

International Aid Ideologies and Policies in the Urban Sector

7th N-Aerus Annual Conference, 8 – 9 September 2006, Darmstadt, Germany

MultiCriteria evaluation in participative community planning

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Introduction

A brief reconstruction of the causes of the introduction of participation into development theories and practice is critically reconstructed.

The development paradigm of the 60's and 70's derived from the legacy of colonial rule. The conception was centralized, development was something governments did for or to people (IISD, 1995). There was little stakeholder involvement of those undergoing "development". Questionnaires without local connections, long and unintelligible questions, high cost of implementation and long periods needed for data analysis have been identified as the major pitfalls. Moreover the so called practice of "rural tourism" has been importantly denounced. The on site visit was typically made by a professional, town based consultant who would just stopover close to main road sites, during the dry season, in areas where projects had already been implemented, meeting more men than women. Clearly no trust or any kind of bidirectional collaboration was possible (Chambers, 1992).

Participatory development arose as a reaction to this realisation of failure.

Along these tracks, a parallel movement has arisen; the Paulo Freire activism experience (Freire, 1968) inspired the definition of a new approach in development interventions in southern countries, where beneficiaries play a more determinant role. Chambers (Chambers 1997) greatly contributes to a wider new paradigm in which positivist, reductionist, mechanistic, standardised-package, top-down models and development blue-prints are rejected, and in which multiple, local and individual realities are recognised, accepted, enhanced and even celebrated.

Reviewing the traditional planning processes, especially in the realm of environmental issues, the capacity to by-pass the traditional "decision-announce-defence" trap (CEC 1998) is then attributed to public participation. Embedding the conflictive issues in the first phases of the process, a shared compromise solution is then to be reached, which could be executed without major concerns (Beierle 1998).

It is also advocated that participation could be a spontaneous catalyst for aggregation, for horizontal linkages, but also for cross scale linkages: i.e. root associations such as isolated communities can relate themselves with international NGOs (Rosendo 2005).

"Participation" and its companion "sustainability" have now gained a status of buzzwords, fully embedded in the mainstream of the development rhetoric. It is almost inconceivable to draft a proposal for any donor without including a participative process (White, Nair et al., 1994).

Handbooks, guidelines, and terms of reference learn to use the concept indiscriminately assuming that it is widely and uniformly understood. We do believe there is a need to revise the concept critically and try to pinpoint a less ambiguous correspondence between the real process implemented and the statement declared.

A definition of participation based on the power distribution between the social actors

The wide diversity of interpretation reflects the definition of the concept. Despite the idealisation of the expected outcomes of participation, project experiences as well as academic research have revealed a fairly rooted divergence between the expectations of the implementing agency and the beneficiaries.

Participation can be practised and theorised at various levels. Among the definitions arising from Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969), some researchers (Deshler and Sock, 1985) underline the specific and fundamental importance of power relations between the social actors involved in the process and then define the degree of participation up to a "genuine" one, when participants are empowered by means of control over management and goals of the project.

Ideally then, "Participatory development stands for a partnership which is built upon the basis of a dialogue among the various actors, during which the 'agenda' is set jointly, and local views and indigenous knowledge are deliberately sought and respected. This implies negotiation rather than the dominance of an externally set project agenda. Thus people become actors instead of being simply beneficiaries" (Schneider and Libercier, 1994).

The distribution of powers between social actors induces for each of them a strategy and particular motivations for engagement, or refusal. Especially referring to our field of action, now commonly referred to as Community-based and -driven development (Mansuri and Rao, 2004), we can state that the major agency counterpart is a community, a group of people, who indeed could be unanimously defined as at least having fairly weak negotiation power.

Any relation enforced is then crucially conditioned by this power pattern. Even the most simple connection, with only two actors: the implementing agency and the beneficiaries, is fundamentally affected by the respective distribution of power, a distribution that certainly privileges the agency and rarely the community. A consensus is thus created which is more apparent than real, and actually represents the wishes of the most powerful players (Johnson and Wilson, 2000), up to experiencing a sort of "ventriloquising villager's needs" phenomenon (Mosse, 2001) in which development agencies are able to project their own various institutional needs onto rural communities.

Irresolute nodes in applying participation: intrinsic and contingent variables

Both academic systematisation as well as implementation reports reveal a set of irresolute ambiguities that have the capacity to sink the process or to permit it to be manipulated.

A brief sketch of structural problems coexist with more contingent situations. The structural ties are implicit in the mechanism of development-aid. The second category of issues, referring to more contingent variables, should not be left uncritically to the leverage of development agencies and indeed are equally able to affect the outcomes.

The conceptualisation of participation theory seems to have the following irresolute ambiguities:

The real terms defining the process. Often the factual translation of participative expression is conceived as a mere consultation in the assessment phase, a way to get some insights into a community of beneficiaries (Mosse, 2001). In other cases the interpretation is much deeper including a shared decision making phase, but more often successful participation is transliterated into a scheduling of human and material contributions. In this reflection we are not pointing out any values attached to a version of participation rather than to another. In our view, the point is that, at the present time, the word "participation" neither describes a crisp "object", a development procedure, nor a definite ideal model to pursue (Ebrahim, 2003).

This haziness is then transposed into the monitoring. Endogenous difficulties exist to screen concepts that belong more to a personal/individual sphere, or even to the historical unravelling of a community of people, rather than to the expected results of a time bounded project. In fact the monitoring time horizon should be necessarily anchored to the project life, but concepts as “empowerment” or “learning” are dynamic and progressive concepts, almost impossible to capture in brief sampling .

In addition there is a proven tendency of development agencies to cover up unsuccessful experiences and then to diffuse (and consequently receive) only what is perceived as successful, “magic rules” rather than critical reviews and contextually framed analysis. We believe, that this attitude has also a dramatic counter effect on the way the “development system” is financed (Brett, 2003).

The major product that a bottom-up process should raise, we believe, should be the inclusion of different perspectives into the planning. However this has strong theoretical limitations. Comparability of values and reducibility of positions to a common term or measurement play a relevant role. The same relevant role is played by the technical operability when translating qualitative, personal, atomised points of view, into a much more general picture (Chambers, 2002).

This last point can be seen as a bridge to the other group of more contingent reflections:

As a consequence of decades of development interventions, the foot-prints are deeply marked: agencies can no longer pass as unquestionably virtuous. Beneficiaries have their own vision, and consequently, precise expectations of what kind of benefits they can draw interfacing with external agents, both personally and collectively (Michener, 1998).

As PRA/PLA¹ literature has indeed pointed out: great attention should be given to the behavioural approach to beneficiaries. The respect, the easiness are considered as crucial variables. Apart from personal attitudes, what is stressed is how the process is conducted, how the communication challenge is handled: whether contextualised variables are reported or if general procedures are used (Zurayk, 2003).

Finally, as a crosscutting issue, that can indeed enclose almost all of the reflections made, there is the conceptualisation of “accountability”. The emerging concept of downward accountability challenges the implementing agency with new responsibilities, both in terms of allocation of resources and distribution of power. However, if it is formalised into a defined framework, it could represent the corner stone to a more sound design of interventions. And at the same time it could potentially solve most of the theoretical drawbacks still existing in the participative theory. However it should be recognised that the problem of creating real accountability is far more complex than the adoption of one participative technique rather than another (Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Najam, 1996; Mansuri and Rao, 2004).

Participation as a complex system itself

The analysis performed allows us to identify in the participative theory a sort of meta-complexity. In its theory we can spot the proprieties attributed to complex system theory (Giampietro and Ramos-Martin, 2004) such as multiple legitimate perceptions, the great degree of uncertainties involved and the crucial role of the scale on which the process is implemented.

We believe a similar set of considerations can be performed, identifying within participation theory a sort of meta-complexity or better a self-reflexivity, which indeed can be seen as an inner propriety of complex system (Funtowicz and Ravetz, 1997).

¹ Participative Rural Appraisal, PRA, (now referred as Participatory Learning and Action, PLA) is a family of approaches and methods finalised to allow rural people to share, amplify and analyse their own knowledge.

This reflection could then support our attempt to better frame participation theory and its role in developing interventions. These are the properties that can be identified:

First, many different definitions of participation exist. The all set of varieties of participation share a plain legitimisation and room for implementation with important outcomes to be expected.

Secondly an internal observer, targeting a participative process, has different and relative perceptions and radically different behaviours, as well as for their motivations in participating. Also an external observer, looking at such a process, can spot dramatically diverse uniqueness. It is a fact a wide portion of (mainly Western-Northern) society has such a positive impression of participation that it agrees to financially sustain agencies that label themselves as applying participative methods. On the other hand it is also true that other portions of society (mainly from the Southern countries) have serious concerns about the opportunity or at least the way such interventions are implemented (Falconí, 2002; Martinez-Alier, 2002; Martinez, 2003; Bravo and Carrere, 2004).

Thirdly, participation policy definition embeds a deep degree of uncertainties and risks. Small group behaviour or unexpected heritage of previous interventions are uncertainties which are almost never identifiable ex-ante, but they could have a dramatic impact on outcomes.

Finally there is the issue of scale, of the multiplicity of possible, legitimate scales of intervention that can be identified. The scale of interventions brings inner limitations regarding the amount of information handled, but also regarding the learning that can be effectively achieved, as well as the degree of binding which affects the legitimacy and operability of the entire process. In fact, an extremely local process could lose in terms of legitimacy or not capture the relevant variables at stake. Likewise, an extended process, on the contrary, can be extremely poor in terms of operability and real decision making effectiveness.

Accountability as the means to control the overall process

Our first conclusion is that from any point in the line between weak and strong, participation can be functional to development management if benefits and limitations are transparently recognized. Accountability implementation is then identified as the necessary precondition to guarantee a pluralistic approach in development management and the basis to deal with unequal distribution of power.

The points now discussed mark the “participation” system as a highly complex setting that needs a proper mechanism for controlling the quality.

Participation as a complex process itself, to comply with its basic requirements, needs internal control. We consider that this requirement can be individuated in the accountability concept.

Any participative technique adopted should operationalize. Upward to the donors, as imposed by financing mechanism, but even more critically, downward to the beneficiaries. This is the conceptual key to explain an otherwise too ill-defined sphere.

In fact, this continuous effort to report to the various parties, which in practice characterises accountability, can deal with the two major points:

- guarantee the minimal reduction in the various, legitimate points of view
- deal with the distribution of powers.

Clearly these outcomes are not automatic results, but instead need specific methodological choices.

“Strengthening accountability implies a pluralistic approach to development management, since all the institutions which mediate the relationships between users and agencies must be strengthened simultaneously. This in turn depends upon an interdisciplinary approach to the

problem” (Brett, 2003). And if interdisciplinary is evoked, it is then a matter of language and specific knowledge.

Let us now examine the second point, the evident uneven distribution of powers between the players. As explained, it represents an intrinsic feature of any activity, this being more or less stringent depending on the context: but neither a rural community vs. a “progressive” NGO can be treated as neutral, both have an unequal pattern of knowledge and interests.

This can be realistically disclosed reflecting on the role that wide and open sharing of information can play in a conflict. It can also be seen as a precondition for the constitution and active surveillance by what can be referred to as civil society. Therefore wide accountability can set the realistic preconditions of an extended monitoring system to guarantee at least the access to the weaker and less influential parties in the process.

“Increasing the accountability of states, private firms, or NGOs is not just a matter of new constitutions or economic liberalisation, but building active civic organisations (political parties, pressure groups, independent media and autonomous research agencies) which can subject elites to continuous surveillance, and take appropriate action when they fail.” (Brett, 2003).

What is stressed is not a formal monitoring of proceeding and results, which could be easily traced back to a tendency toward managerialism and bureaucracy, but instead a way to avoid the failure to accommodate value-pluralism, and an over commitment to the scientific paradigm of inquiry.

Accountability should represent the measure to define the boundaries of the participative intervention, the way to formalise the limits of the participative process implemented, to report the extent of empowerment, of learning or legitimacy definable within the outcomes reached.

The case study definition

This paper wants to present a simple methodology to perform what has been defined a meta-evaluation and thus allow the appraisal of the inner characteristics of the participative process to be evaluated. The meta-evaluation has been applied to seven cases of participative planning realized in the Amazonian communities of the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve, Ecuador.

A case study² with a very specific goal: the tailoring of a complete process of identification, problem structuring and finally, decision making, culminating with the defining of a proposal for each one of the seven communities settled inside the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve³, providing them with a suggested intervention that could share the highest consensus and could have a high chance of surviving the project itself.

The proposed solution is to fully accept a MultiCriteria⁴ thinking in all the working phases, ending up in tailoring a complete process of identification, problem structuring and finally, decision making.

² This case study was conceived with the support of the Italian NGO UCODEP leading the *Proyecto Reserva Cuyabeno* AIDCO/B7-6200/01/0380/TF granted by the European Union.

³ The reserve is located in the North-Eastern part of Ecuador in the Amazon basin. It represents one of world mega bio diversity hotspot and it is currently one the biggest protected areas of the country. A total of 700 indigenous people are historically settled inside and they are formally contributing to the management of the Reserve.

⁴ In general, a multi criteria problem is represented in a tabular or matrix form. Given the set A, made by n alternatives, and G, m evaluation criteria, it is possible to build an n x m matrix, called evaluation or impact matrix. The evaluation matrix may include quantitative, qualitative or both types of information . The m criteria witness m points of view considered relevant in the decision problem and each of them express the preference on alternative a to alternative b.

A brief description of the planning methodology

The MultiCriteria approach could represent a scientific attempt to explore the interface between science and society, capable to tackle complex contexts and generate comprehensive evaluations. More specifically, the Social MultiCriteria Evaluation (Munda, 2004) is a method to perform integrated assessment, in which various participatory methods are merged with a multi-criteria framework, suggesting a new approach, focusing then not solely on the aggregation procedure, but in the overall process. A dynamic where the quality of the final product is functional and dependent on the quality of the social process. The characteristics of the process itself, such as multi-interdisciplinary, participation and transparency are then necessary conditions to achieve a satisfactory result.

A participative MultiCriteria evaluation for community planning

The process adopted can be divided into two phases.

A planning procedure, based on an integrated MultiCriteria approach, has been conceived. Social actors have been involved in a multistage participative process in which actual resources and expectations have been raised to provide a significant picture of the system, but above all an endogenous creation of planning knowledge to generate novel alternatives to be evaluated.

Different methodological choices have been merged: the Participative Rural Appraisal discipline has played a role functional to the MultiCriteria problem framing, a merging that provided directly in the seven indigenous communities of the Cuyabeno Reserve a first outcome, constituted by a collective prioritisation of a set of potential interventions.

This phase has been further integrated in a more strategic assessment, in which agency vision has been included and a more detailed MultiCriteria aggregation has been performed. This has produced a finer selection of one intervention for each community, a proposal intended as a candidate that could share the highest degree of compromise between the parties and thus potentially, the greatest chance to guarantee sustainability and appropriateness.

The meta evaluation of the process proposed

The quite novelty of the approach proposed for the communitarian planning has thus induced to figure out a procedure to evaluate it. A "meta-evaluation" (Wenstøp and Seip, 2001), because evaluation of a process of designation, could also provide an independent frame to externalize the need for communicating the inner properties of the process and then constitute a first step in the accounting of the kind participation followed out.

Based on the proposed review of participative theory, the following scheme of meta-evaluation is intended as a tool to frame similar planning processes in development interventions. In this case was applied to the results of our seven field implementations, but could in fact represent a scheme to which similar experiences based on different methodological approaches could be submitted.

We believe that this task can be purely methodological, focusing on the process rather than on the specific outcomes. It is, in fact, strategic to reveal behavioural trends, indications related to the changes occurring in the nature and growth of the process itself, rather than the final specific suggestions of interventions.

The definition of the relevant criteria

The following list illustrates our proposed set of criteria to formalize this type of monitoring. Some suggestions are taken from Raushmaier (Rauschmayer and Wittmer, 2004), but the major intent is to formalise the kind of reasoning we proposed in the participation theory review.

Therefore four major dimensions have been identified: learning, empowerment, legitimacy and accountability. These are synthesised into a set of twelve criteria. Each criterion is described, in terms of meaning and direction, if the preference increases within its maximisation or minimisation. Furthermore we propose a distinction between criteria which refer to the merging of tools proposed (PRA techniques, MultiCriteria problem structuring and voting procedures, MultiCriteria aggregation) or to the process itself, therefore affected by contingent, but not irrelevant, local conditions.

Later on a reference table is proposed in which to each criterion is added a set of sub-indicators or better “marks” to supply an anchor to the effective recognition of the relevant proxies.

META-EVALUATION CRITERIA LIST		
CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	SUB INDICATORS - MARKS
LEARNING		
1. Creative knowledge generation – Maximization criterion. – Tool related criterion.	The production of an original and constructive knowledge during the planning session.	– Utilization of the knowledge produced – Number of proposals generated – Depth of proposal investigation
2. Convergence or diversity – Maximization criterion. – Tool related criterion.	The tendency to a convergence towards a shared solution.	– Agreement on the voting (convergence on the proposals) – Agreement on the voting results
3. Introduction of external elements – Maximization criterion. – Process related criterion.	The introduction of elements external to the community livelihood.	– Reaction to external input in the planning – Inclusion of external reflection in the proposal
EMPOWERMENT		
4. Self involvement – Maximization criterion. – Process related criterion.	The request for a change in the relation between the community of beneficiaries and the implementing agency,	– Availability to participate increased during the sessions – Community agenda definition
5. Traceability of contributions – Maximisation criterion. – Tool related criterion.	Proposals or priorities directly surged from communitarian realm followed along the tracks of the planning process.	– Traceability of contributions.
6. Scope for empowerment – Maximisation criterion. – Process related criterion.	A scope exists for the agency to empower the direct beneficiaries of the development intervention.	– Review of the dynamics of the macro-system assessment
LEGITIMACY		
7. Relevant actors involvement – Maximisation criterion. – Process related criterion.	The involvement of all the relevant social actors	– Feasibility analysis of the proposed interventions, institutional survey. – Review of the institutional macro-system assessment.
8. Compatibility existing legislation. – Maximisation criterion. – Process related criterion.	The compatibility with the existing normative.	– Feasibility analysis of the proposed interventions, legislative survey. – Compatibility with actor’s mission to persecute.
9. Binding value of proposals – Maximisation criterion. – Process related criterion.	The binding value of the outcomes of the process. Expectation management.	– Cost-effectiveness considerations are communicated – Binding value of the final proposal.
ACCOUNTABILITY		
10. Agreement on instruments – Maximisation criterion. – Process related criterion.	The rules and assumption behind the process of planning are transparent to insiders and outsiders.	– Acceptance of the PRA and planning exercises – Acceptance of the final proposal.
11. Appropriate variables – Maximisation criterion. – Tool related criterion.	Locally appropriate variables have been considered. The communication has produced a real share of information and the results obtained have been reported clearly.	– Use of local features to characterise issues and concept.
12. Downward accountability – Maximisation criterion. – Tool related criterion.	Downward accountability has been performed and to what extent.	– Justification of the reason behind a decision to the beneficiaries. – Monitoring of the proceedings of each proposal submitted. – Structure of the reporting sessions.

Table 1 - Meta-evaluation criteria list.

Criteria Pedigree assessment

Aware of the fuzziness of this kind of evaluation, the necessity to use marks, substantially proxy indicators, is recognized as a further complication due to the impossibility to monitor the direct object of investigation. Aiming to strengthen this evaluation effort, a tool for the assessment of the inner quality for the meta-evaluation is proposed.

The pedigree matrix tool is applied. Pedigree matrix is an evaluative description of the mode of production of information (van der Sluijjs, Kloprogge et al., 2003; van der Sluijjs, Janssen et al., 2004).

The final aim is thus to produce a parameter to attach to each of the proposed criterion to evaluate its quality strength as information carrier. A parallel piece of information is intended to specifically communicate the nature of the assessment procedure and therefore its inner applicability and constraints.

To minimise arbitrariness and subjectivity in measuring strength, a pedigree matrix is used to code qualitative expert judgements for each criterion into a discrete numeral scale from 0 (weak) to 4 (strong) with linguistic descriptions (modes) of each level on the scale.

The methodology proposed is the following:

1. A pedigree matrix is constructed indicating the references to assess the quality of the “marks” used to evaluate each criterion performance.
2. The criteria of the overall meta-evaluation are now considered alternatives of the pedigree score matrix
3. Each dimension (Learning, Empowerment, Legitimacy, Accountability) is disaggregated into the respective criteria. Each criterion is further disarticulated in the qualitative “marks”. The whole set of “marks” is subjected to the pedigree matrix.
4. The pedigree score provides a “strength”, the normalised average of the scores, that measures the quality of the qualitative indicators used to evaluate the participative process.

PEDIGREE MATRIX			
CRITERIA			
SCORE	TYPE OF SOURCE	METHODOLOGICAL QUALITY	REPLICABILITY OF THE MARKS UTILIZED
4	Tangible outcome of the process	Approved standard in well established discipline	Parameter that is “universally” valid in participative planning process
3	Expected/agreed outcome of the process	Reliable method common within discipline	Typical condition of the adopted methodology
2	Estimated proxy from internal process situation	Acceptable method, but limited consensus on reliability	Reported occurrence in comparable methodology or in comparable context
1	Synthesised from external data	Unproven methods, questionable reliability	Parameter identified as part of the specific context
0	Hypothetical assumption	Purely subjective method	Local or time contingency occurred

Table 2- Pedigree Matrix to assess the quality of the criteria to meta-evaluate participative process.

Then the criteria list proposed to evaluate the implemented process is submitted to the pedigree matrix. The criteria are the elements to be evaluated to assess their inner “strength”. For each of the three pedigree criterion a score is attributed. Then a normalised feature is computed.

PEDIGREE SCORE EXPLANATION			
	TYPE OF SOURCE	METHODOLOGICAL QUALITY	REPLICABILITY OF THE MARKS UTILIZED
LEARNING			
1. Creative knowledge generation:	The marks are tangible outcomes of the process.	The use of such process indicator marks is not frequently reported in	The marks depend on the planning exercise, therefore similar experience.

– Utilisation of the knowledge produced				the literature, however its concreteness is suitable for our evaluation purpose.	but with a different structure, i.e. the evaluation of a specific proposal to be tailored to community characteristics is only partially comparable.
– Number of proposals generated					
– Degree of proposal investigation					
Strength evaluation					
Normalized feature	0.7	4		2	2

Table 3 – Pedigree score’s attribution explanation for the first criterion utilized.

Performance judgments review

The instruments to perform the evaluation are then ready. The effective evaluation will consist in the filling in of an impact matrix where the twelve criteria exposed will judge the seven case study performances.

Score legend:								
++	definitely positive							
+	positive							
0	neutral							
-	negative							
--	definitely negative							
		Tarapuy	Puerto Bolívar	Playas de Cyb	Zabalo	Saucudo	Teikua	Charap
LEARNING								
1. Creative knowledge generation		++	+	+	0	++	+	-
2. Convergence or diversity		++	-	+	0	++	+	+
3. Introduction of external elements		++	-	+	++	++	--	--
EMPOWERMENT								
4. Self involvement		++	--	++	0	++	0	0
5. Traceability of contributions		++	++	++	++	++	++	++
6. Scope for empowerment		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
LEGITIMACY								
7. Relevant actors involvement		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
8. Compatibility with existing legislation		++	++	++	++	++	++	++
9. Binding value of proposals		0	0	0	0	0	++	++
ACCOUNTABILITY								
10. Agreement of hypothesis and instruments		++	--	0	0	++	0	0
11. Appropriate variables		+	++	+	+	+	+	+
12. Downward accountability		+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Table 4 - Meta-evaluation matrix. Bold criteria are the ones referring to the proposed process.

A first evaluation is a plot of all judgements. Technically it is the representation of the impact matrix, no aggregation is performed. We provocatively believe that such a minimalist approach has already an extremely powerful usefulness, allowing a comprehensive representation regarding how the different dimensions have performed.

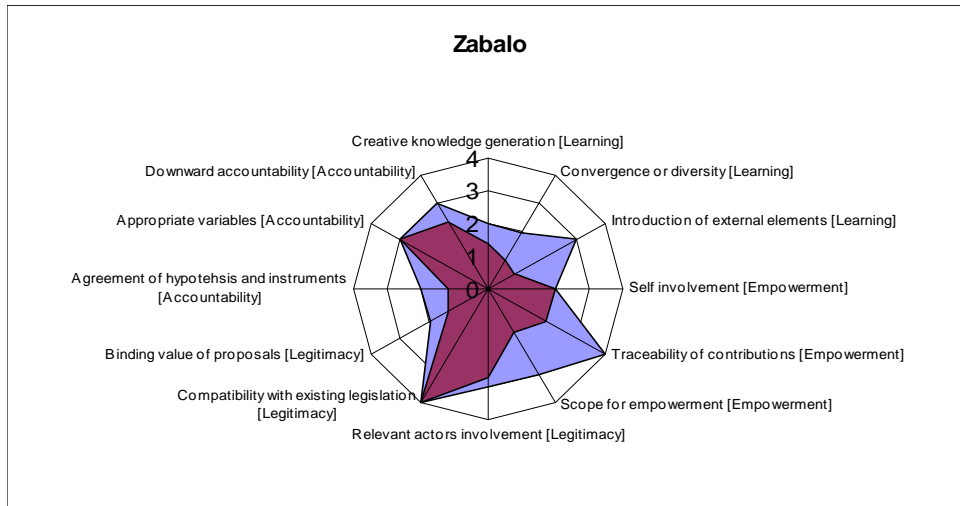


Fig. 1 - Plot of the performance in each criterion for the community of Zabalo. The dark area represents the performance multiplied by the “strength” coefficient which varies from zero to one.

A more comprehensive insight can be obtained dividing the criteria attributed to the tool, i.e. peculiar to the methodological choices made, and what on the contrary has been attributed to contingent phenomena ascribable to the context encountered.

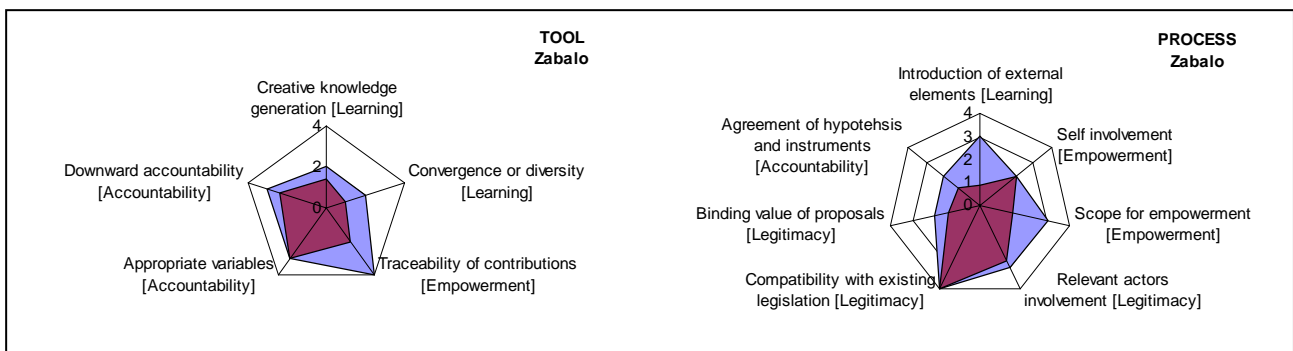


Fig. 2 – On the left: Plot of the performance in the criteria referring to the set of methodologies used. On the right: Plot of the performances in the criteria referring to the local condition encountered.

However also a MultiCriteria aggregation, based on a pure ordinal method, has been performed to produce a ranking of the planning cases analysed. This has allowed a finer comparison between the seven experiences and some deeper insights of the resistances encountered.

Conclusion

Finally we believe that this meta-evaluation main contribution is exactly regarding the issue of communicating the inner aspects of the participative processes realized.

Regarding less the specific features of the MultiCriteria procedure, what it is worth to underline is the way the method transparently communicate the assumptions used to evaluate participation. Thus allowing both an internal and an external control over the process realized.

Such disclosure of information could constitute a parallel piece of information for the daily development project management, but also a format to archive participative processes and thus spread experiences.

The method hereby suggested is then a proposal to submit for the discussion, but we believe that at least the basic principle of transparency is intrinsically fulfilled, thus guaranteeing the basic requirements for the functioning of accountability.

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