.

[14] OCDE. Public Sector Modernization: Open Government. 2005.p.2.

[15] "The administrative function seeks the general interests and is developed based on the principles of equality, morality, efficiency,

economy, promptness, impartiality and publicity, through the decentralization, appointment and spreading of functions" (Art. 209 of the Political Constitution of Colombia).

[16] Definition of transparency according to James O'Toole and Warren Bennis. See more at: *What's Needed Next: A Culture of Candor*, Harvard Business Review, 2009.

[17] Art. 209 and 269 of the Constitution, Law 87 of 1993, Decree 1826 of 1994, 2145 of 1999, 1537 of 2001, 1599 of 2005, 2913 of 2007, 4445 of 2008 and 3181 of 2009

[18] Law 594 of 2000 and Decree 4124 of 2000.

[19] Art. 209 of the Constitution and Law 80 of 1993.

[20] Laws 715 of 2001, 962 of 2005, 1176 of 2007 and Decrees 159 of 2002, 72 of 2005, 3402 of 2007, 416 of 2007 and 3402 of 2007 and 1192 of 2010.

[21] Laws 962 of 2005 and 489 of 1998 and Decree 1151 of 2008.

[22] See: Peter M. Jackson. (1995). Reflections on performance measurements in public service organizations. In: Public finance foundation readers. Measures for success in the public sector. Cipfa. For more details see: Mario Algarra, (2005). No more corruption. Preventive strategy to fight against it. Legal Editions Gustavo Ibañez

[23] Poll on "Institutional Work Environment" and Poll on "Political Culture."

[24] Video-conference carried out on December 9th, 2010, anti-corruption worldwide day at the PGN facilities. http://www.procuraduria.gov.co/portal/Descentralizacion_y_ Entidades_Territoriales.page

Author Biographies

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Georges A. Fauriol joined the National Endowment for Democracy in February 2010 as Vice President, Programs: Planning, Grants Management, Compliance and Evaluation. Previously, he was Senior Vice President at IRI, having also served as Vice President for Strategic Planning and Acting President during 2004. Prior to joining IRI in October 2001, Fauriol was Senior Fellow and Director of the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, where he was the senior scholar specializing in Western Hemisphere issues—the Caribbean, Mexico, Central and South America, and Canada. Previously, Fauriol worked at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, the U.S. Information Agency, and the Inter-American Development Bank. Fauriol is the author or coauthor of several books and more than 50 publications and has testified before congressional committees frequently. He received his master's and doctorate degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and holds a bachelor's degree from Ohio University.

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