PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AND URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Georgetown University
and
the Faculty of the
Department of Politics and Government
of the Universidad Nacional de General San Martín
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Master of Arts
in Development Management and Policy

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Buenos Aires, Argentina
December 18, 2009
Abstract
Democratic theorists are busy researching and debating contemporary transformations of the institutions through which citizens participate in their government, and the generally increasing institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation has received significant attention. However, there has been insufficient theorization of the most appropriate scales and policy domains for the institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation. While many theorists and practitioners have argued that the urban scale of governance is the most appropriate scale for the institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation and that the environment is the most appropriate policy domain for the institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation, there has yet to be developed a theoretical framework that adequately elaborates these arguments. Moreover, upon such elaboration of the arguments in favor of participatory urban governance and participatory environmental governance, one finds that these arguments seem to be even stronger when synthesized into one theoretical framework for participatory urban environmental governance.
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Participatory Democracy and Urban Environmental Governance

Introduction

This theoretical research aims to synthesize the often praised but insufficiently explored relationships between participatory democracy, urban governance and environmental management – that is between a determined mode of governance (the how - participatory), a jurisdictional level, demography and sociology of governance (the where/who - urban), and an object or domain of governance (the what – the environment) – in light of the increasing historical relevance of all three of these distinct but interrelated sociopolitical phenomena. As alluded to in the opening citation by Barnett & Low (2004), participatory democracy, and democratization processes more generally, have been given a lot of attention amongst theorists and practitioners of urban governance and environmental governance. Although the theoretical relationships between participatory democracy, urban governance, and environmental management are generally viewed as positive or favorable by academics, policy-makers and citizens alike, they are rarely considered with sufficient synthesis and deserved emphasis. While much of the bibliography on democratic transformations recognizes the increasing importance of non-electoral citizen participation in governance, impressively little research seems to be addressing the scales, the demographics and the policy domains of participatory democracy.

This theoretical research is fundamentally exploratory and it aims to address and to elaborate what Dahl (1967) has called “an elemental political question” (in that it is
age-old and has generated a variety of competing answers) about “the problem of the appropriate unit for a democratic political system” (p. 953). The more specific question – extrapolated from Dahl’s elemental political question – that will be addressed herein is the following: *what is the most appropriate (that is, feasible and desirable) unit/scale and policy-domain for the institutionalization of participatory democracy?*

Although I might hypothesize that urban environmental governance is the most feasible and desirable arena for the institutionalization of participatory democracy – that is, both an evaluative and normative statement – this research aims, primarily, to provide wanting theoretical synthesis as well as historical insight and analysis in order to better guide empirical research on participatory democracy and contemporary transformations in the democratic institutions of citizen participation. To do so, *first*, participatory democracy will be defined and relevant democratic theory will be discussed, especially in light of the historicity of democratic theory and practice. *Second*, urban governance will be defined and its theoretically positive relationships with participatory democracy and its undeniably relevant historicity will be discussed. *Third*, environmental governance will be defined and its theoretically positive relationships with both participatory democracy and urban governance and its undeniably relevant historicity will be discussed. *Fourth*, urban environmental governance will be reconsidered as one theoretically reinforcing policy domain that is especially appropriate for the institutionalization of participatory democracy. Finally, in the *fifth* and concluding chapter, the relevance and challenges of my fundamental research question will be
analyzed in light of the theoretical synthesis and historicity provided in Chapter 1 through
Chapter 4.

It should be noted that throughout this theoretical exploration and synthesis,
history and historicity of the subject matter will be included, as it is deemed insightful.
While the value of history and historicity may not be frequently appreciated by
democratic theorists (O’Donnell, 2003; Rosanvallon, 2006, 2007), herein it is considered
essential if we are to understand the transformations of democratic institutions over time,
especially in recent decades. Moreover, with specific regard to the central subject matter
at hand, Rosanvallon (2006) has emphasized that democracy not only has a history,
“democracy is a history” (p. 38). He goes on to assert that democracy “has been a work
irreducibly involving exploration and experimentation, in its attempt to understand and
elaborate itself” (p. 38). For Rosanvallon:

History conceived in this way is the *active laboratory* that created our
present and not simply its background. Attention to the most burning and
urgent of contemporary problems can therefore not be dissociated from the
meticulous reconstruction of their origins. To start with a contemporary
question, to trace its genealogy before facing it anew at the end of the
inquiry, enriched by the lessons of the past, has to be the method
developed to give indispensable depth to political analysis. It is thanks to
such a permanent dialogue between present and past that the process
whereby societies are instituted can become legible and from which a synthetic understanding of the world can emerge. (p. 39)

While the scope of this research doesn’t permit extensive historical analysis, some discussion of historical tendencies and events are indispensable for an adequate exploration of the apparent transformations of democratic institutions and the institutionalization of non-electoral citizen participation for urban environmental governance.

Chapter 1

Defining Participatory Democracy

Although some understand “participatory democracy” to include non-institutional forms of political participation (Roussopoulos & Benello, 2005), this research presently restricts itself to state institutions of non-electoral citizen participation in the public policy-making processes (and their appropriateness for urban environmental governance). Non-institutionalized means of citizen participation are fundamental to democratic politics and they definitely affect the existence and use of institutionalized means of participation (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006; Warren, 2002, 2003; Dallari, 1984); however, their analysis in conjunction with that of the state institutions far exceeds the possibilities of this research. Therefore, the use herein of “participatory democracy” as referring exclusively to state institutions does not imply disregard for non-institutional forms of participation, but rather restricts itself to state institutions for practical purposes.
The conceptualization and definition of participatory democracy used herein can be understood in reference to the typology of democratic modes of participation formulated by Dalton, Scarrow & Cain (2003a). These authors delineate the following “three modes of democracy” (p. 9-11):

1. **Representative Democracy**: citizens elect representatives to both deliberate policy issues and make final decisions.
2. **Direct Democracy**: citizens both deliberate policy issues and make the ultimate decision.
3. **Advocacy Democracy**: citizens or surrogate public-interest organizations directly participate in the processes of policy formation, deliberation, or administration, but elected representatives make the ultimate decision. The citizen participation does not legally bind the elected officials in their decision-making.1

The use of the term “participatory democracy” hereafter refers to institutions belonging to either of the modes of democracy labeled by Dalton, Scarrow & Cain (2003a), as direct or advocacy – that is, institutions of both binding and non-binding non-electoral citizen participation. The categorization put forth by Dalton, Scarrow & Cain is useful in bringing attention to non-binding modes of participation, which make up an increasingly large part of the institutional ecology of participatory democracy, in addition to its distinction between electoral and non-electoral institutions of participation. It

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1 The authors distinguish between two types of *advocacy democracy*: a) direct access to policy process, and b) direct engagement in policy process.
should be noted that deliberation is implicit in all three modes, but the quantity and quality of deliberation is not specifically valued within this typology. However, since deliberation is implicit in this typology and is generally highly valued amongst participatory democracy theorists (Fishkin, 1991; Mutz, 2006; Fischer, 2000), the theoretical discussion of participatory democracy herein will also presume deliberation as characteristic of participatory democracy, even though the quantity and quality of such deliberation will obviously vary depending upon the specific mode of participation and procedural details. Before any further discussion of participatory democracy, however, it is necessary to address broader conceptualizations of democratic governance and the theoretical and historical relationships between representative democracy and participatory democracy.

**Contemporary Democratic Governance in Crisis or Transformation?**

Recent history has proven the overwhelming popularity of democracy throughout the world, manifested by the fact that the great majority of countries claim to be democracies (Lipset, 1994; Rosanvallon, 2007; Warren, 2003; Cheema, 2005; Cheresky, 2006; Barnett & Low, 2004). Although there appears to be no alternative regime to that of democracy nowadays, the quality of democratic governance remains highly contested. Rosanvallon (2007) has asserted that “[t]he democratic ideal today has no rival, but the regimes that claim to be democratic give rise to strong criticism all over the world”2 (p.

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2 My translation of “[e]l ideal democrático hoy no tiene rival, pero los regímenes que lo reivindican suscitan casi en todas partes fuertes críticas.”
Most criticism of and discontent with democratic governments today pertain to the traditional institutions of representative democracy and the political parties and politicians who strive to control them. And many of the critical and discontent are demanding new institutions and the reform of others in order to increase and improve citizen participation in governance. In the last few decades, political scientists have brought deserved attention to the increasingly apparent paradox of representative democracy’s success and failure throughout the world. Although the traditional institutions of representative democracy have always caused some degree of criticism and discontent (Rosanvallon, 2007), the criticism has reached such intensity in recent decades that it has led many to posit a crisis of representative democracy (Crozier, Huntington & Watanuki, 1975; Sorj, 2005; Hart, 1972; Hamel, 1998; Castells & Borja, 2004; Montufar, 2004). Many authors, however, prefer to talk about transformation or metamorphosis rather than crisis (Bobbio, 1996; Warren, 2002, 2003; Rosanvallon, 2006, 2007). For Bobbio (1996), transformation is more appropriate than crisis “because crisis makes one think about imminent collapse”; yet, while representative democracy may not enjoy optimal health, it’s not on the edge of collapse (p. 15). In fact, as Warren (2003) has emphasized, representative democracy has expanded and deepened in recent decades.

While this debate about crisis or transformation will probably remain unsettled for some time to come, and any future consensus may vary from country to country, transformation seems to be the more appropriate word when discussing the general phenomenon at the present moment. Nevertheless, what is more certain about this
paradoxical state of democratic governance is the increasing demand for and use of non-electoral (or non-representative) institutions of citizen participation, which has simultaneously occurred in the last few decades and for many is, at least partially, the result of dissatisfaction with representative institutions. The causal explanations for the dissatisfaction with representative institutions – and, thus, the increasing demand for and use of non-representative institutions of citizen participation – are numerous and will obviously depend on the particularities of each national (or local) political system and culture, but the conclusion of Dalton, Scarrow & Cain (2003a) seems most reasonable: “a mix of factors is needed to explain the patterns we uncover” (p. 9). Some of the most common and influential factors, however, merit a brief summary.

The structural causal explanations for the transformation (or crisis, for some) of representative democracy, and the concomitantly increasing demand for and use of non-representative institutions of citizen participation, point to inherent problems of representative democracy and representative institutions, which are receiving increasing attention and criticism now that democracy seems to be the only game in town.

Dalton, Scarrow & Cain (2003a) have highlighted perhaps the most basic structural explanation, that is “the underlying logic of democracy”. For these authors, “[p]articipation and consensus-building are essential characteristics of the democratic process. Once these values become accepted, there may be an inevitable pressure to expand these processes to allow greater citizen access and ensure the effectiveness of
democratic participation” (p. 8). Similarly, Warren (2003) has discussed the generalization of “a certain ethos of democracy” (p. 240).

Rosanvallon has pointed to such “original dysfunctions” (2007, p. 22) and “internal contradictions” (2006, p. 43) of representative democracy as the disassociation between legitimacy and trust, representative entropy – that is, “deterioration of the relationship between representatives and the represented” over time (2007, p. 30) – and the contradiction between “the political principle of democracy and its sociological principle: the political principle consecrates the power of the very collective subject that the sociological principle tends to make less coherent and whose visibility it tends to reduce” (2006, p. 43).

Fuchs & Klingemann (1995) have emphasized two other systematic causes for dissatisfaction with representative democracy. “First, because the resources available to any government to implement its policies are limited and, secondly, because implementing a particular policy necessarily rules out others” (p. 3). As will be addressed shortly hereafter, the dissatisfaction with these two systematic characteristics of representative democracy has historically been regulated by the government/opposition institutional mechanism.

Bobbio (1996) has pointed to two other structural defects of representative democracy: first, the tendency to form small elites within parties, and, second, the ingovernability brought about by demand-overload and inflation of the welfare state,
which ineluctably results from the democratic political marketplace. To better illustrate the latter structural defect, Bobbio explains that:

[w]hile those entitled to political rights were only landowners it was natural that the greatest demand upon the political power was the protection of property rights and contracts. From the moment in which political rights were extended to the dispossessed and the illiterate, it became equally natural that those who governed… were demanded employment, unemployment assistance, free schools, and so on, why not?, cheap housing, medical attention, etc. (p. 136)

Obviously, the degree of these structural or systematic defects of representative democracy – as well as others that may have been overlooked – as well as their consequences are not constant and immutable, but rather are influenced by non-structural phenomena such as historical events, social processes, institutional developments and technological innovations. Also, while non-structural phenomena may influence the degree of structural defects and their consequences, they may also pose new problems for representative democracy that are not necessarily related to structural ones. Some of these non-structural phenomena, therefore, also merit brief discussion – even if their consequences (directly and indirectly) upon representative democracy are far from being completely understood or agreed upon.

The demand-overload (and consequential governmental-overload or welfare state inflation) phenomenon, for example, considered by Bobbio (1996) to be structural, has
clearly been exacerbated by such non-structural phenomena as the decline of political parties (Sorj, 2005), the expansion of the rights-based discourse (O’Donnell, 2003; Sorj, 2005; Gauchet, 2002; Uggla, 2004), the increasing complexity and uncertainty of modern societies and economies (Dalton, Scarrow & Cain, 2003a, 2003b; Warren, 2003; Armony & Schami, 2005; Fung & Wright, 2003; Sorj, 2005; Held, 2005; Beck, 1992, 1994, 1997), the emergence of new political actors (Dalton, Scarrow & Cain, 2003b; Sorj, 2005), increasing citizen expectations (Rosanvallon, 2007; Dalton, Scarrow & Cain, 2003a; Warren, 2002; Dogan, 2005), and the increasing capacity and savvy of citizens and citizen groups to articulate demands (Rosanvallon, 2006, 2007; Dalton, Scarrow & Cain, 2003a; Sorj, 2005; Norris, 1999; Fischer, 2000; Craig, Kreppel & Kane, 2001) – which of course is not unrelated to innovations and cost reductions of information and communication technologies. And the decline of political parties – to choose just the first of the aforementioned non-structural phenomena influencing the demand-overload phenomenon – as institutional means of channeling and regulating social demands is the consequence of other important non-structural phenomena, such as individualization, social fragmentation, ideological homogenization, personalization and negativization of politics, expansion of the rights-based discourse, constitutionalization and judicialization, to name a few (Sorj, 2005; Rosanvallon, 2006, 2007; Goldstein, 2004; Schudson, 1998). And, although it might appear to be a dauntingly complex, if not infinite, web of interrelated phenomena, one could go on linking many of the other aforementioned non-structural phenomena with others, aforementioned and otherwise. For the sake of
coherence, however, it’s best to return to the structural characteristics or defects of representative democracy listed above and to address the relevant non-structural phenomena that are apparently exacerbating them.

The first structural characteristic of representative democracy mentioned above is its most basic and fundamental characteristic of democratic governance, which is its underlying logic or ethos. Needless to say, there isn’t any singular and indisputable definition of the democratic logic or ethos. For Warren (2002), “[t]he long-established norm of democracy is that a political system should maximize rule by and for the people” (p. 678). For Dahl (1998, 2006), the underlying logic or ethos seems to be political equality. Regardless of how the democratic logic or ethos might be defined, however, the idea put forth by Dalton, Scarrow & Cain (2003a) is that once accepted there will inevitably be pressure for its realization. This structural characteristic of representative democracy - and democratic governance more generally – has always been problematic since the ideals of maximum participation and political equality are unattainable, but the non-structural historical processes of democratization and widespread acceptance of the democratic logic in recent decades have made it much more so. As Warren (2002) has emphasized:

[T]he growing tension between ideal and reality could signify that governments are performing worse and are less democratic than they were several decades ago. Evidence suggests, however, that the gap has more to do with changing expectations… Support for democratic values remains
strong, and citizens are increasingly leveling these expectations at their governments. They now expect more responsiveness, better performance, more accountability, and less incompetence and corruption. Moreover, citizens are now less deferential and have less respect for traditional forms of authority. (p. 681)

In support of Warren’s latter assertion, Nye (2009) has recently confirmed that opinion polls demonstrate that “people today are less deferential to authority in organizations and politics”.

The structural “dysfunctions” and “contradictions” of representative democracy highlighted by Rosanvallon (2006, 2007) have also been exacerbated by non-structural phenomena in recent decades. The disassociation between legitimacy – understood as procedural – and trust has worsened in recent decades as reforms have aimed to improve legitimacy by increasing the number of elected positions in government and the frequency of elections, as well as to improve the quality of elections, while distrust has apparently skyrocketed. As Dogan (2005) has affirmed, “[f]orty years of surveys attest to this loss of confidence but not of legitimacy” (p. 4). The deterioration of trust in the institutions of representative democracy, Dogan has argued, is attributable, in varying degrees, to the following non-structural phenomena:

- decline of traditional values; decline of primate institutions; decline of ideologies; increasing governmental overload; increasing mass communication and information; increasing popular expectations;
increasing visibility and transparence of political rulers; increasing immigration… generating a higher frequency of status incongruence; increasing upward mobility of elites; increasing influence of… journalists and editors of newspapers and magazines; increasing uncovering of misdeeds by… judges; increasing individualism. (p. 4-5)

The other structural contradiction emphasized by Rosanvallon is the contradiction between the political principle of representative democracy and the sociological reality. More specifically, the political principle of government by the “people” doesn’t have any sociological coherence since it is an abstract and artificial construct. Non-structural processes of individualization, social fragmentation, immigration and secularization have exacerbated this contradiction.

Fuchs & Klingemann (1995) have explained how the aforementioned two systematic limitations on representatives to satisfy the public have historically been regulated by the government/opposition mechanism. They argue that “[t]he effectiveness of this mechanism depends on how many citizens regard at least one party as suitable and competent to represent their interests, and how many citizens believe that ‘their’ party has a real chance of assuming government in the foreseeable future” (p. 3). The decline of political parties obviously makes this mechanism less effective and, therefore, exacerbates these two systemic causes of dissatisfaction with representative democracy.

The structural tendency for elite-formation within parties – the other structural defect of representative democracy pointed out by Bobbio (1996) – may or may not have
changed in recent decades, but it too would seem to be susceptible to influences from non-structural influences, such as increasing expectations of citizens and the increasing power of the media. Nevertheless, it’s not clear if this tendency has in fact increased or decreased.

The structural problems of representative democracy addressed above have, in large part, become even more problematic due to the affects of many of the non-structural phenomena mentioned, which helps explain the widespread dissatisfaction with representative institutions that has led some authors to posit a crisis of representative democracy. Nevertheless, as Klingemann (1999) has explained:

[t]he fact of dissatisfaction does not imply danger to the persistence or furtherance of democracy. A significant number of people spread around the world can be labeled ‘dissatisfied democrats’. They clearly approve of democracy as a mode of governance, but they are discontented with the way their own system is currently operating. The dissatisfied democrats can be viewed as less a threat to, than a force for, reform and improvement of democratic processes and structures as the third wave continues to flow.

(p. 32)

Not only does dissatisfaction with representative democracy increase citizen pressure for democratic reforms, but many of the non-structural phenomena contributing to increased dissatisfaction are also contributing to make democratic reforms more feasible and
desirable, especially those that promote non-electoral/non-representative participation in governance.

Increased access to powerful information and communication technologies, for example, not only has made the ills of representative democracy – such as corruption and lobbying – more visible to active citizens and the general public, but it also challenges the age-old assumption that “people are better off delegating judgements and decisions to their elected representatives on the grounds that elected representatives are better informed and have more knowledge at their command” (Vibert, 2007, p. 13) and allows citizens and citizen groups to participate more effectively in policy-making processes. The increasing capacity of citizens and civil society to effectively articulate their demands not only challenges representative institutions, but also makes non-electoral participation more feasible (Rosanvallon, 2006, 2007; Norris, 1999; Nye, 2009; Craig, Kreppel & Kane, 2001).

The complexity of modern society and the demand-overload that threaten representative institutions with ingovernability have also motivated governments to delegate decision-making and other public policy processes to subnational governments, independent agencies and the public at large (Dalton, Scarrow & Cain, 2003a; Warren, 2003; Fung & Wright, 2003; Vibert, 2007). As Warren (2002) has noted, “state strategies to maintain governability in the face of demand overload can involve devolving political arenas in ways that increase opportunities for participation by precisely those disadvantaged by distributions of money, power, and knowledge” (p. 692). Not only does
complexity and uncertainty promote delegation and devolution, but some argue that it should also promote more deliberation and value-based decision-making. Fung & Wright (2003) have argued that “complexity and uncertainty often prevent participants from forming clear preferences that can be easily aggregated” (p. 19), thus voting is inadequate for modern democratic governance and must be complemented by more deliberative institutions.

Beyond the theoretical assumptions, some of these phenomena have proven themselves favorable for participatory democracy in the past as well. As Dalton, Scarrow & Cain (2003a) point out, “distrust of elected officials stimulated the first waves of pressure for democratic reform in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (p. 5). It’s no surprise, therefore, that many authors give particular emphasis to the increasing political distrust of recent decades as an impulse for democratic reform to increase non-electoral citizen participation (Rosanvallon, 2006, 2007; O’Donnell, 2003; Dogan, 2005).

Although the analysis of structural and non-structural factors of the transformation of democratic governance is not the central objective of this research, consideration of them is indispensable nonetheless. Two of these factors, however, are indeed central to this research, as evidenced by the title, and will be addressed with greater detail. These two factors – too often overlooked or underappreciated – are urbanization and environmental conscientization³.

³ The term ‘conscientization’ is understood as the process of increasing general awareness regarding a certain matter (in this case the certain matter is the environment).
In summary, representative democracies suffer structural defects and contradictions that inevitably cause dissatisfaction; and, these structural difficulties have been exacerbated by a number of historical events (end of the socialist alternative and ideological homogenization), social phenomena (individualization) and institutional developments (state fragmentation and bureaucratic delegation), and technological innovations (widespread access to powerful information and communication technologies). And not only have such non-structural phenomena exacerbated the problems of representative democracy, but many have arguably made participatory democracy more feasible and more desirable. Although the intricate web of these phenomena and their relationships remain inadequately understood, it must be acknowledged and appreciated when addressing the transformation of democratic governance and the increasing existence and use of institutions of participatory democracy. And it is within this complex and dynamic context of transformation that greater analysis of participatory democracy seems unequivocally relevant.

Why Governance?

transformations of democratic participation in governing processes beyond the election of decision-makers.

In Van Kersbergen & Van Waarden’s (2004) analysis of nine different approaches to the concept of governance, they have concluded that:

The meaning of ‘governance’ in these nine approaches may differ, but most of them have some characteristics in common. First […], the approach is pluricentric rather than unicentric. Second, networks, whether inter- or intra-organizational, play an important role. These networks organize relations between relatively autonomous, but interdependent, actors (e.g., business firms in a sector, public and private organizations, EU Member States). In these networks, hierarchy or monocratic leadership is less important, if not absent. The formal government may be involved, but not necessarily so, and if it is, it is merely one – albeit an important – actor among many others. Third, one finds an emphasis on processes of governing or functions as against the structures of government. These processes are relatively similar in the public and private sectors, and concern negotiation, accommodation, concertation, cooperation and alliance formation rather than the traditional processes of coercion, command and control. Fourth, the relations between actors pose specific risks and uncertainties, and different sectors have developed different institutions to reduce these in order to make cooperation possible or easier.
Finally, many approaches are normative. They prescribe an ideal as well as an empirical reality. This holds in particular for the ‘good governance’, ‘corporate governance’, ‘new public management’ and ‘multilevel governance’ approaches. (p. 151-152)

Or, as Van Vliet (2008) has put it, “[g]overnance involves multiple stakeholders, interdependent resources and actions, shared purposes and blurred boundaries between the public and private, formal and informal, state, market and civil society sectors, greater need for coordination, negotiation and building consensus” (p. 3). Regardless of what might be the best definition of ‘governance’, its denotation of multistakeholder and civil society participation, horizontality and networks is linguistic evidence of the transformations of democratic government.

**Participatory Democracy (Non-Electoral Citizen Participation):**

Participatory democracy is by no means an exclusively modern idea. Many authors, in fact, refer to the high degree of non-electoral citizen participation in the government of ancient Athens (Held, 2001; Rosanvallon, 2007; Bookchin, 2007; Catt, 1999), as well as other pre-modern societies (Bookchin, 2007; Held, 2001). In the United States, popular demand for more opportunities of participation in government surged in the late twentieth century, resulting in several reforms (Barczak, 2001; Dalton, Scarrow & Cain, 2003a). Nevertheless, in the last few decades there has been increasing public demand for participatory democracy in the advanced industrialized democracies (Dalton, Scarrow & Cain, 2003a; Warren, 2003) as well as in less consolidated democracies,
especially those of Latin America (Kliksberg, 2007b; Dagnino, 2002; Restrepo, 2001; Avritzer, 2002; Wampler & Avritzer, 2004; Menegat, 2002; Grompone, 2005). As Almond & Verba (1963) argued in their now classic *The Civic Culture* during the beginning of this *renaissance* of participatory democracy:

> If there is a political revolution going on throughout the world, it is what might be called the participation explosion. In all the new nations of the world the belief that the ordinary man is politically relevant – that he ought to be an involved participant in the political system – is widespread. (p. 2)

And since the publication of *The Civic Culture*, the so-called “participation explosion” has resulted in increasingly complex institutional (as well as non-institutional) ecologies of non-electoral participatory opportunities. Nevertheless, public demand for participatory democracy remains strong today.

In addition to, and partly because of, increasing public demand for more non-electoral participation in and control of government, there has also been a renewal of intellectual support for participatory democracy within academia. As asserted by Dowding, Goodwin & Pateman (2004):

> In recent years, participatory democratic theories have enjoyed a renaissance. The idea that there are democratic benefits to an inactive citizenry is not something one often reads nowadays in academic writing. The dominant tendency today is quite the opposite (Verba 2000).
Theorists of social capital (Putnam 2000; Skocpol and Fiorina 1999), in particular, despair of the falling levels of political participation, seeing it as part of a trend of declining sociality in community life. Where, in the 1960s, community was seen as a radical alternative to modern democratic failings, these days bemoaning the lack of community is something that is as likely to be done by those on the conservative (rather than libertarian) right as by those on the left. (p. 2-3)

Participatory democracy is argued to be good or desirable for many different reasons. In order to classify and differentiate the predominant arguments in support of participatory democracy we can adopt the “three distinct virtues” that Sen (2000) highlights in his praise of democracy (and the political and civil rights it should guarantee and promote):

1) its intrinsic importance; 2) its instrumental contributions; and, 3) its constructive role (in the creation of values, norms and priorities) (p. 148, 157, 246). This classification of the virtues of democracy and, herein, more specifically, of participatory democracy, may be disputable; but, the classification of the variety of arguments for each of the three general virtues are, obviously, even more so. This is especially so if considering the variety of modes of participation and domains and stages of policy-making. The point here is only to highlight some of the most prominent arguments in an orderly manner, without any intention of doing so exhaustively, in order to illustrate the general

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4 It is noteworthy that Warren (2002) has alluded to these three categories of goods provided by democratic participation with the terms “moral requirement”, “developmental opportunity” and “strategic necessity” (p. 678).
theoretical support for participatory democracy before addressing the more specific theoretical relationships between participatory democracy and urban environmental management.

**Intrinsic (Moral) Importance**

While Aristotle (2000) declared “that man is by nature a political animal” (p. 28) and many classic modern political theorists, such as Rousseau, J. S. Mill, and Wollstonecraft, have emphasized the importance of political participation for moral self-development (Held, 2001), the intrinsic importance of citizen participation in politics has been, perhaps, best captured in the following concepts of “development as freedom”, “agency”, and “procedural utility”.

Since human freedom is the preeminent objective of development for Sen (2000), he sees the expansion of political and civil freedoms, such as participation in governance, as intrinsically good:

> [P]olitical liberty and civil freedoms are directly important on their own, and do not have to be justified indirectly in terms of their effects on the economy. Even when people without political liberty or civil rights do not lack adequate economic security (and happen to enjoy favorable economic circumstances), they are deprived of important freedoms in leading their lives and denied the opportunity to take part in crucial decisions regarding public affairs. These deprivations restrict social and political lives, and must be seen as repressive even without their leading to other afflictions
(such as economic disasters). Since political and civil freedoms are constitutive elements of human freedom, their denial is a handicap itself.

(p. 16-17)
The development as freedom approach argued by Sen implies the institutionalization of and respect for democratic processes and procedures. Considering his repeated support for “participatory freedom” (p. 9, 32-33), “participatory politics” (p. 158) and “the participatory exercise of political and civil rights” (p. 19), it seems fair to acknowledge his implicit support for institutions of non-electoral citizen participation. In the case of referendums, Sen does explicitly argue in favor of their usage, although only in passing (p. 242). Most notable, however, is the association he makes between participation and development: “the need for popular participation is not just sanctimonious rubbish. Indeed, the idea of development cannot be dissociated from it” (p. 247).

Although Sen’s “development as freedom” approach also has its grounding in the idea of “agency” – that is, “the agency role of the individual as a member of the public and as a participant in economic, social and political actions” (p. 19) –, it is O’Donnell (2003) who makes “agency” the central concept upon which he discusses democracy (and its connections with human development and human rights). For O’Donnell, the underlying and foundational element of democracy (as well as of the concepts of human development and human rights):

is the moral conception of the human being as an agent, that is, someone normally endowed with practical reason and sufficient autonomy in order
to decide how he/she wants to live, someone who has the cognitive capacity in order to reasonably detect the options available to him/her, and someone who feels – and is interpreted by others as – responsible for the courses of actions that he/she chooses\(^5\). (p. 33)

Even though O’Donnell regards political rights to participation to be definitive of “agency” and he positively values opportunities for citizen participation in the “discussion, decision and implementation of public policies” (p. 55), it is noteworthy that his discussion of citizen participation is generally of electoral – rather than non-electoral – participation and he is very cautious about the policy domains in which citizen participation is desirable. Nevertheless, it is the conceptualization of the citizen as an “agent” that makes his/her participation in governance intrinsically valuable and justified.

Frey & Stutzer (2005) have emphasized the intrinsic values of citizen participation, regardless of the outcome of such participation, in their discussion of “procedural utility\(^6\)”. These authors argue that there are three broad categories for the sources of procedural utility: 1) institutional preferences regardless of outcomes, 2) non-interactive individual behavior, and 3) interactive behavior (p. 92-93), making the

\(^5\) My translation of “es una concepción moral del ser humano como un agente, es decir alguien que está normalmente dotado de razón práctica y de autonomía suficiente para decidir qué tipo de vida quiere vivir, que tiene capacidad cognitiva para detectar razonablemente las opciones que se encuentran a su disposición y que se siente – y es interpretado/a por los demás como – responsable por los cursos de acción que elige.” (p. 33)

\(^6\) Lane (1988) has discussed the intrinsic value of democratic citizen participation using the term “procedural goods”.

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important distinction between participation as a right (an institutional characteristic) and participation as an activity:

The right to participate in political decisions is a crucial characteristic of any democratic institution. People can gain procedural utility from this state of being as they may have preferences about the democratic institutions within which they live, and act beyond the outcome that is generated by democratic decision-making. They may feel that the political sphere takes their wishes seriously into account in a fair political process, or they may feel alienation and apathy towards the political institutions installed… Participation rights in the political mechanism of decision-making, ranging from voting in elections, launching and voting on referenda, to running for a seat in parliament, may thus provide a feeling of being involved and having political influence, as well as a notion of inclusion, identity and self-determination. It may even be hypothesized that the right to participate in political decision-making accords the citizens more encompassing self-determination than actual participation, because political participation rights are a comprehensive characteristic of political institutions and affect people’s well-being, and not only during a restricted period of political activation. With the rights to participate, the decision is left up to the individual of whether to actually participate or
Persons may value the right to participate even if they rarely or never exercise it themselves. (p. 95)

After analyzing data from the reported subjective well-being of citizens and foreigners, criteria by which they differentiate between outcome and procedural utility (as foreigners are excluded from rights, but not from outcomes), and between cantons with weak and strong participation rights, in Switzerland, Frey & Stutzer conclude that subject well-being is higher in cantons with strong participation rights as well as higher, and even more so, for citizens than for foreigners. Due to the insignificant statistical correlation between greater use of participation rights and reported subjective well-being in their data, the authors reaffirm their hypothesis that “participation rights are more important in terms of a feeling of control, self-determination or influence on the political sphere than actual participation is” (p. 106). Nevertheless, whether the greater source of procedural utility be the characteristic of an institution (as they argue) or the actual participation, it is the intrinsic value of participation rather than the outcome (or instrumental value) of participation that is evidenced by procedural utility.

In addition to the aforementioned concepts, less detailed theoretical arguments in favor of intrinsic values of participatory democracy, such as identity/human nature (Kliksberg, 2007a; Benello, 2005; Dallari, 1984), goodness/morality (Roussopoulos & Benello, 2005; Dallari, 1984; Collins, 1997), freedom/self-determination (Sen, 2000; Warren, 2002), for example, are made by countless other contemporary political theorists.
and practitioners. Intrinsic values of non-electoral citizen participation can also be found explicitly declared in legislation, such as UK’s Sustainable Communities Act 2007.

**Instrumental (Practical) Contributions**

Besides the intrinsic values of participatory democracy, many political theorists and practitioners argue that non-electoral citizen participation in policy-making has positive instrumental contributions for policy-making, and human conditions more generally. Cheema (2005), for example, has gone as far as to assert that experience “suggests that the ability of the people to organize themselves to participate in the political process and influence national and local policies and programs is the single most important factor in improving human conditions” (p. 2). More specifically, however, we can point to four commonly argued instrumental contributions of participatory democracy that generally improve policy outcomes and human conditions: effectiveness, equity, legitimacy and sustainability.

**Effectiveness**

Public policies that have been designed, decided, implemented, monitored and evaluated with citizen participation, it is argued, will most likely be more effective than policy-making procedures that don’t include such participation (Kliksberg, 2007a, 2007b; Fung & Wright, 2003; Warren, 2003). This is in large part due to the quality and quantity of information provided by citizens and citizen groups throughout the policy cycle, mostly in the forms of proposals, demands, warnings and denunciations. Policies designed with broad citizen participation and “local knowledge” are more likely to
recognize and avoid local obstacles and harness local resources. Policy decisions will more likely correspond with citizens’ priorities and needs if citizens and citizen groups are included in the decision-making. Frey & Stutzer (2005) affirm that “[t]here is ample evidence that in more direct democratic jurisdictions the outcome of the political process is closer to the wishes of the residents” (p. 98). Implementation and management of public policies will more likely be more transparent, accountable, and adaptive to unforeseen phenomena than otherwise if they promote active citizen participation. And, public policies are best monitored and evaluated by the actual beneficiaries of such policies. Throughout the policy cycle, citizen participation shortens the feedback loop – “the distance and time between decisions, action, effect, observation, and reconsideration” (Fung & Wright, 2003, p. 25) – and facilitates adaptive management (Kliksberg, 2007a; Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Parson, 2000; Beck, 1994; McGarry, Brenner, Cowan, Harvey, McCarthy & Murphy, 2007). In the ideal case that all of the information provided by non-electoral citizen participation is seriously considered and deliberated, “decision-making is likely to generate superior solutions compared to hierarchical or less reflective aggregation procedures (such as voting) because all participants have opportunities to offer useful information and to consider alternative solutions more deeply” (Fung & Wright, 2003, p. 25).

**Equity**

It is also argued that participatory democracy will result in more equitable outcomes than non-participatory government (Fung & Wright, 2003; Kliksberg, 2007a).
Since most public policy has the objective of serving the general public interest or focalized disadvantaged groups, participatory democracy is characterized by the instrumental contribution of promoting equity if it also – as argued above – promotes effectiveness. Additionally, it is argued, participatory democracy will generate more equitable outcomes than non-participatory government because “a decision is more likely to treat those affected by it fairly when they exercise input” (Fung & Wright, 2003, p. 26). Also, in the ideal case that citizen participation is deliberative and decisions are made by reason rather than by lobbying, hierarchy, or the aggregation of preferences, policy decisions will likely be more equitable since reasonable and inclusive deliberation promotes fairness (Fung & Wright, 2003).

**Legitimacy**

Another instrumental contribution of participatory democracy is legitimacy⁷ (Sen, 2000; Kliksberg, 2007a; Fung & Wright, 2003; Lovan, Murray & Shaffer, 2004; Hamel, 1998; Devine, 2003). This probably doesn’t require much argumentation since it is the extension of the legal-rational type of legitimacy (Weber, 1946), and its updating in accordance with contemporary circumstances. Traditionally representative democratic government has enjoyed this type of legitimacy by means of the legally defined and guaranteed procedures of citizen participation, although merely in elections, party politics and conventional administrative and judicial actions, in addition to basic civil liberties.

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⁷ Similar, but not synonymous, to legitimacy is governability, which too has been argued to be promoted by participatory democracy (Warren 2002: 692; Ferreyra: 108).
However, as Booth & Seligson (2005) have observed, “in the United States and many other established democracies, surveys have shown that in recent decades the legitimacy of quintessentially democratic institutions (especially legislatures and parties) has eroded markedly” (p. 537). Due to increasing distrust of representative politics and increasing capabilities of citizens and citizen groups, however, legitimacy of government increasingly requires legally defined protection and promotion of non-electoral citizen participation.

It is also apparent, however, as Lipset (1994) has asserted, that legitimacy “is best gained by prolonged effectiveness being the actual performance of the government and the extent to which it satisfies the basic needs of most of the population and key power groups” (p. 8). In this sense, legitimacy depends upon legal-rational procedures of participatory democracy as well as effectiveness (the first aforementioned instrumental contribution of participatory democracy). Rohrschneider (1999) has agreed “it is plausible to suggest that both – political values as well as the perceived performance – jointly influence individuals' institutional support” (p. 15). Theoretically, then, participatory democracy promotes legitimacy both by legal-rational procedures and increased policy effectiveness.

Sustainability

Closely linked to, but substantially different than, legitimacy, is participatory
democracy’s instrumental contribution of sustainability (Kliksberg, 2007a; Hamel, 1998; Schmitter, 2001). Obviously, illegitimate government and public policies are not easy to sustain in the long-term; but, nor does legitimacy necessarily bring about sustainability. Therefore, legitimacy appears to be necessary but not sufficient. In addition to contributing legitimacy, participatory democracy contributes sustainability by developing a sense of public commitment with democratic governance. As eloquently affirmed by J. S. Mill (1861), “[l]et a person have nothing to do for his country, and he will not care for it” (p. 52). Such “sociopolitical compromise” (Hamel, 1998, p. 184) with and “feeling of ownership” (Kliksberg, 2007a, p. 159) of participatory governance are crucial in order to sustain the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reformulation phases of public policies in the long-term.

These four instrumental contributions of participatory democracy could surely be accompanied by others, as well as further discussed in relation to the various modes of non-electoral participation, but they shall suffice in order to provide a general but brief summary of the theoretical support for the instrumental value of contemporary participatory democracy.

Constructive (Practical) Role

In his defense of democracy, Sen (2000) has argued that “[p]olitical and civil rights, especially those related to the guaranteeing of open discussion, debate, criticism,

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8 This is not to be confused with environmental sustainability; although, it has also been argued that participatory democracy does instrumentally contribute to environmental sustainability (Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000).
and dissent, are central to the processes of generating informed and reflected choices. These processes are crucial to the formation of values and priorities” (p. 153). Since participatory democracy considers “discussion, debate, criticism, and dissent” as fundamental components of non-electoral citizen participation and aims to provide more institutional opportunities for such participatory activities, one can deduce an even greater constructive role of participatory democracy than that of modern representative democracy. According to such logic, participatory democracy promotes, more so than modern representative democracy, the formation of social values, the conceptualization and prioritization of collective needs, and education in its broadest sense. It is no surprise, therefore, that these constructive contributions of non-electoral participation are predominant in the participatory literature, especially that of education – civic and basic, informal and formal. Essentially, it is argued that participatory democracy helps construct a better citizenry.

First, in support of the positive impact of participatory democracy on the formation of shared social values and the sense of community, Berry, Portney & Thomson (2000) conclude their well-known study of five U.S. cities – “characterized by an impressive commitment to the idea of participatory democracy” – by stating that “[t]he most striking finding of this examination of the impact of citizen participation on individuals is its effect on the sense of community. There is a strong and positive relationship between level of participation and sense of community” (p. 290). Also, in his discussion of the model of Nuclei of Participatory Intervention, used in Germany and
Spain, Harms (2000) has emphasized that this uniquely participatory method of problem solving and consensus-building – although apparently not institutionalized – “becomes a vehicle for ‘creating community’” (p. 132). Advisory boards, public hearings, citizen legislative projects and other institutions of participatory democracy can also become vehicles for the formation of social values. This constructive role, however, is not exclusive to participatory democracy, and has been argued by many to be characteristic of conventional representative democracy and other political systems (Rohrschneider, 1999). More precisely, the argument for this constructive role of participatory democracy is that non-electoral citizen participation promotes the formation of democratic social values, such as tolerance, respect, compromise, commitment and responsibility, better than conventional representative democracy. The formation of democratic social values is positive for government and beyond government. As Hamel (1998) has asserted, the participation of community actors and their public expression of values “has introduced into the public arena normative considerations which enlarge politics and democracy” (p. 183). Sen (2000) illuminates the importance of this constructive role beyond its impact on government and beyond the impact of government:

For efficient provision of public goods, not only do we have to consider the possibility of state action and social provisioning, we also have to examine the part that can be played by the development of social values and of a sense of responsibility that may reduce the need for forceful state action. (p. 269)
Second, regarding the conceptualization and prioritization of collective needs, the paragon of this constructive role of participatory democracy is probably the institutional process of participatory budgeting, whereby citizens and social actors deliberate and vote to prioritize their preferences for budget allocations, although it can result from other collective modes of non-electoral citizen participation as well. Sen (2000) has emphasized that, rather than by means of the aggregation of preferences by simply voting, public discussion and deliberation can help make our individual preferences more sensitive to collective needs rather than individual interests:

[T]he politics of social consensus calls not only for acting on the basis of given individual preferences, but also for sensitivity of social decisions to the development of individual preferences and norms. In this context, particular importance has to be attached to the role of public discussion and interactions in the emergence of shared values and commitments. Our ideas of what is just and what is not may respond to the arguments that are presented for public discussion, and we tend to react to one another’s views sometimes with a compromise or even a deal. (p. 253)

Similarly, McCaffery (1999) has emphasized that “‘public judgement’ is developed through the constitutive role played by community-based forums” (p. 1626).

Finally, participatory democracy’s constructive role for education may be its most important, and was given special attention – although in less institutionalized contexts of non-electoral participation – by classical political theoretists such as Rousseau, Jefferson,
Toqueville, Mill and Dewey. And contemporary theorists who highlight the educational role of participatory democracy are innumerable (Sen, 2000; Berry, Portney & Thompson, 1993; Hart, 1972; Dahl, 1998; Menegat, 2002; Fung & Wright, 2003). Hart (1972) has argued that “[t]he importance of this educative aspect of participation must be emphasized, for it is the basic justification advanced by the advocates” (p. 607). But even less vocal advocates of participatory democracy also highlight its constructive role for civic education. Dahl (1998), for example, has recognized that “civic education requires not only formal schooling but public discussion, deliberation, debate, controversy, the ready availability of reliable information, and other institutions” (p. 79) and that “older institutions will need to be enhanced by new means of civic education, political participation, information, and deliberation” (p. 188). One of the most forceful arguments made in favor of participatory democracy’s constructive role of education was that made by Davis (1964) during the beginning of the renewal of participatory democracy:

Participation in the management of public affairs would serve as a vital means of intellectual, emotional, and moral education leading toward the full development of the capacities of individual human beings.

Participation in politics would provide men with opportunities to take part in making significant decisions and to transcend the narrow bounds of their private affairs. It would build and consolidate a sense of genuine community that would serve as a solid foundation for government. (p. 40)
Besides the intrinsic and social values of education, it creates a sort of virtuous cycle in that it also improves democratic political participation, in its electoral and non-electoral forms.

The importance of education for participatory democracy theorists and advocates is such that they often go beyond proclaiming participatory democracy’s constructive role of education and demand the provision of both civic and basic education of high quality and universal accessibility as fundamental building blocks for participatory democracy (Beyer, 1988). In this sense the relationship between education and participatory democracy can be considered a two-way street, a symbiotic relationship, or a virtuous cycle. Sen (2000), for example, has made the seemingly obvious observation that “since participation requires knowledge and basic educational skills, denying the opportunity of schooling to any group – say, female children – is immediately contrary to the basic conditions of participatory freedom” (p. 32-33). It is no surprise, therefore, that one of the policy areas with disproportionately active non-electoral citizen participation is that of education – exemplified by the Parent Teacher Associations in the United States or the Conselhos Municipais de Educação [Municipal Education Councils] in Brazil. And this constructive role of promoting high quality and universally accessible civic basic education has great benefits, of course, not only for the political system, but also for economic strength and social and individual well-being. It is in this double promotion of education, as both a result of and requisite for non-electoral citizen participation, that makes the educational aspect of the constructive role of participatory democracy
especially important to its theoretical support. It is worth noting that, as pointed out by Aunión (2009), “different international bodies, such as the Council of Europe or UNESCO, have transmitted since the 1990s the need to educate in civic values⁹” (p. 28).

The overall constructive role of participatory democracy has led many to refer to it with the term empowerment (Kliksberg, 2007a; Bachrach & Botwinick, 1992; Black, 1999; Berry, Portney & Thomson, 1993; Marschall, 1998). Berry, Portney & Thomson (1993) affirm that the survey research for their study supports the view that “participation does nurture attitudes that can be said to empower people” (p. 290).

History and Historicity of Participatory Democracy:

In addition to the theoretical support for participatory democracy, some authors point to a favorable historical context for such democratic transformations. Warren (2002) has argued that participatory democracy has become more feasible today than in the recent past for two main reasons. First, contrary to the assertions of political apathy, citizens have generally become more critical of authority and now have greater expectations from government. Second, while traditional forms of political activity such as voting, political parties, and fraternal organizations have stagnated and in many cases declined as means of democratic participation, new forms of political activity have increased in recent decades (p. 682-683).

⁹ My translation of: “distintos estamentos internacionales, como el Consejo de Europa o la UNESCO, han transmitido desde los años noventa del siglo pasado la necesidad de educar en valores ciudadanos”.
Whether it be due to the theoretical support and/or the favorable historical context discussed above, channels of non-electoral citizen participation have in fact been included (at least juridically, if not practically) into the institutional framework of most real existing democracies, in the industrialized world and otherwise (Dalton, Sarrow & Cain, 2003a; Warren, 2003; Menegat, 2002; Brailovsky, 2004, 2007). Nevertheless, it can be argued and should be considered that participatory democracy may be more or less feasible and more or less desirable, depending upon the what (policy domain), the where (political jurisdiction), and the who (demography/sociology) of policy-making. In addition to the two reasons Warren (2000) has given for the increased feasibility of participatory democracy today, it can also be argued that decentralization, urbanization and municipalization\(^{10}\) also make participatory democracy more feasible and desirable.

The following chapter intends to explore the theoretical and historical relationships between urban governance and participatory democracy.

Chapter 2

**Defining Urban Governance:**

Urban is an adjective that refers to a particular type of human settlement: the city. For the U.S. Census Bureau, urbanity is measured by density (Pickett, Cadenasso, Grove, Nilon, Pouyat, Zipperer & Costanza, 2001). As societies and their economies and technologies have changed throughout history, the city has also changed in its form.

\(^{10}\) The term ‘municipalization’ refers to the process of increasing relative political importance of cities and municipalities. See end of Ch. 2.
Considering its changing form, Lofland (1998) defines the city simply as “a permanently populous place or settlement” (p. 7), so that her definition covers “both those large, dense, and heterogeneous settlements – past and present – that are visually distinct from their surroundings and those jumbles of variously sized settlements that are woven together into the urban blankets the U.S. Census Bureau calls “metropolitan statistical areas”” (p. 7). For the purposes of this theoretical research, it seems more useful to emphasize what ‘urban’ does not refer to, rather than precisely what it does refer to. ‘Urban’ does not refer to a nation-state nor any vast region that includes scarcely inhabited land. Also, ‘urban’ does not refer to small, rural, sparsely populated settlements. In light of these contrasts, it could be said that ‘urban’ simultaneously refers to a level or scale of governance – that is, municipal – and a type of society – that is, densely populated. While some contemporary metropolitan areas may include more than one municipality and may be less dense than cities have been historically, as alluded to in Lofland’s definition, they remain being characterized mainly by local municipal politics and non-rural society and the sociological characteristics that implies (interdependence, heterogeneity, network society, cosmopolitanism, informational economy, etc.).

**Participatory Urban Governance:**

Although participatory democracy is being demanded and promoted at all levels of government, and national and transnational civil society organizations have increased the institutional opportunities for non-electoral participation at their respective levels, the non-electoral participation of civil society and individual citizens at the local level has
gained special attention amongst academics and practitioners (Castells & Borja, 2004; Warren, 2002, 2003; Dalton, Scarrow & Cain, 2003a; Gray & Jenkins, 2000; Fischer, 2000; Sabsay & Tarak, 1997; Sabsay, 2007; Gómez, 2002). As Warren (2002) has observed, “competing research suggests that new forms of political activity have emerged in the past two decades, especially at the local level” (p. 682). Localness, however, while not entirely meaningless, doesn’t tell us much more than sub-nationalness and proximity, although this also varies considerably depending on population size and density. The distinction between rural and urban is perhaps the most striking inadequacy or ambiguity of localness, which is, nevertheless, too often indiscriminately celebrated. While the term ‘urbanness’ (or ‘urbanity’) also suffers territorial and demographic vagueness, it nonetheless denotes the unique demographic, cultural, economic and political density, plurality, centrality, dynamism and cosmopolitanism of human settlement and collective living in cities, in addition to localness.

Urban governance refers, herein, to the governance of the city and, more importantly, by the city. It is often argued that the unique characteristics of city life (demography and sociology) make participatory democracy especially feasible and desirable for urban governance. Additionally, contemporary proponents of participatory urban governance frequently refer to 1) the historical evolution of democracy since the Athenian city-state and other well-known experiences of participatory democracy in

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11 And may not necessarily imply sub-nationalness when considering such exceptions as Singapore, Monaco and the Vatican City.
cities as evidence of the feasibility of participatory urban governance, and 2) the historical evolution of cities since the industrial revolution as evidence of the desirability of participatory urban governance. I will address these theoretical and historical arguments in the same order.

**Proximity**

Of all of the distinguishing characteristics of cities that are argued to be favorable for participatory urban governance, perhaps the most frequently observed is that of proximity (Low, 2004; Puig, 2003; Isin, 2000). As T. Puig (2003) has put it, municipalities are “public organizations for the democracy of proximity” (p. 17). Castells & Borja (2004) go as far as to argue that “the principle of proximity” is what legitimizes local autonomy (p. 151). We can differentiate between, at least, three kinds of proximity that apparently make participatory democracy especially feasible and desirable for urban governance: vertical proximity (accessibility), horizontal proximity (density), and environmental proximity (intimacy).

**Vertical Proximity (Accessibility)**

Vertical proximity refers to the closeness of the governed to those who govern and to the institutions of government. The assumption is that greater closeness implies greater accessibility and facility for the use of participatory institutions (Low, 2004; Kolesas, 1998; Isin, 2000; Sabsay, 2007). Isin (2000) has argued that “[t]he city is the closest level of government to the citizen and is approachable and direct” (p. 11). Sabsay (2007) has asserted that “[i]t must be emphasized that it is the local sphere… which is
most fertile for the implementation of participatory mechanisms, particularly due to the greater closeness between the governed and those who govern” (p. 3). While some argue that advanced technologies may increase the vertical proximity between supra-local units of government and the people – and this may be true for some institutions –, there are certain forms of non-electoral participation that would be more costly or less accessible at supra-local levels of governance. While referenda, and perhaps citizen legislative projects, could be – and have been – used at supra-local levels without too much difficulty, the challenges and costs of using participatory budgeting, citizen juries, public hearings, advisory boards and other institutions requiring deliberation between multiple people are obviously much greater at supra-local levels than at the local level. It’s no coincidence that Warren (2003) has observed the “evidence of… new experiments in deliberative policy-making especially in local government” (p. 237). Obviously, in order to maintain (or increase) the vertical proximity of urban governance in megacities and very sprawled cities, urban governance must be decentralized to sub-municipal units, such as neighborhoods.

**Horizontal Proximity (Density)**

Whereas vertical proximity refers to the spatial and temporal closeness of the governed to those who govern and to the institutions of government, therefore facilitating participatory democracy, horizontal proximity (or density) refers to the proximity between citizens – interpersonal proximity. Horizontal proximity is indirectly propitious for participatory democracy in that it facilitates association, organization, mobilization,
confrontation, negotiation, cooperation and education\textsuperscript{12} (Milgram, 1970; Low, 2004; Kolesas, 1998).

Horizontal proximity facilitates, it is argued, 1) the intentional association, organization and mobilization of civil society, and 2) the unintentional interaction of citizens by a) confrontation and negotiation of interests, needs and worldviews, and b) spontaneous cooperation and acts of solidarity\textsuperscript{13}. All of these are educational experiences that ought to promote democratic principles, such as equality, justice, and dissent. Whereas the organization of civil society may be equally facilitated by horizontal proximity in rural and urban areas, the unintentional interaction of citizens (not to mention, yet, the diversity of their interests, needs and worldviews) seems to be greater in the city than in rural areas. As Low (2004) has explained, “the interpersonal proximity and density of contact facilitated by cities have always held out the hope of cities as places where better, more participatory, or at least more involving democratic practices might thrive” (p. 129).

\textsuperscript{12} The word ‘education’ is used in this case to denote both its broader, non-institutional sense as well as its narrower, conventional sense.

\textsuperscript{13} It is worth acknowledging that intentional association and organization often leads to unintentional interaction, confrontation, negotiation and education, but as a secondary feature rather than a primary one. For example, a club or NGO may have the primary objective of promoting sports or green space or what have you, but there will most likely be unintentional interactions between the members with different interests and worldviews which are secondary to the members’ primary relationship of association for sports or green space. This interaction is also important for education and the development of democratic values, but it is not the same as unintentional interactions of a primary relationship, which are more confrontational and have greater potential for negotiation and education. Such unintentional interactions of a primary relationship could be exemplified by confrontations over noise pollution or public space occupation and by spontaneous cooperative relationships of helping a stranger in need (on a bus or in the plaza).
While it is absolutely true that transportation and communication technologies have allowed for the suburbanization of cities and less horizontal proximity in cities, cities remain denser than rural areas and the cost efficiencies of service provision in dense settlements – as well as the related resource efficiencies and environmental concerns\(^{14}\) – reinforce the benefits of horizontal proximity (Tibajuka, 2007; Isin, 2000; Lynch, 1998; Satterthwaite, 1997; Hardoy, Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 1992; Angotti, 2006; Strogatz, 2009; Szabo, 2009).

**Environmental Proximity (Intimacy)**

This type of proximity is similar to horizontal proximity, but is broader and more totalizing than interpersonal relationships. Environmental proximity (or intimacy) refers to the relationship between the citizen and his environment (physical and social). Essentially, the argument emphasizes the greater intimacy of citizens with their local reality and with their local political concerns. The implications of this are twofold. First, the political concerns and all phases of public policies relating to locality \(X\) should be debated and decided by the those who live in and have the most intimate relationship to (and knowledge of) locality \(X\), rather than by supra-local governments and actors who have superficial knowledge of locality \(X\). Second, if citizens are going to participate in democratic politics, they are most apt to do so at the local level than at supra-local levels because they have more knowledge of and more commitment to local political concerns.

\(^{14}\) Environmental concerns regarding urban density and horizontal proximity will be addressed in Chapter 4.
The emphasis given to local knowledge and information amongst participatory theorists and practitioners (Warren, 2003; Kliksberg, 2007a; Fung & Wright, 2003; Fischer, 2000; Coburn, 2005) reflects the importance of environmental proximity for participatory democracy at local levels, rural and urban. As in the case of vertical proximity, in order for environmental proximity to make participatory democracy more feasible in major cities, urban governance must be decentralized to the neighborhood (or other sub-municipal) level.

It must be acknowledged, that these three types of proximity are similarly characteristic of rural localities, although to varying degrees. In the case of megacities without decentralized administration, vertical proximity may even be greater in rural localities. However, rural localities may also be very spread out, thus enjoying less vertical proximity. Environmental proximity will also be less in localities that experience significant internal and external migrations, which is more characteristic of urban areas. In the case of horizontal proximity, the facility for intentional association, organization and mobilization is likely to be similar in rural localities as in urban localities, but the quantity and quality (due to greater diversity) of unintentional interactions are much greater in urban areas than in rural areas (Andrews). While these types of proximity may be shared to varying degrees with rural communities, they are, nevertheless, much weaker at supralocal levels of society and governance, such as the nation-state or regions. Thus, proximity is perhaps the most frequently cited characteristic of urban governance that makes it especially appropriate for participatory democracy.
Publicity

Publicity – that is, the quality or state of affecting the general population – is greater in the city than in rural areas or supra-local levels of society. In other words, and perhaps clearer ones, what is usually considered private becomes less private and more public in urban environments. Mongin (2006) has described the urban experience as “progressing from private life to public life” (p. 43). This is a consequence of 1) horizontal proximity (density) and 2) risk society.

Just as horizontal proximity facilitates unintentional interaction of citizens, it also makes private concerns public concerns. In less urban environments the construction of one’s house or workplace within the confines of their property is mostly a private matter; however, in urban areas these private matters often times affect others, sometimes just neighbors and sometimes the general public. “In the city,” Fitzpatrick & LaGlory (2000) have written, “heavy concentrations of multistoried dwellings, with shared-wall construction, close proximity to public sidewalks, and severe cooling difficulties made for an environment where public and private space could not be easily distinguished” (p. 51). Mongin (2006) has argued that “architectural production is in the origin of issues that affect the possibility of a project of urbanism, the relationship between the private

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15 My translation of: “la experiencia urbana se manifiesta […] progresando de lo privado a lo público”.
and the public and our conception of public space” (p. 305). This is true not only with architectural production (as well as maintenance and destruction), but also with transportation, recreation and economic activities that become public concerns in dense areas. As Muñoz Machado & López Benítez (2007) have asserted: “Urbanism is a necessarily public function. The decision as to how cities ought to be organized and ought to develop cannot be left, therefore, in the hands of individuals, because they would prioritize self-interest over the general interest of the entire city” (p. 186).

Modern urban governance requires the democratization of historically private matters that are now undoubtedly of public interest.

In addition to horizontal proximity, increased publicity of human activities in urban areas can also be attributed to the increased risk of human activities. The theoretical detail of risk society will be addressed in the section on uncertainty, but for the time being it must be acknowledged that the increased risk of private activities, mostly due to technological sophistication and the neoliberalization thereof, have made them of public interest. As Beck (1997) has argued, “[i]n the age of risk, society becomes a laboratory with nobody responsible for the outcomes of experiments. The private sphere’s creation of risks means that it can no longer be considered apolitical” (p. 10).

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16 My translation of: “la producción arquitectónica está en el origen de cuestiones que afectan la opción de un urbanismo de proyecto, la relación entre lo privado y lo público y nuestra concepción del espacio público”.

17 My translation of: “El urbanismo es una función irrenunciablemente pública. La decisión relativa a cómo deben ordenarse o desarrollarse las ciudades no puede dejarse, por consiguiente, en manos de los particulares, porque éstos harían primar sus intereses sobre los generales del conjunto de la ciudad”.

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While the increased publicity of risk society applies to both urban and rural society, it is especially evident in the former (Caz, Rodríguez & Saravia, 2004), as will be discussed in the section on uncertainty.

The greater publicity of urban society, therefore, increases: 1) the scope of urban governance; and, 2) the need for public participation in urban governance. The greater publicity or “public realm” of cities has led Beauregard & Bounds (2000) to propose “an urban citizenship” (p. 243), with increased opportunities for non-electoral citizen participation.

**Heterogeneity**

In contrast to rural societies, urban societies are generally characterized by heterogeneity. And, while national, regional, and global societies may be heterogeneous, heterogeneity is most intensely and most frequently experienced in cities. Milgram (1970) wrote that:

> Any observer in the streets of midtown Manhattan will see (i) large numbers of people, (ii) a high population density, and (iii) heterogeneity of population. These three factors need to be at the root of any sociopsychological theory of city life, for they condition all aspects of our experience in the metropolis. (p. 1461)

In addition to being characteristic of urban society (Guillette, 2000), heterogeneity (i.e. ethnic, cultural, religious, ideological, sexual, professional, etc.) has been argued by many sociologists to facilitate interaction with ‘the other’, especially in public spaces,
which in turn promotes the reflection, deliberation and tolerance conducive for
democratic governance (Mongin, 2006; Beauregard & Bounds, 2000; Carr, 1992;
Stevenson, 2003).

Beauregard & Bounds (2000), for example, have argued that “[t]he public realm
is ‘the city’s quintessential social territory’ (Lofland, 1998, p. 9). It is where people of
diverse backgrounds engage each other on a daily basis in a variety of activities and
associations. There, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship are exercised, civic
sentiments are formed and identities are realized” (p. 243). At the heart of theoretical
arguments that urban heterogeneity facilitates participatory democracy is what Sen
(2000) has called “preference formation through social interaction” (p. 253), and the fact
that cities tend to provide more frequent and more diverse opportunities for social
interaction between individuals and groups of varying needs, values, ideologies and
interests than rural settlements (Fitzpatrick & LaGlory, 2000; Stevenson, 2003). It is
precisely the heterogeneity of urban life that has led I. M. Young (1995) to propose “an
ideal of city life as a vision of social relations affirming group difference” (p. 251, as
cited by Stevenson, 2003, p. 43) rather than the ideal of community, which assumes
homogeneity, similarity and conformity.

**Complexity**

As explained in Chapter 1, 21st century politics is increasingly complex and
dynamic, which, according to some, has challenged representative institutions and
required the delegation and devolution of power (Dalton, Scarrow & Cain, 2003a;
Warren, 2002, 2003; Fung & Wright, 2003; Beck, 1994); and, nowhere is the complexity and dynamism characteristic of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century more manifest than in cities (Lofland, 1998), especially megalopolises, which are the centers of economic, cultural and political activity. Therefore, it is not surprising that many theorists have argued that the complexity and dynamism of 21\textsuperscript{st} century urban governance also challenges the traditional representative institutions of urban governance and requires more participatory institutions of governance (Hamel, 1998; Stevenson, 2003; Stoker, 2000; John & Cole, 2000).

Lofland (1998) has argued that “cities are the most complex of settlement forms because they are the only settlement form that routinely and persistently contains all three realms [of social space – i.e. private, parochial and public realms]” (p. 10). Urban planning, Pinilla Castro (2006) has explained, arose as a response to industrialization and “increased complexity in the conditions of the surrounding (social and technical) environment” and it has been influenced by “recent knowledge developed in complexity and system theories” (p. 82). For this author, “complex adaptive systems are comprised of very many agents or active elements working together. Complex systems are also open: they survive and evolve by exchanging information, matter, and energy with their respective environments” (p. 82-83). Considering the trend of increasing urbanization and the increasing use of information technologies in cities (Mongin, 2006; Castells, 2004), there is little doubt about the increasing complexity of urban systems and their governance. Also, the complexity of urban governance seems to arise, in large part, from
the division of labor and specialization of knowledge that characterize urban society
(Inglehart, 1997; Andrews, 1976).

Likewise, with special emphasis on the political facets of urban complexity, John & Cole (2000) have argued that:

the nature of the urban space implies a loose collection of political interests, some of which may not have a location in the exact territory occupied by a local political authority. The challenge for urban leaders is to make sense of the complexity and to bring together a disparate set of potential participants (p. 99).

The complexity and dynamism of urban societies and the challenges they pose for urban governance, however, have been exacerbated by the processes of urbanization, globalization and neoliberalization, which generally imply, respectively: more demographic pressure on urban infrastructure, more division of labor and specialization of knowledge and more social demands; more dependence on and vulnerability to supranational phenomena and actors; and more dependence on private actors and less public financing. This has forced municipal governments, in the words of Stoker (2000), to “grapple with some intractable and difficult policy issues” that include: “economic development and property development, finance (balancing spending with revenues), training and employment, crime prevention and public safety, transport congestion, and pollution and environmental problems” (p. 92). Hamel (1998) has included “poverty” and
“social exclusion” in his list of difficulties for municipalities\textsuperscript{18}. The exacerbated complexity and dynamism of urban society and the particular difficulties of urban governance has led Stoker and others to suggest more interactive, adaptive, transparent and participatory modes of urban governance.

**Transdisciplinarity**

Similarly related, and partially due, to the complexity of urban systems, is the transdisciplinarity of urban studies. As Stevenson (2003) has pointed out “it was the theories and methods of an emerging interdisciplinary field of cultural enquiry that, albeit unintentionally, effectively reshaped the parameters of urban scholarship” (p. 54). Many urban researchers tend to emphasize the transdisciplinarity (or interdisciplinarity or multidisciplinarity) of urban studies (Stevenson, 2003; Low, 1996; Parker, 2004; Mukai, 2002), which for policymaking implies the need for diverse input of knowledge and the participation of a wide variety of, if not all, experts and stakeholders. In this sense, the transdisciplinarity that characterizes urban governance makes the institutionalization of participatory democracy more desirable for urban governance than for other scales of governance. The relationship between transdisciplinarity and participatory democracy, however, will be developed with greater detail in Ch. 3.

\textsuperscript{18} While Hamel was focusing on North American municipalities, poverty and social exclusion are difficulties for municipalities almost anywhere in the world and, in fact, are more severe problems elsewhere.
Network Society

Urban populations are characterized by specialization/division of labor and interdependence (Andrews, 1976; Inglehart, 1997), which create extensive economic, social and political networks. Cities are also dynamic economic, cultural and political centers that constitute nodes in all sorts of regional and global networks. Swyngedouw (2006) has argued that “cities are constituted through dense networks of interwoven socio-ecological processes that are simultaneously human, physical, discursive, cultural, material and organic” (p. 21). The importance of networking in cities has been evidenced by the fact that network analysis has long been an important methodological tool for urban research (Low, 1996). Moreover, advances in communication and information technology – in addition to increased specialization of knowledge and division of labor – have exacerbated the networking logic characteristic of urban life (Castells, 2004). Networking and connectivity, it has been argued, make participatory democracy more feasible (Fleury, 2005).

Extensive economic, social and political networks have been argued to make participatory democracy more feasible for two main reasons. First, the extension of networks and the intensification of the networking logic, it is argued, make individuals less submissive to authority and social relations and decision-making processes more horizontal and less hierarchical (Van Kersbergen & Van Waarden, 2004). Second, networks increase and accelerate the flow of information amongst individuals and groups with weak ties (Mongin, 2006; Nye, 2009; Mutz, 2006). Of course, the networking logic
and the advancement of information and communication technologies may have also increased and accelerated the flow of information amongst individuals and groups with strong ties – such as family members and friends –, but weak ties, it is argued, are especially important for democracy. Nye (2009) has argued this point very recently:

[W]eak ties extend further and provide more novel, innovative, and non-redundant information... Weak ties, such as one finds on the Internet, are more effective than strong ties for providing the necessary information to link diverse groups together in a cooperative manner. In other words, weak networks are part of the glue that holds diverse societies together.

They are also the basis of democratic leadership. (n.p.)

Similarly, Mutz (2006) has concluded that weak ties are good for democracy since “[d]ifferences of political opinion are indeed more easily maintained and more beneficially aired with one’s dentist than with a close friend or family member” (p. 2).

Third, networks increase the visibility of government leaders and other political actors and make their actions more transparent and accountable. Van Kersbergen & Van Waarden (2004) have argued that:

actors who occupy a more central position in a network are more visible to others inside and outside the network, that information about their behaviour spreads more rapidly, that they are therefore more careful about maintaining a positive reputation, and that they are hence better able to
resist temptations for opportunism, fraud or abuse of power. They also make greater efforts to be exemplary citizens (p. 164).

According to these arguments, the extension of economic, social and political networks and the intensification of the networking logic make: 1) citizens more willing and able to participate in urban governance, 2) citizens better informed to participate in urban governance, and 3) political leaders and other central actors more likely to provide and respect opportunities to participate. For these three reasons, the network society that characterizes modern cities makes urban participatory democracy more feasible.

Extensive economic, social and political networks have also been argued to make participatory democracy more desirable. First, network society makes urban participatory governance more desirable because of the information that participants from such networks can provide to policy-making processes. More than the quantity of information that networks can provide, Van Kersbergen & Van Waarden (2004) have argued that the dynamics of networks improve the quality of information and the consequences of information exchange: “information exchange and disputation itself becomes part of the system of checks and balances within the network administration and the network economy. It works also as a mechanism for mutual learning” (p. 162). Second, in the words of Castells (2004), “[a] network-based social structure is a highly dynamic, open system, susceptible to innovating without threatening its balance” (p. 501-502). Such an innovative and adaptive system of social structure can help deal with the increasing complexity and dynamism of urban governance. Hamel (1998) has argued that “cities call
for networked systems in order to plan their technical and spatial organization, as well as to enhance their management” (p. 177). Therefore, it is argued, network society, if given the opportunities to participate in governance, can provide 1) more and better information as well as 3) innovative and adaptive solutions in an increasingly complex urban society.

Also, in the globalized network society, cities – especially ‘global cities’ – become increasingly important political arenas since they constitute nodes within financial and information networks (amongst others) (Castells, 2004; Isin, 2000). Brand (2005) has pointed out the argument that “cities are seen to be an ideal unit for local action to resolve global problems since […] they constitute a network of centres of information and institutional power in the new world economic order” (p. 37). If we accept the desirability of the four instrumental contributions of participatory democracy described in Chapter 1, then the increased relative importance of urban politics (municipalization) makes urban participatory democracy more relatively desirable. Not only should the increased relative importance of urban politics make urban participatory democracy more relatively desirable for citizens, but it should also make urban participatory democracy more of a priority on academic research agendas.

Before moving on, it is important to note that the increasing dominance of the networking logic in society doesn’t only apply to elites, the technologically savvy or important economic actors. Increased networking has also been observed amongst middle and lower income sectors as well. Van Vliet has observed that “the urban poor have increasingly begun to organize themselves in networks, federating themselves in national
and international networks and allying themselves with government agencies and private
organizations in negotiated cooperative arrangements that are more responsive to their
needs” (p. 9). Tajbakhsh (2000) has also emphasized the importance of networking
among neighborhood and community-based organizations for the promotion of urban
policy reforms. Holston (2008) has concluded that:

> Especially in cities, we find that people of all social classes have made
direct access to the internet, email, YouTube, chatrooms, cellphones, text
messaging, and digital photography part of their daily lives. We find that
these and other forms of grassroots media – such as pirate radio stations,
home recording studios, and laser-printer publishers – produce new kinds
of knowledge, distribute them quickly, and connect people with each other
almost immediately. (p. 1)

**Uncertainty**

Just as in the case of complexity or network society, increased uncertainty is not
an exclusively urban phenomenon, but it is a phenomenon that is accentuated in
contemporary urban society. Economic globalization and interdependence as well as the
increased velocity and unpredictability of technological, economic, geopolitical and
environmental changes (amongst others) has made society and governance generally
more uncertain (Beck, 1992, 1994, 1997; Kliksberg, 2007a). However, uncertainty is
particularly problematic for urban areas due to: 1) the multidimensional and dynamic
relations, especially of economic and political dependence, between city governments
and local and supralocal actors and phenomena (political uncertainty) (CEPAL, 2003); 2) increased exposure to risk (physical uncertainty) in complex, dynamic and synergetic urban environments (Beck, 1994, 1997; Manjares, 2005; George & McKinley, 1974; Guillette, 2000). These uncertainties, in turn, make the institutionalization of participatory democracy an important means of legitimizing urban governments challenged by such uncertainty as well as an important means of better informing policy-making processes with the local knowledge and value judgments of citizens.

Urban politics, as previously mentioned, has gained importance relative to national politics due to the centrality of cities in the globalized networked economy as well as generally increasing urban populations and municipal budgets (Castells, 2004; Isin, 2000). Increased economic competition amongst cities has motivated private actors and “new city users” (Sassen, 1999, p. 192) – especially from the business community – to make more demands upon city governments (CEPAL, 2003). Rapidly changing urban economies, societies and environments have resulted in increased demands from urban populations as well. Processes of decentralization, deconcentration and devolution as well as globalization and the development of supranational institutions have changed – to varying degrees, depending on specific contexts, of course – the institutional frameworks within which cities are governed (CEPAL, 2003). All of these phenomena have made urban policy-making less certain and more challenging for city governments, which in turn has motivated many city governments to seek the participation and involvement of
citizens and private actors in urban governance procedures in order to access information and to legitimize their leadership (John & Cole, 2000; Hamel, 1998).

The complexity and dynamism of urban society generate risk and synergistic results from the interaction amongst diverse actors, materials and processes, which cannot be easily foreseen, nor easily assessed. Alluding to modern societies and built environments, Beck (1997) has declared that “[r]isk society begins where nature ends” (p. 10). The concern with synergy has been expressed most emphatically and frequently amongst urban ecologists (George & McKinley, 1974), toxicologists (Guillette, 2000) and epidemiologists (Susser, Schwartz, Morabia & Bromet, 2006). Increased uncertainty in contemporary cities has caused many conflicts over projects that are perceived by many stakeholders to bring uncertain changes and risk to the urban environment and society.

**Anonymity**

Cities have historically been characterized by, and romanticized for, anonymity (Milgram, 1970; Boswell, 1981; Holton, 2000; Bookchin, 1995, 2007). This was clearly reflected in the medieval German phrase *Stadluft macht frei* – ‘city air makes one free’ (Mongin, 2006; Holton, 2000; Mennell, 1998). It has been argued that the sense of liberty and equality that urban anonymity imbues (Milgram, 1970; Mongin, 2006; Stevenson, 2003; Hamel, 1998) foments reason and abstract thinking (Bauman & May, 2001;

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19 Such as the maintenance, modification or expansion of transportation, telecommunications, solid waste, hazardous waste, electricity, fuel, water, sewage, storm water, health, security, education, R & D, industrial, commercial, residential and recreational infrastructure.
Stevenson, 2003; Mongin, 2006), rights adjudication (Mongin, 2006; Dallari, 1984, 1996; Fernandes, 2005), citizenship (Holston & Appadurai, 1999; Holston, 2008; Fernandes, 2005), civilization (Wirth, 1940; Stevenson, 2003), and participatory democracy. As Bookchin (2007) has asserted so eloquently:

The city is the domain where the archaic blood-tie that was once limited to the unification of families and tribes, to the exclusion of outsiders, was – juridically, at least – dissolved. It became the domain where hierarchies based on parochial and sociobiological attributes of kinship, gender, and age could be eliminated and replaced by a free society based on a shared common humanity… It is above all the domain where institutions and values have their roots not in zoology but in civil human activity… [T]he municipality constitutes the only domain for an association based on the free exchange of ideas and a creative endeavor to bring the capacities of consciousness to the service of freedom… Freed of domination as well as material exploitation – indeed, recreated as a rational arena for human creativity in all spheres of life – the municipality becomes the ethical space for the good life. (p. 99-100)

In addition to the liberty, creativity and intellectual mentality that urban anonymity purportedly imbues, conviviality amongst anonymous individuals requires the rule of law and equal rights, opportunities for rights adjudication and the institutionalization of democratic modes of governance. Stevenson (2003) has
emphasized that Tonnie’s famous 19th century distinction between *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* was based on the anonymity and contractualism that was increasingly defining urban social relations in that period. Similarly, Mongin (2006) has argued that urbanization has contributed to the dominance of the rights-based discourse (p. 120-124) and Dallari (1996) has argued that urbanization is partially responsible for increased litigation and the judicialization of politics. As Dallari put it:

it’s important to point out the phenomenon of the accelerated and intense urbanization of social life […]. This has had an enormous influence on contractual relations, property rights, notions of public and private and of individual and collective, as well as on the exercise of rights in general. Moreover, simply by the fact that more people lived in cities made the possibility of judicial recourse for the protection of rights of the resolution of conflicts more feasible for many people, which explains, in great part, the significant increase of the number of judicial actions registered in the last decades\(^\text{20}\). (p. 6)

\(^{20}\) My translation of: “é importante assinalar o fenômeno da acelerada e intensa urbanização da vida social, [...]. Isso teve enorme influência sobre as relações contractuais, o direito de propriedade, as noções de público e privado e de individual e coletivo, bem como sobre o uso dos direitos de maneira geral. Acrescente-se, ainda, que o simples fato de ter passado a residir na cidade tornou mais viável, para muita gente, a possibilidade de procurar o Judiciário para a defesa de direitos ou a solução de conflitos, o que explica, em grande parte, o expressivo aumento do número de ações judiciais registrado nas últimas décadas.”
Since Dallari published the previous statement, the processes of both urbanization and judicialization have continued to increase and they have contributed to transformations within the legal system that expand the system to include particularly urban rights and improve access to adjudication or resolution. For example, “some Latin American countries”, Fernandes (2005) has asserted, “have been undergoing an important process of legal change, thus contributing towards the empowering of a new field of public law, namely urban law” (p. 41). Fernandes makes concrete reference to Law 388/1997 in Colombia and Law 10.257/2001 in Brazil, both of which devolve powers to municipalities for urban planning and governance, while establishing that municipalities must ensure the social and ecological functions of land and the public interest more generally; but, most importantly, both of these renowned laws require that municipalities provide and promote institutionalized opportunities of non-electoral citizen participation.

The theoretical and historical relationships between urban anonymity and the development of rational-legal institutions of governance make the institutionalization of urban participatory democracy more feasible and more desirable. It may be no surprise, then, that Stoker (2000) has claimed that “the study of urban politics has returned to a reformulated concern with institutions but this time framed within the wider context of what has been termed the ‘new institutionalism’ (Lowndes, 1996)” (p. 93). Nor is it coincidental that many authors discuss urban citizenship (Isin, 2000; Fernandes, 2005; Holston, 2008; Holston & Appadurai, 1999). Holston (2008) has suggested that “the
development of urban citizenships throughout the Global South has been a primary generator of these new participatory publics” (p. 2)

**Cosmopolitanism**

In the words of Safier (2000), cosmopolitanism is “the worldview that seeks to argue for the global unity of all humanity and consequently an acceptance of universal belonging and solidarity of all human beings as ‘citizens of the world’, equally deserving of recognition and respect” (p. 31). The universality, equality and respect that are underlying values of cosmopolitanism, it is argued, also happen to be underlying principles of and conducive values for democratic governance and a participatory civic culture. Since urban societies are generally more cosmopolitan than rural societies and nation-states (Dye, 1963; Rohlen, 2002), then urban governance ought to be an exceptionally feasible and desirable scale of governance for the institutionalization of participatory democracy.

While it is true that some cities and some parts of cities are more cosmopolitan than others, the general tendency is that urbanization, globalization and the proliferation of rights-based discourse are creating a more cosmopolitan society, concentrated and exemplified in cities – especially the so-called ‘global cities’ (Mongin, 2006; Dolabela Pereira, 2007; Isin, 2000; Sassen, 1999). For Holston & Appadurai (1999), cities are “the place where the business of modern society gets done, including that of transnationalization,” and cities are “especially privileged sites for considering the current renegotiations of citizenship” (p. 3). The latter of these two urban characteristics
is of particular interest herein. If it is true that cities are more cosmopolitan than rural
municipalities and more cosmopolitan than nation-states, and cosmopolitanism promotes
democratic values and facilitates a participatory civic culture, then urban governance
would logically appear to be an exceptionally appropriate scale of governance for
democratization and the institutionalization of participatory democracy. Furthermore, if it
is true that the theoretical concept and legal meaning of citizenship is currently being
renegotiated, as held by Holston & Appadurai, then such renegotiation ought to facilitate
the institutionalization of participatory democracy in cities.

Information and Education Intensity:

Cities have long been regarded as centers of information, critical thinking, self-
reflexivity, and education – in both its broader and narrower meanings. Marx & Engels
([1848] 1972) wrote that “[t]he bourgeoisie has […] created enormous cities, has greatly
increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a
considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life” (p. 84, as cited by
Stevenson, 2003, p. 12). Mongin (2006) has argued that the city is a “novel of learning21”
(p. 61) and Bookchin (2007) has argued that “[m]unicipal life should become a school for
the formation of citizens” (p. 104). More specifically, it has been argued that cities are: 1)
more intellectually and politically stimulating than rural areas; 2) more effective than
rural areas in the provision of educational services; 3) centers of information.

21 My translation of: “novela de aprendizaje”
The heterogeneity, anonymity, complexity and dynamism of urban society has long made it considered to be more intellectually stimulating and politically active than in rural areas. As previously mentioned, some have asserted that urban life foments reason and abstract thinking (Bauman & May, 2001; Simmel, [1903] 1995; as cited by Stevenson, 2003; Mongin, 2006) as well as civilization (Wirth, 1940; Howard, [1902] 1965; as cited by Stevenson, 2003). Such habitual exercise of reason helps citizens critically process and use information in order to effectively participate in concrete policymaking processes. This assertion constitutes part of the cognitive mobilization perspective that argues that the public has become more capable of participating in complex and information-intensive policymaking processes (Craig, Kreppel & Kane, 2001; Norris, 1999).

As was explained previously, participatory democracy has an educational role for, but also demands greater education of, the citizenry; and, urban areas are more effective than rural areas in the provision of educational services. Isin (2000) has affirmed that “[t]he modern city is also the space where it is most appropriate to deliver public services such as education” (p. 11). Like many public services, that of education – in both its broad and narrow meanings – is most effective in urban areas due to the density, the economy of scale, the diversity of resources, and the concentration of research, editorial and pedagogical institutions in cities (Tibaijuka, 2007; Lynch, 1998; Satterthwaite, 1997; Angotti, 2006; Isin, 2000; Bender, 1988). Bender (1988) has underscored the “common history” (p. 3) of cities and universities, for example.
Also, the economic, political and cultural centrality of cities has made them the centers of information (Brand, 2005; Castells, 2004). Not only must citizens be educated in order to effectively participate in policymaking processes, they also must have access to reliable and updated information pertinent to concrete policies or their general wellbeing. It is in cities where information concentrates and where one finds the greatest libraries, museums, laboratories, think-tanks, universities and other public and private institutions that contribute to the generation, diffusion and critical examination of knowledge, which in turn makes non-electoral citizen participation more feasible and more desirable than in rural or supralocal governance. While it is true that more and more information is accessible by Internet, access to the internet tends to be much more ubiquitous and inexpensive in urban areas than in rural areas. In the network society, cities – especially ‘global cities’ – constitute the nodes through which information is concentrated and transmitted (Castells, 2004).

For the reasons provided above, these three information- and education-related characteristics of urban society arguably make participatory democracy more feasible and desirable for urban governance than for other scales of governance.

Creativity

Some of the aforementioned characteristics of urban life, such as heterogeneity, anonymity and cosmopolitanism, it has been argued, promote creativity (Stevenson, 2003; Bookchin 1995, 2007; Mongin, 2006), which is supposed to be good for policy innovation and adaptive management (McGarry, Brenner, Cowan, Harvey, McCarthy &
Murphy, 2007; Fleury, 2005). A recent OECD publication (1996) has argued that “creativity is an important resource and capacity for cities, but one that remains unrecognised or marginalised. Historically, cities have been the repositories of creativity” (p. 51).

If urban society is exceptionally creative and creativity improves policy-making, then the non-electoral participation of members of urban society is desirable in order to improve policy-making. In this sense, then, the creativity of urban society makes the institutionalization of participatory democracy exceptionally more desirable at the urban scale of governance than at other scales less characterized by creativity.

While it is absolutely true that these theoretical characterizations of collective urban life are over-simplified and have merited ample criticism (Low, 2004; Stevenson, 2003; Fitzpatrick & LaGlory, 2000), they are, nonetheless, helpful in distinguishing between collective rural life and collective urban life, not to mention between collective urban life and collective national or global life. Such theoretical characterizations mustn’t be interpreted as universally applicable to all urbanites, or even most, but they do seem to be fairly accurate characterizations of the collective urban life of many and its theoretical value seems undeniable, although clearly disputable in its degree. And while the degree to which such characterizations are descriptive of contemporary urban reality can and ought to be disputed, the possibility of promoting and intensifying those real or potential characteristics of urban life that are propitious for participatory democracy is another valuable consideration for normative democratic theory and concrete policy-making.
Both normatively and descriptively, most of the urban governance literature emphasizes the value of the aforementioned general (not universal) theoretical characteristics of collective urban life for participatory democracy. In addition to such theoretical characterizations of urban society, however, it is essential that one consider the history and historicity of participatory urban governance.

**History and Historicity of Participatory Urban Governance:**

In addition to the theoretical arguments that institutionalization of participatory democracy is more feasible and more desirable for urban governance than for other units of governance, it is important to recognize and discuss the history and historicity of urban participatory democracy. Modern representative democracy as we know it, developed with the rise of nationalism and the formation of the nation-state in the 17th and 18th centuries. Nevertheless, there were some very important and interesting experiences of “democratic” governance in cities before the rise of the nation-state, and most political theory prior to the 19th century considered the city-state to be the appropriate unit for democracy (Dahl, 1967; Bookchin, 2007). Pre-modern experiences of democratic governance, of course, weren’t as inclusive as modern representative democracy, but they reflect the importance of the city as a center for the innovation and institutionalization of citizen participation in democratic governance. While some of these experiences consisted of institutions of popularly elected leaders or judges, others included institutions of non-electoral citizen participation. More important than the institutional details of these early democratic experiences, for the purpose herein, however, are the
characteristics of cities that have facilitated the development of democratic values, ideals, demands and institutions, as much of the following historical evidence suggests.

Although some may go as far back as the urbanization of ancient Sumer in search of the earliest experiences of democratic governance (Bookchin, 2007), the earliest undisputable and most frequently cited antecedent of participatory democracy is undoubtedly that of ancient Athens – and, to a lesser degree, those of other Greek city-states. The democratic experience of Athens – as well as the contemporaneous literature on political philosophy – had profound influence on Roman society, and subsequently the entire Western world. At the core of the Athenian legacy, are the ideals of political equality and rational-legal legitimacy, but also the political centrality of the city – the *polis*. As Mongin (2006) puts it, “[s]ince the moment in which one evokes politics, the city becomes synonymous with the *polis*” (p. 99). This is especially the case when one evokes participatory democracy, since the Athenian *polis* was characterized by a variety of institutions of non-electoral citizen participation (Held, 2001; Rosanvallon, 2007; Calhoun, 1924). The two fundamental and most participatory institutions were the popular assembly and the popular courts. While any citizen could speak and vote in the popular assembly, the popular courts were made up of citizens by sortition (lottery). Also, a variety of institutions of control over the lottery-drawn courts and executives, made popular control and accountability central to Athenian democracy. As Rosanvallon (2007) put it: “‘Weak’ legitimation by sortition and “strong” power of control constituted
in Athens a coherent institutional arrangement” (p. 96). The contemporary challenges to representative democracy and demands for non-electoral means of participation may give rise to more Athenian-like institutional ecologies of weak electoral legitimation and strong non-electoral control.

Athens and the other Greek city-states, however, were just the earliest, most cited, and most influential of many other concrete experiences of democratic innovation occurring within the city. Bookchin (2007) summarized the variety of urban democratic experiences:

Examples of municipal democracy were not limited to ancient Athens. Quite to the contrary, long before class differentiations gave rise to the state many relatively secular towns produced the earliest institutional structures of local democracy. Assemblies of the people may have existed in ancient Sumer… They clearly appeared among the Greeks… they were popular centers of power in republican Roma. They were nearly ubiquitous in the medieval towns of Europe and even in Russia, notably in Novgorod and Pskov… The assembly, it should be emphasized, began to approximate its truly modern form in the neighborhood Parisian sections of 1793. (p. 107)

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22 My translation of: “Legitimación “débil” por el sorteo y poder “fuerte” de control componían en Atenas un dispositivo institucional coherente.”
The resurgence of local democracy across medieval Europe has received considerable attention amongst historians and democracy theorists (Rosanvallon, 2007; Held, 2001; Skinner, 1992; Bookchin, 1995). Held (2001) has argued that the evolution of urban life during the Italian Renaissance was especially influential in stimulating new ideas about popular sovereignty and civic-mindedness.

The etymological evidence of the social recognition of the distinctively participatory nature of cities is a revealing, and seemingly underappreciated, historical manifestation of the relationship between cities and participatory democracy. Mongin (2006) has explained that, in fact, there were two words in Ancient Greek to refer to the urban life: *asty* (the geographic place) and *polis* (the deliberative place) (p. 102). And, similarly, in the 16th century many distinguished between the *civitas*, “a political entity defined by the type of association that exists amongst its inhabitants,” and the *urbs*, “a delimited, organized and built space” (p. 169).

As illustrated above, many theorists have argued that modern cities continue to be propitious units of governance for more participatory democracy. As Holston & Appadurai (1999) assert:

Although one of the essential projects of nation building has been to dismantle the historic primacy of urban citizenship and to replace it with the national, cities remain the strategic arena for the development of citizenship… [W]ith their concentrations of the nonlocal, the strange, the
mixed, and the public, cities engage most palpably the tumult of citizenship (p. 2).

And, more than two millennia since the democratic innovations of ancient Athens, cities have again manifested their potential for participatory governance and democratic innovation in recent decades, especially throughout North America (Cole, 1975; Berry, Portney & Thompson, 1993; Hamel, 1998; Latendresse, 2004; Coote, 1997; Konisky & Beierle, 2001), Latin America (Kliksberg, 2007a; Castells & Borja, 2004; Menegat, 2002; Gugliano, 2007; Wampler & Avritzer, 2004; Avritzer, 2002; Lissidini, 2007; Barrera, 2004; Landau, 2008; Schapira, 2006; Grompone, 2005; Velásquez, 1999) and in Europe (Jacobsen, 2008; Castells & Borja, 2004; Milan, 2007; Gomà & Brugué, 1994; Hammer, 2000; Gómez, 2002; Harms, 2000; Sancassiani, 2005; Counsell, 1999; Eckerberg & Forsberg, 1998; Font & Blanco, 2007).

In addition to the grassroots demand for and use of institutions of non-electoral citizen participation in cities, there also seems to be consensus amongst the international community regarding the desirability of citizen participation in urban governance. In 1987, the Brundtland Commission recognized the importance of the participation of civil society and private actors in urban governance (WCED, 1987; Brand, 2005). In 1996, “171 countries signed the Habitat Agenda, a comprehensive guide to inclusive and participatory urban development” (Tibaijuka, 2007, p. xviii). The report from the Urban Futures conference held in Berlin in 2000 made the following prescription for urban governance: “[i]t shall also be an objective of good urban policy to give to the citizens of
every city opportunities to participate in the governance of their city and feel that they are their stakeholders” (Hall & Pfeiffer, 2000, p. 38).

Perhaps, the most revealing historical phenomenon linking urban governance and participatory democracy has been that of urban planning. As Ellin (1999) has pointed out:

On both sides of the Atlantic, a number of other challenges toward the authoritarian planning-by-numbers in use since the 1940s appeared in the late 1960s and 1970s, such as social planning, community-based planning, participatory architecture, process architecture, advocacy planning, self-building, and sweat-equity, efforts recalling some earlier initiatives of Patrick Geddes (1910s) and Frank Lloyd Wright (1930s). This brand of populism sought to enlist people in the design of their own environments, regarding style as elitist. (p. 65)

If it is true that urban planning arose as a response to the increased complexity of cities and complexity makes participatory democracy more desirable, as was previously argued, then it should not be surprising to find that urban planning policies have often promoted non-electoral citizen participation (Jackson, 1972; Brand, 2005; Ellin, 1999; Barnett & Low, 2004; Menegat, 2002; Fowles, 2000). Not only have urban planners recognized the value of citizen participation, but citizens have also recognized the importance of urban planning and have demanded to have a say in urban planning processes. “As a response to the demands of social movements,” Hamel (1998) has emphasized, “a number of local governments became engaged in reforms whose aims were to increase and enlarge citizen
participation in urban planning and development issues through public consultation” (p. 181). Similarly, Brand has pointed out that urban planning lost its central command role and “began to see itself as fulfilling an essentially communicative function: establishing dialogue, achieving consensus... and collaborating in the participatory definition of goals, performance targets, management practices, monitoring procedures and budget allocations” (p. 40). Even architects have shown increased interest in community participation with their projects (Marschall, 1998; Fowles, 2000; Ellin, 1999; Towers, 1995).

In addition to the aforementioned historical evidence that suggests the appropriateness of urban governance for the institutionalization of non-electoral citizen participation, there are four distinct but interrelated contemporary processes that arguably make participatory urban governance more feasible and more desirable: urbanization, decentralization, globalization and municipalization.

**Urbanization**

First, we should distinguish between the process of urbanization and the process of urban growth, whereby ‘urbanization’ refers to the increasing proportion of the total – national or global – population in urban settlements (relative terms) and ‘urban growth’ refers to the increasing population in urban settlements regardless of the total (absolute terms) (Stevenson, 2003). The process of urbanization and the birth of the modern city emerged out of the industrialization of the 19th centuries (Stevenson, 2003; Parker, 2004; Lee, 2007). As Stevenson (2003) has noted, industrialization, “first in Britain and then
more generally in Europe, clearly involved urbanization on a scale never before experienced” (p. 14). This period of industrialization and urbanization also contributed to the expansion of civil and political rights. As Dallari (1984) has pointed out:

The history of humanity, for millennia, reveals the existence of a constant struggle for the greatest number possible of people to be able to participate in political decision-making. In the modern era there was great advances in this sense, for various reasons, such as the concentration of people in cities and the improvement of communication technology, which favored increased awareness and collective action [...] In the 19th century, as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, the urban proletariat emerged, which through many struggles achieved the right to political participation, considerably expanding the number of people recognized to have such a right23 (p. 27-28).

And, since the 19th century the demographic shift towards cities has continued all over the world, to varying degrees but with few exceptions24.

23 My translation of: “A historia da humanidade, desde milênios, revela a existência de uma luta constante para que o maior número possível de pessoas participe das decisões políticas. Nos tempos modernos houve grande avanço em tal sentido, por vários motivos, como a concentração das pessoas nas cidades e o aperfeiçoamento das técnicas de comunicação, favorecendo o despertar das consciências e uma ação conjunta, bem como pela expressa proclamação, na Declaração... No século dezenove, em conseqüência da Revolução Industrial, formou-se o proletariado urbano, que através de muitas lutas conseguiu conquistar o direito de participação política, ampliando-se consideravelmente o número de pessoas às quais se reconhece tal direito.”

24 Which were mostly due to totalitarian policies such as those in China or Cambodia.
The numbers are fairly\(^{25}\) clear. Parker (2004) has affirmed that “[a]t the beginning of the twentieth century some 10 per cent of the world’s population dwelt in towns or cities” (p. 1). The percentage of urban dwellers has already reached 50 per cent – the emergence of *homo urbanus* – and is expected to reach 60-67 per cent of the world’s population by the year 2030 (Parker, 2004; Fitzpatrick & LaGlory, 2000; Brand, 2005). Nevertheless, the global process of urbanization is occurring at different speeds and in different forms throughout the world. Castells (2004), for example, distinguishes between three different regional processes of urbanization: U.S. metropolitanism (and the emergence of ‘edge cities’), European metropolitanism, and developing world megacities (p. 432-444). The latter of these processes should be especially of interest to anyone concerned with the plight of humanity, considering that, as Lee (2007) has pointed out, “U.N. projections suggest that nearly all of the world’s population growth in the coming generation will be in cities in low- and medium-income nations” (p. 4).

Regardless of one’s regional focus, urbanization and urban politics must become priorities for research in the social sciences. The urban (economic and cultural) pull and the rural (economic) push that contribute to urbanization (Black, 1999, p. 45) continue to be active and, as Flavin (2007) has declared, “[m]ore than at any time in history, the future of humanity, our economy, and the planet that supports us will be determined in the world’s cities” (p. xxiii). This increasing relative importance of urban politics

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25 I say ‘fairly clear’ because the definitions and standards of measuring ‘urban’ areas are not universal and because there are many countries for which census data are not current or not reliable (Lee).
(municipalization) will be addressed in detail following a brief but indispensable discussion of decentralization. Nevertheless, to summarize this subsection, if history has proven that urbanization contributes to the expansion of political rights and that municipalities are propitious units of governance for participatory democracy, then contemporary processes of urbanization would seem to bode well for the institutionalization of participatory democracy.

Decentralization

Herein, ‘decentralization’ adopts the definition of Cheema & Rondinelli (2007) as “the transfer of authority, responsibility, and resources – through deconcentration, delegation, or devolution – from the center to lower levels of administration” (p. 1). For these authors:

Until the late 1980s governments pursued three primary forms of decentralization: deconcentration, devolution, and delegation.

Deconcentration sought to shift administrative responsibilities from central ministeries and departments to regional and local administrative levels by establishing field offices of national departments and transferring some authority for decisionmaking to regional field staff. Devolution aimed to strengthen local governments by granting them the authority, responsibility, and resources to provide services and infrastructure, protect public health and safety, and formulate and implement local policies. Through delegation, national governments shifted management authority
for specific functions to semiautonomous or parastatal organizations and state enterprises, regional planning and area development agencies, and multi- and single-purpose public authorities. (p. 3)

Likewise, Cheema & Rondinelli affirm that “decentralization practices can be categorized into at least four forms: administrative, political, fiscal, and economic” (p. 6).

These forms of decentralization of the state and political life have been a general global trend since the 1960s (Cole, 1975; Ansell & Gingrich, 2003a; Hamel, 1998; Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). “By the early 1990s,” Cheema & Rondinelli (2007) have pointed out, “all but twelve of the seventy-five countries with populations of more than 5 million had undertaken some form of decentralization” (p. 8). Furthermore, decentralization has been promoted by many different actors, all across the ideological spectrum (Low, 2004; Ansell & Gingrich, 2003a, 2003b), including major international development organizations that prescribed decentralization as a part of structural adjustment policies (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). More particularly, processes of decentralization have been supported by what Ansell & Gingrich (2003b) call the “neo-liberal agenda” and the “democratic accountability agenda”, the former being most concerned about efficiency and the streamlining of bureaucracy while the latter is concerned about increasing access to government, citizen participation and accountability (p. 140). Herein, we are most interested with the latter point of view.

Decentralization has been acclaimed by many who argue that increased vertical proximity (between the governed and those who govern) facilitates non-electoral citizen
participation and accountability (Cole, 1975; Hart, 1972; Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007; Brinkerhoff, Brinkerhoff & McNulty, 2007; Gomà & Brugué, 1994). For Hart (1972), “the primary purpose of decentralization is to enhance the range of participation for individual citizens” (p. 606) and “[p]articipatory democracy is impossible without the extensive decentralization of public organizations” (p. 604). Or, as Dahl (1998) has summed up the matter, “[t]he smaller a democratic unit, the greater its potential for citizen participation and the less the need for citizens to delegate government decisions to representatives” (p. 110). Obviously, large cities suffer the same problem of having too many participants that makes some institutions of non-electoral citizen participation – such as assemblies or public hearings – meaningless if not impossible at supralocal levels, which explains why in large cities decentralization has often gone beyond the transfer of power and responsibilities to municipalities from the nation-state towards the transfer of power and responsibilities from municipalities to neighborhoods in order to facilitate participation.

It must be noted, however, that decentralization doesn’t necessarily make government more efficient nor does it necessarily guarantee participatory governance. Regarding the latter, Cheema & Rondinelli (2007) have observed that “the relationship between decentralization and citizen participation is conditioned by complex political, historical, social, and economic factors that differ in strength and importance among and within countries” (p. 9). These authors go on to conclude that:
Although evidence can be found for both beneficial and negative consequences of decentralization among and within countries, many of the failures of decentralization are due less to inherent weaknesses in the concept itself than to government’s ineffectiveness in implementing it. (p. 9)

Therefore, while implementation of decentralization processes may be challenging and may even have negative consequences in practice if poorly carried out, the theoretical link between decentralization and participatory governance is strong and the historicity of decentralization appears to make participatory urban governance more feasible now than in previous decades. Dolabela Pereira (2007) has recently made the observation of the Brazilian experience, for example, that “[a]fter the process of decentralization we found a strong mobilization of civil society … organized, above all, around local projects” (p. 344).

Globalization

While it is undoubtedly true that globalization has made supranational institutions of democratic governance more necessary and more powerful, globalization has also increased the relative economic, cultural and political power of cities – especially those considered to be ‘global cities’. Globalization has contributed to the aforementioned

26 My translation of: “Depois do processo de descentralização encontramos uma forte mobilização da sociedade civil (tais como indivíduos, grupos organizados, movimentos sociais, associações de classe, ONGs, empresas privadas) organizada, sobretudo, em torno de projetos locais (através de contratos públicos, convênios, acordos, parcerias, planos e projetos participativos etc.).”
processes of urbanization and decentralization. Global diffusion and reduced costs of agricultural technologies and machinery has accelerated the push from rural areas while increased international trade and the emergence of service economies has strengthened the pull of cities. Decentralization processes have also benefited from globalization as the increasing economic and cultural centrality of cities has enabled private actors and municipal leaders to pressure nation-states to devolve power and authority to municipal government (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). This simultaneous shift of political primacy from the nation-state to supra- and subnational units of governance has been labeled by some as ‘glocalization’ (or ‘relativization of scales’) (Brenner, 2004). The increasing interplay between global and local forces and the decreasing relative relevance of the nation-state has been well described by Holston & Appadurai (1999):

Our point is not to argue that the transnational flow of ideas, goods, images, and persons – intensified by recent developments in the globalization of capital – is obliterating the salience of the nation-state. Rather, it is to suggest that this flow tends to drive a deeper wedge between national space and its urban centers. There are a growing number of societies in which cities have a different relationship to global processes than the visions and policies of their nation-states… Cities have always been stages for politics of a different sort than their hinterlands. But in the era of mass migration, globalization of the economy, and rapid circulation of rights discourse, cities represent the localization of global forces as
much as they do the dense articulation of national resources, persons, and projects. (p. 3)

Similarly, Held (2005) has argued that, as a result of globalization and the extensive networking of state and non-state political actors, “developments at the local level – whether economic, social or environmental – can acquire almost instantaneous global consequences, and vice versa” (p. 241). Low (2004) has emphasized that the increasing relative – in addition to absolute – importance of urban governance has resulted in more theoretical attention to urban democracy:

[R]ecent discussions of globalization have placed a considerable theoretical and practical-political emphasis on cities and city-regions as key protagonists in a post-national global order. A stronger focus on the possibilities presented by cities for the deepening of democracy has ensued. (p. 129-130)

The increasing relative political importance and protagonism of cities, as well as the concomitantly increasing theoretical emphasis on urban governance, is what we shall call ‘municipalization’.

Municipalization

While the word ‘municipalization’ is most commonly understood to mean the incorporation of non-municipal territory or services into the jurisdiction of a municipality, herein the word signifies the contemporary process of increasing relative political importance of municipalities – similar to its use by Kolesas (1998) as
“revitalization of local politics” (p. 133). Today, in the first decade of the 21st century, cities have become powerful political actors; and, this is, in large part, due to the three broader processes of urbanization, decentralization and globalization described above. As Andrews (1976) illustrated a few decades ago:

In our urbanized society, the governments of large cities become more and more important. New York City alone has a budget larger than that of some countries. Mayors such as John Lindsay, Jean Drapeau, Richard Daley, and Sam Yorty have been better-known than most federal politicians. Decisions made by city councilors and administrators can change not only the physical shape of the city but also the way of life of each citizen living there. (p. 243)

And, since 1976 the relative power of municipalities has generally continued to increase (Hamel, 1998; Brenner, 2004; Leitner, Sheppard, Sziarto & Maringanti, 2007; Brand, 2005). This phenomenon has been supported by calls from international bodies for increased capacity for municipal governments. For example, the World Commission on Environment and Development asserted (1987) in its report *Our Common Future*:

To become key agents of development, city governments need enhanced political, institutional, and financial capacity, notably access to more of the wealth generated in the city. Only in this way can cities adapt and deploy some of the vast array of tools available to address urban
problems – tools such as land title registration, land use control, and tax sharing. (WCED, 1987, n.p.)

More recently, Castells & Borja (2004) have argued that cities are increasingly asserting their economic, social, cultural and political power; and, moreover, they have emphasized the role of cities in democratic innovation and the promotion of participatory democracy.

Theoretical discussions of citizenship have also emphasized the declining legitimacy and primacy of the nation-state (Brenner, 2004; Low, 2004; Axtmann, 2004; Beauregard & Bounds, 2000; Isin, 2000) and the increasing legitimacy and protagonism of the municipality (as well as international and global scales of governance), which make the city a more appropriate arena for the practice of citizenship and participatory democracy (Low, 2004; Beauregard & Bounds, 2000; Isin, 2000; Holston, 2008; Holston & Appadurai, 1999). As Isin (2000) has explained, “[a]t sub-national levels, the renewed emphasis on citizenship not only as legal rights and obligations but also as social practices through which citizens make themselves has heightened the role of the city in democracy once again” (p. 6).

While the theoretical characteristics of urban society, the history and historicity of participatory urban governance and the increasing relative importance of urban politics all appear to make the institutionalization of participatory democracy especially feasible and desirable for urban governance, much empirical evidence is lacking in order to evaluate the feasibility and desirability of the various institutional forms of participatory urban governance (i.e. participatory budgeting, citizen juries, referenda, advisory boards,
public hearings, etc.). As Hamel (1998) concludes his article on urban politics in the 1990s, “if the formation of urban politics is embedded in a movement leading to democratization of public management, it is far from achieving unanimity in its forms and contents” (p. 184). While this research does not contribute the needed empirical evidence in order to better understand the “forms and contents” of participatory urban governance, it does aim to synthesize much of the relevant urban democratic theory with a specific policy domain that, too, has been argued to be an especially feasible and desirable arena for participatory democracy: environmental policy. This synthesis, it is hoped, should also help provoke debate amongst and guide future research of urban sociologists, political scientists, environmental sociologists, and all sorts of policy-makers.

Chapter 3

Defining Environmental Governance:

Environmental governance (or management) is, clearly, about governing the environment; but what is the ‘environment’? In search of a fairly conventional or common definition, one might find something similar to the definitions provided by Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary:

1: the circumstances, objects, or conditions by which one is surrounded
2 a: the complex of physical, chemical, and biotic factors (as climate, soil, and living things) that act upon an organism or an ecological community and ultimately determine its form and survival b: the aggregate of social
and cultural conditions that influence the life of an individual or community

This lexicographical example ought to illustrate the ambiguity of the word. For some, definition 1 and 2b may seem excessively inclusive or practically elusive; and, for others, definition 2a may seem too restricted or ideologically or culturally charged.

The latter concern has gained particular interest in recent decades, and it is often articulated with a critique of the separation or dualism of ‘society’ and ‘nature’ (Smith, 2006; George & McKinley, 1974; Delaney, 2001; Aguiar, 1998; Simmons, 1993; Pepper, 1996; Harvey, 1996). Simmons (1993) has explained that:

To define environment is a job of altogether greater complexity. It seems easy at first if we accept the commonly used sense that it consists of all those material entities which exist on planet Earth but which are not human. If we accept this view then we have immediately a framework in which to discuss ‘the environment’ but we are open to accusations of epistemological shallowness. We accept a dualism of ‘humans’ and ‘environment’ which may not be true in reality since we ourselves are the only reference point: there is no totally detached outsider who can see the whole picture. Further, it encourages a static picture of ‘us’ and ‘it’ which clearly pays little heed to the dynamics of the processes which connect living humans to other things. Lastly, not all cultures accept that such a dualism describes a real division. (p. 1)
George & McKinley (1974) have also challenged the separation of ‘society’ and ‘nature’ by asserting that:

In a fuller sense all events, substances, and structures are natural. The Empire State Building is no less natural than a skein of Canadian geese flying northward for the summer. An untended dump site filled with abandoned cars, refrigerators, and sodden mattresses riddled by rats is no less natural than a forest glen filled with the song of spring birds. All is nature. (p. 5)

For Delaney (2001), “[g]iven the radical polysemy of the term and the fact that there is a multiplicity of different “natures” whose application is context-dependent, these may or may not coalesce into a single, coherent, stable image” (p. 488). In perhaps the most aggressive of critiques, Smith (2006) has affirmed that “[w]hen we look back at the intellectual shibboleths of the high capitalist period – say the last three centuries – few ingrained assumptions will look so wrongheaded or so globally destructive as the common-sense separation of society and nature” (p. xi).

Much of the criticism of simplistic uses of the word ‘environment’ (and ‘nature’) in exclusive reference to the non-human physical world has emerged since the birth of mainstream environmentalism and environmental politics in the 1960s and 1970s, and the subsequent multidisciplinary treatment of them within the social sciences (Pepper, 1996; Parson, 2000). In his critique of those narrow conceptualizations of ‘the environment’ that refer exclusively to the non-human physical world, especially those that do so in the
language and worldview of classical economics and human dominion over nature, Aguiar (1998) has asserted that “the concept of the environment encompasses physical, chemical, biological, economic, sociological, anthropological, technological, ethical, philosophical and juridical domains” (p. 23). Humans have become important – if not the most important – variables in the quality of the environment; therefore, it is argued, the environment cannot be understood and addressed without the social sciences and other epistemological sources. As Winter (1996) has pointed out, “[w]e cannot leave our problems solely to physical scientists to create physical solutions, because our environmental problems are also psychological in origin” (p. 2). Environmental psychology, for example, has been especially insightful in its emphasis on human behavior and the subjectivity of the environment (Winter, 1996; Tassara, 2004; Viñar, 2002).

Nor is it hard to find everyday uses of the word in which social aspects are central to its meaning. As Harvey (1996) has explained:

the “environmental issue” necessarily means such different things to different people, that in aggregate it encompasses quite literally everything there is. Business leaders worry about the political and legal environment, politicians worry about the economic environment, city dwellers worry

27 My translation of: “o conceito de meio ambiente abrange domínios físicos, químicos, biológicos, econômicos, sociológicos, antropológicos, tecnológicos, éticos, filosóficos e jurídicos”.

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about the social environment and, doubtless, criminals worry about the environment of law enforcement, and polluters worry about the regulatory environment. That a single word should be used in such a multitude of ways testifies to its fundamental incoherence as a unitary concept. (p. 117)

An adequate definition of ‘environment’, then, must include social and cultural – in addition to the material – aspects of our surroundings. However, if such a definition must be operational for research or analysis of environmental phenomena transcending nations and cultures, then it must also be sensitive to and inclusive of different worldviews regarding the ‘environment’. Thus, one might look to the UNEP or other international bodies for such a transnational and transcultural definition. The UN and other international bodies, however, are mostly concerned with climate change, stratospheric ozone depletion, biodiversity and habitat loss, hazardous waste trading, and other macroenvironmental problems, and they pay less attention to microenvironmental concerns.

Determining a singular, universal, inclusive and operational definition of ‘environment’ appears to be an impossible or fruitless task. Thus, herein, we shall acknowledge the polysemy of the word (Attfield, 2003; Delaney, 2001) and settle for a flexible definition that encompasses multiple meanings because there are multiple – in fact, infinite – environments and kinds of environments, from the billions of personal subjective environments to any municipality’s or country’s legal environment and to our shared atmospheric and galactic environments. With such an aim, Harvey’s definition of
‘environment’ as “whatever exists in the surroundings of some being that is relevant to the state of that being at a particular place and time” (p. 118) seems appropriate. What is particularly useful about this definition, too, is that it implies the varying relevance of environmental phenomena. Global warming, desertification, noise pollution, pet ownership norms and street names are all relevant to human environments – as well as those of other beings - but there is obviously a great difference between the degrees, scales and types of relevance of such environmental conditions, wherein ‘degrees’ refer to relative importance (i.e. survival, long-term health, quality of life, aesthetics, etc. – think Maslow’s hierarchy of needs), ‘scales’ refer to relative publicity (i.e. galactic, global, of a specific river basin, personal, etc.) and ‘types’ refer to different types or ways of relevance (i.e. physical, spiritual, economic, cultural, psychological, recreational, etc.).

Environmental governance, then, is the governing of that which exists in a given society’s surroundings and is relevant to the state and well being of that society as a whole or of any one of its members. The most relevant environmental phenomena for any given society are those that threaten survival, affect the whole of society and are relevant in many ways. This explains why water and air pollution, stratospheric ozone depletion and global warming have been the most well known environmental governance concerns in recent decades and relatively little attention has been directed towards concerns such as noise and visual pollution, pet ownership norms and historical site preservation, to give a few examples. Of course, it must be acknowledged that we almost always have uncertain and imperfect knowledge of the relevance of most environmental phenomena.
Participatory Environmental Governance:

In the debate regarding representative and participatory democracy, it is important to consider the degree to which citizen participation might be more or less desirable depending on the concrete policy issue or domain at hand. In reference to his elaborate list of dimensions of “democraticness”, Guillermo O’Donnell (2003) acknowledges that:

this is, one could say, a naïve list. One reason is that it ignores some complicated situations. The list in effect, has preference for positively valuing opportunities for citizen participation. Nevertheless, in certain areas of public policy (for example, decisions about exchange rates) there could be solid reasons to avoid such participation; or in other areas (for example, negotiations of foreign affairs or some issues of national security) the need for secrecy can be justified.

While there may be good reasons to argue that non-electoral citizen participation is not always practically justified or superior to the “guardianship” of elected representatives; it also seems that there are good reasons to argue that non-electoral citizen participation is exceptionally justified and superior to traditional representative institutions of citizen

28 My translation of: “esta es, por así decir, una lista inocente. Una razón es que ignora algunas situaciones complicadas. La lista, en efecto, tiene preferencia por valorar positivamente las oportunidades de participación ciudadana. Sin embargo, en ciertas áreas de políticas públicas (por ejemplo, decisiones sobre el tipo de cambio) puede haber sólidas razones para evitar esa participación; o en otras áreas (por ejemplo, negociaciones de relaciones exteriores o en algunos asuntos de seguridad nacional) puede justificarse la necesidad del secreto. En estos casos el test de democracia relativa debería centrarse sobre el tipo de procedimientos y actores involucrados en el establecimiento de esas limitaciones, así como en la existencia o no de posibilidades de desafiarlas.”
participation for the governance of certain policy domains and objects. Here it is argued that non-electoral citizen participation is especially feasible and desirable in the policy domain of environmental governance, more so than for any other policy domain, due to the following unique characteristics of environmental governance.

Proximity

As discussed in Chapter 2, three kinds of proximity (vertical, horizontal, environmental) make local governance the most appropriate level of governance for the institutionalization of participatory democracy. Since environmental governance mostly – although definitely not exclusively – takes place at the local level, it tends to be especially appropriate for the institutionalization of participatory democracy. As Roussopoulos (1993) has tersely stated, “political ecology privileges action at the local and regional levels” (p. 87).

All environmental problems have a local aspect, but not all environmental problems have a global aspect. Global warming requires the participation of local governments and all individuals, households and communities – as well as supranational policies of regulation, monitoring and information-sharing. “Whilst global environmental issues are long-term and only detectable through scientific knowledge,” Brand (2005) has argued, “cities allow them to become immediate and tangible” (p. 53). This phenomenon is summed up in the popular slogan “think globally; act locally” (Pepper, 1996; Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Guha, 1999; Nordhaus & Shellenberger, 2007; Speth & Haas, 2006; Cohen, 2006). As Prugh, Costanza & Daly (2000) have asserted:
[w]e believe communities are the primary locus of responsibility for creating a sustainable world... Directed sustainability will come about in neighborhoods or not at all... The political structure and process necessary for a regionally, nationally, and globally sustainable society must be built on a foundation of local communities (p. xv-xvi).

This belief is shared by most, if not all, environmental philosophies (Roussopoulos, 1993). One of the leading climate change legislators in the UK parliament, Lord Puttnam (2008), has also emphasized the role of local communities and local action for effective climate change mitigation and adaptation. While climate change is both a global and local policy concern, noise pollution, fire hazards and building codes, on the other hand, are almost exclusively local in their scope of governance. Andrews (1976) has pointed out that “[s]uch environmental concerns as parks, sewage and garbage disposal, expressways, water quality, and population density are almost entirely under the control of our local governing body” (p. 243). It is not surprising, therefore, that environmentalists tend to focus political participation at the local level.

Moreover, international agreements and declarations have strongly supported this theoretical argument for participatory local environmental governance. For example, Agenda 21 – the UN action plan agreed upon in 1992 – states the following:

Because so many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities, the participation and cooperation of local authorities will be a determining factor in fulfilling its
objectives. Local authorities construct, operate and maintain economic, social and environmental infrastructure, oversee planning processes, establish local environmental policies and regulations, and assist in implementing national and subnational environmental policies. As the level of governance closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainable development. (Ch. 28)

Beyond the international declarations and lip-service, however, local governance appears to be, in fact, leading the way for environmental governance more generally. The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives is a great example of such local environmental leadership (Brand, 2005). In the United States, mayors have distinguished themselves for having exceptionally progressive environmental policies (Grist, 2009); and, according to Chiras (2006), local governments have been the key protagonists in the evolution of U.S. environmental law (p. 604).

Not only is participatory environmental governance more desirable due to the need for effective local environmental governance in order to tackle local as well as supralocal environmental problems (O'Rourke & Macey, 2003), it is also made more feasible because people tend to care more deeply about local issues, which are more immediate, visible and accessible, and, therefore, people will be more willing to participate in the governance of them (Fung & Wright, 2003; Black, 1999). So, in addition to the ability to participate, which is facilitated by the three aforementioned
kinds of proximity, the immediacy and visibility of, as well as the dependency on, local environmental concerns increases the willingness to participate. As Black (1999) has argued, “[t]he only reliable guardians of any ecological system are the people who know it, depend on it, and do not have the option of leaving” (p. 21). Increased ability and willingness to participate effectively, of course, makes participatory democracy more feasible.

Publicity

If it is the aim of democratic governance to manage public goods and affairs while safeguarding private goods and affairs (Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Valencia Hernández, 2007), then one of the most deserving matters of democratic governance is the environment. As John F. Kennedy once said, “our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children’s future” (as cited in Cohen, 2006, p. 156). For many, the environment is the quintessential public good (Sen, 2000; Cohen, 2006; Starrett, 2003). It is of little surprise, then, that most environmental litigation in common law systems is brought about through recourse to laws of public nuisance (Wahlbeck, 1998; Garrels, 2005; Chiras, 2006). As Kiss & Shelton (1997) have pointed out “[u]nlike many areas of law, environmental protection directly affects every individual and group. Environmental degradation, and measures to counter it, can implicate not only health and well-being, but also economic standards and the general quality of life” (p. 72). Here, too, however, distinctions must be made between macro- and microenvironments, the former being more public than the latter.
Nevertheless, even microenvironments such as small residential spaces have some degree of publicity, especially in dense urban areas (see Ch. 2) – within an apartment, for example, noise, odor, humidity and pests can affect many beyond that apartment. Since stratospheric ozone depletion is more public – that is, affecting more people – than the humidity within apartment x somewhere in city z (not to mention more life-threatening and more urgent), it is no surprise that stratospheric ozone depletion receives more political attention, especially at supralocal levels of governance.  

Due to the exceptional publicity of this policy domain, environmental concerns have increasingly made private actions subject to public-interest scrutiny. Whereas most transparency and freedom of information legislation has been limited to the transparency of the state’s activities, the increasing public interest in environmental governance has led to the expansion of access to information to include information about private activities (Kiss & Shelton, 1997). Effective environmental governance requires the politicization of private matters. For Valencia Hernandez (2007), effective environmental governance assumes the interdependence between the private life and the public life: “[t]hat which is private today becomes … the stage where decisions are made that can have very important effects on public life” (p. 331).

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29 As will be addressed in greater detail in the forthcoming section of this chapter on localness, local (urban) governance must address both residential and global environmental concerns whereas supralocal levels of governance don’t have much reason to address the former.

30 My translation of: “Lo privado se convierte hoy… en el escenario en donde se toman decisiones que pueden tener efectos muy importantes en la vida pública” (p. 331).
Collectiveness

Collectiveness is very similar to publicity in that it denotes all people or all members of a group. However, herein, collectiveness is intended to refer to actions and responsibilities, whereas publicity is herein restricted to interests and rights. Kiss & Shelton (1997) have emphasized the collectiveness of environmental governance as well as the obligations and actions it requires of the citizenry:

Environmental law is characterized by the elaboration of comprehensive rights and duties. Constitutional texts that proclaim the state’s obligations to conserve the environment often also contain individual or societal obligations in this regard. In such circumstances, each person has the right to have his or her environment protected, but is obliged to contribute to the effort. … The fulfillment of this obligation necessitates community education, information, and action. State or local government not only must ensure to its citizens information concerning any measure that could menace their environment, but should provide means for participation of individuals and groups in environmental decision-making. (p. 73)

Unlike any other policy concern, the environment is ubiquitous and continuous; therefore, environmental governance requires ubiquitous and continuous collective action. No state, regardless of its size and resources, is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. The only way, to effectively implement, monitor and evaluate environmental governance continuously and ubiquitously is with the active, informed and empowered
participation of all citizens (Tarak, 1989; Grompone, 2005; Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Brand, 2005; Andrews, 1976; Kiss & Shelton, 1997). Prugh, Costanza & Daly (2000) have asserted that “problems requiring collective action are more effectively addressed when civic collaboration is possible” (p. 87); Brand (2005) has point out that “the integrative character of environmental solutions necessarily requires the participation of all social actors and individuals” (p. 48); and, Tarak (1989) has argued that “there is no state capable of assuring a healthy relationship between the environment and every human being... therefore, it’s necessary to have a system of political organization that facilitates a complementary relationship between the monitoring responsibilities of the state and the role that the citizenry might perform better than the state or chooses to perform anyway\(^{31}\)” (p. 177). In this sense, environmental governance is characterized by its need for constant collective action.

While such collective action very well requires non-institutional forms of participation (such as conscientious energy and water consumption, reuse and recycling of materials, use of bicycles and public transport, preservation and maintenance of public space, pest control, etc.) that entail major cultural transformations (Barr, 2003; Brand, 2005; Andrews, 1976; Valencia Hernández, 2007), collective environmental governance

\(^{31}\) My translation of: “no hay estado alguno capaz de velar por una saludable relación entre el ambiente y cada ser humano… por ello, resulta imprescindible la existencia de un sistema de organización política que viabilice una complementación de la fiscalización que les corresponda a los funcionarios estatales con el papel que le pueda tocar a la ciudadanía en aquello que el estado no puede desempeñar correctamente o que la misma ciudadanía decida realizar por voluntad propia”.

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should also be facilitated and promoted institutionally. Common institutional channels include public hearings, advisory boards, citizen panels, judicial recourse, ombudsman’s offices and complaint mechanisms. In an interview regarding the recent creation of a 24-hour environmental complaint hotline for the residents in the Reconquista River Basin, for example, the Director of the Reconquista River Basin Committee, Eduardo Conghos, said:

What we are doing with the creation of this hotline is making the reception of residents’ complaints more immediate. The participation of the residents is of vital importance since this way we can make public interventions more efficient, optimizing the state’s resources and achieving greater efficacy in the monitoring that is carried out on a daily basis\(^{32}\) (InfoBan, 2008).

The collective nature of environmental governance has led many theorists and practitioners to promote the ideas of ecological citizenship (Dobson, 2003; Valencia Hernández, 2007; MacGregor, 2006) and environmental citizenship (Luque, 2005; Dobson & Bell, 2005; Bell, 2003; MacGregor, 2004). Although these two concepts may seem synonymous and interchangeable, some have tried to make distinctions. Huckle

\(^{32}\) My translation of: “Lo que estamos haciendo con la habilitación de esta línea, es atender de forma inmediata las denuncias de los vecinos que se produzcan en la zona de la Cuenca. Siendo de vital importancia la participación de los mismos, ya que de esta manera podemos lograr una mayor eficiencia en la intervención, optimizando los recursos del estado y logrando mayor eficacia en las fiscalizaciones que se realizan en la zona diariamente”
(2008) has differentiated these two concepts by formal/informal or institutional/non-institutional rights and responsibilities:

Sustainability requires the extension of both legal and practical notions of citizenship: a restructuring of the state and international political institutions to facilitate new legal rights and responsibilities (environmental citizenship), and the strengthening and democratisation of civil society to foster moral responsibility and more sustainable ways of living (ecological citizenship). (p. 345)

The leading theorist of the environment-citizenship relationship, Dobson (2003), has also emphasized the difference between the two concepts:

I shall take ‘environmental citizenship’ to refer to the way in which the environment-citizenship relationship can be regarded from a liberal point of view. … [T]his is a citizenship that deals in the currency of environmental rights, that is conducted exclusively in the public sphere, whose principal virtues are the liberal ones of reasonableness and a willingness to accept the force of the better argument and procedural legitimacy, and whose remit is bounded political configurations modeled on the nation-state. For the most rough-and-ready purposes, it can be taken that environmental citizenship here refers to attempts to extend the discourse and practice of rights-claiming in the environmental context.
Ecological citizenship deals in the currency of non-contractual responsibility, it inhabits the private as well as the public sphere, it refers to the source rather than the nature of responsibility to determine what count as citizenship virtues, it works with the language of virtue, and it is explicitly non-territorial. Once again let me stress that I do not think that ecological citizenship is any more politically worthy or important than its environmental counterpart. From a political point of view, indeed, I regard environmental and ecological citizenship as complementary in that, while they organize themselves on different terrains, they can both plausibly be read as heading in the same direction: the sustainable society. (p. 89)

For Engel (1998), who has preferred to theorize about democratic ecological citizenship, “neither democratic values nor ecological values will be known or respected for what they truly are until they are understood as interdependent parts of one comprehensive and explicit covenant of democratic ecological citizenship” (p. S38). Despite the terminological and definitional discrepancies, however, these theoretical explorations of the environment-citizenship relationship illustrate the increasing awareness of environmental rights and responsibilities and the collective nature of environmental governance. The United Nations Environment Program has began a Global Environmental Citizenship Programme with the purpose of environmental education and outreach, and the concept of environmental citizenship is also being used at national and subnational levels for the integration of civic and environmental education. Based upon
their surveys of perceptions of environmentalism and civic behavior in Turkey, Furman & Erdur (1999) have argued that “the global dimension of environmental problems and the emergence of green politics appear to promise a reconciliation of individual rights and duties with collective goals, suggesting a possible renewal of citizenship in a new form” and that “environmentalism has not only penetrated the definition of citizenship, but has also become the most important dimension in designating a good citizen” (p. 181). Similarly, Dalton, Scarrow & Cain (2003b) have maintained that “environmentalism is an example of democratic empowerment of the citizenry” (p. 265), and Narain (2002) has emphasized that “[t]he environment is not about planting trees or protecting tigers, it is about deepening of democracy.”

**Complexity**

As explained in Chapters 1 and 2, 21st century politics is increasingly complex and dynamic; and, such complexity has challenged representative institutions and required the delegation and devolution of power. Of the many different levels of governance, increasing complexity and dynamism is especially manifest in cities. It has also been argued that, of the many different policy domains, environmental governance is exceptionally complex and dynamic (George & McKinley, 1974; Giovannini, 1998; McGarry, Brenner, Cowan, Harvey, McCarthy & Murphy, 2007; Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Press, 1996; Luque, 2005).
Prugh, Costanza & Daly (2000), amongst others (George & McKinley, 1974; Beck, 1994; Guillette, 2000), have referred to chemical production, interaction and human exposure in order to exemplify environmental complexity:

Assessing the damage done by multiple exposures to thousands of chemicals with unknown interactive effects is impossible. Equally impossible is determining how individuals who differ wildly in physical health, obesity, diet, and dozens of other factors might react to a given chemical (p. 93-94).

Moreover, these authors argue that the environment is not only complex, but *emergently complex*:

Above all, ecosystems display *emergence*. Emergence means that a system can show properties or behaviors that cannot be predicted from breaking it down into its component parts and understanding them reductively. … The behavior of a single molecule can be described in terms of well-understood equations. Those equations, however, give little hint that combining billions of water molecules produces a substance that transforms from a solid to a liquid at 32 degrees Fahrenheit and thence to a gas at 212 degrees, or that can inspire countless poets with its magical beauty. Likewise, life itself displays emergent properties: biological processes can be described thoroughly in terms of biochemistry, but those biochemical laws do not predict whalesong, the Mona Lisa, or Play-doh.
... In emergently complex ecosystems, new species appear and others die out. The balance among the pieces may change, and the nature of their interactions shift. An ecosystem may begin to show new dynamics and characteristics. Surprises are normal, and the unexpected, particularly in response to perturbation, happens all the time. (p. 92-93)

The biophysical aspects of the environment are not the only ones that make environmental governance exceptionally complex. The multitude and diversity of stakeholders also make environmental governance exceptionally complex. Giovannini (1998) has articulated these socio-economic and socio-political aspects very clearly:

A characteristic of environmental conflict is the many actors, with many different levels of power and influence. It can be very complex, touching a vast variety of interests, and it can also have a high level of uncertainty in its scientific aspects. (p. 163)

Let us now discuss the latter characteristic of environmental governance mentioned by Giovannini.

Uncertainty

Environmental governance is characterized by exceptional complexity; and, science’s inability to grasp such complexity has consequently resulted in greater uncertainty (Beck, 1994, 1997; Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Giovannini, 1998). Prugh, Costanza & Daly (2000) have argued that “the emergent complexity of ecosystems means that their behavior is often intrinsically indeterminate and unpredictable. ... We must live
with unavoidable uncertainties” (p. 93). Referring to increasingly complex and dynamic chemical environments, George & McKinley (1974) have also made this point:

We do not know what our proliferation of chemicals may do to produce mutations among water and soil organisms formerly not harmful (or harmful in minor ways) to us. …we know little about the capacity of pathogens for generating new and more deadly forms… We do not know the exact sources of new diseases today (p. 71).

Ulrich Beck is perhaps one of the most well known intellectuals to have theorized this phenomenon. In his discussion of risk society, Beck (1997) has argued that the concept of risk has gone through two stages, one of calculability and one of incalculability. He calls this second stage of risk manufactured uncertainty:

Here the production of risks is the consequence of scientific and political efforts to control or minimize them. … manufactured uncertainty means that risk has become an inescapable part of our lives and everybody is facing unknown and barely calculable risks. Risk becomes another word for ‘nobody knows’. We no longer choose to take risks, we have them thrust upon us. … Calculating and managing risks which nobody knows has become one of our main preoccupations. That used to be a specialist job for actuaries, insurers and scientists. Now we all have to engage in it, with whatever rusty tools we can lay our hands on – sometimes the calculator, sometimes the astrology column. The basic question here is:
how can we make decisions about a risk we know nothing about? (Beck, 1997, p. 12)

In response to this question, Beck (1994, 1997) essentially prescribes the democratization of rationality, science, technology and politics, based on the principles of transparency, responsibility, deliberation and the meaningful participation of all citizens as equals.

Normativity

Like most policy domains, environmental policy has often been treated as a technical matter to be managed by scientists, economists, engineers and lawyers. Fuller (2000) has argued that “what is most striking about the role of science in contemporary society is the ease with which we justify courses of action by appealing to scientific knowledge without any clear understanding of either its content or its effects, let alone the conditions of its production” (p. 528). However, many argue that scientific expertise and technocracy is at least insufficient for – if not antithetical to (Pepper, 1996, p. 5) – environmental governance; and, this is in large part to due to the aforementioned prevalence of uncertainty in environmental governance (Beck, 1994, 1997; Parson, 2000). More than scientific analysis and technological innovation, they argue, the governance of the environment ought to be based on and guided by values and normative principles, such as sustainability (Revesz & Stavins, 2004; Chiras, 2006; Cohen, 2006; Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Brand, 2005) and the precautionary principle (Attfield, 2003; Beck, 1994; Parson, 2000; Scott, 2005; Rosanvallon, 2007). The normativity of environmental governance is also clearly evidenced by the popularity of such terms –
and, now, established sub-disciplines of philosophy – as ‘environmental ethics’ (Sen, 2000; Attfield, 2003; Cohen, 2006) and ‘bioethics’ (Pepper, 1996). In Cohen’s (2006) five-dimensional framework for understanding environmental policy, for example, “[e]nvironmental ethics is the most important of the five dimensions” (p. 13).

Scientific expertise and technocratic governance, with their methods of risk assessment and the calculation of probabilities, have failed to grasp increasing complexity, uncertainty and risk, which in turn is discrediting scientific and technocratic governance (Beck, 1994, 1997; Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Fischer, 2000; Brailovsky, 2004). Beck (1997) has provided three reasons why “politicians can no longer rely on scientific experts”:

This is so, first, because there are always competing and conflicting claims and viewpoints from a variety of actors and affected groups who define risks very differently. So producing conflicting knowledge on risk is a matter of good and not bad experts. Secondly, experts can only supply more or less uncertain factual information about probabilities, but never answer the question: which risk is acceptable and which is not. Thirdly, if politicians just implement scientific advice, they become caught in the mistakes, modes and uncertainties of scientific knowledge. So the lesson of the risk society is this: politics and morality are gaining – have to gain! – priority over shifting scientific reasoning. (p. 13-14)
The inadequacy of scientific expertise and technocratic governance, however, does not imply an absolute Luddite rejection of science and technology. In fact, both scientific expertise and technological innovation remain crucial but insufficient tools for environmental governance. Brand (2005) has eloquently described this seemingly paradoxical situation:

[C]ontemporary attitudes towards science are ambiguous. Whilst scientific knowledge is held to be a major cause of ecological degradation, the revelation of ecological problems is increasingly dependent upon it....

Contemporary environmental problems such as climate change, ozone layer depletion, ecosystem degradation, complex forms of pollution, and so forth, defy sensorial detection and can only be described through the application of scientific expertise by specialized institutions. (p. 8)

Similarly, Rosanvallon (2007) has emphasized in his discussion of a society of generalized distrust that “the role of scientists is perceived as inevitable and problematic at the same time” (p. 28). Coote (1997) has proposed a middle path between technocracy and the absolute rejection of scientific expertise, based on transparency, public access, public participation and public debate.

What is less ambiguous than general attitudes towards science, however, is the normativity of environmental governance and the subsequent need for institutions of

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33 My translation of: “el papel de los científicos es percibido así como ineludible y problemático al mismo tiempo.”
participatory democracy wherein a greater number and diversity of values are expressed, debated, formed and reformed so as to inform and guide environmental policy-making. In recent years, there have been numerous experiences with the use of non-electoral means of citizen participation in order for common citizens to inform themselves about and discuss the relevance of scientific expertise and technological innovation for concrete policy concerns in light of shared values and normative principles (Fuller, 2000; Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Fischer, 2000). As explained by Fischer (2000):

Owing to the indeterminacies of scientific analysis in complex questions of risk assessment, technocratic decision-making has given rise to the problematic politics of expertise in which each side of an issue can use its own scientists to dispute the claims of the other side… The alternative … is found in a turn to a constructivist understanding of science and a less technocratic, more participatory approach to decision making and consensus building (p. 108).

Also, participatory forms of value-oriented environmental governance are gaining support from the increasing awareness of the subjective understanding and valuation of environmental quality (Winter, 1996; Tassara, 2004; Viñar, 2002; Brand, 2005; Harvey, 1996). Castells (2004) has tersely explained that “places are good or bad according to value judgements about what constitutes a good life” (p. 458), and Giovannini (1998)

34 My translation of: “son buenos o malos lugares según juicios de valor sobre qué constituye una buena vida.”
has emphasized that “[m]any of the problems at this stage are related to values, as ultimately decisions are influenced by what individuals think is important and what is not important.” (p. 161). In addition to the inadequacy of technocratic governance to grasp contemporary complexity, uncertainty and risk, then, the subjectivity of environmental quality also demonstrates the normativity of environmental governance and the consequential need for institutionalized means of citizen participation that provide the value-based guidance for environmental governance.

Adaptivity

In addition to normativity, the complexity, dynamism and uncertainty of socio-environmental processes has resulted in greater need for adaptivity in environmental governance (Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Parson, 2000; Beck, 1994; McGarry, Brenner, Cowan, Harvey, McCarthy & Murphy, 2007; Brand, 2005; Oksanen, 2007; Cohen, 2006). As Parson (2000) has emphasized, “[e]nvironmental problems rarely disappear... As human activities continue to grow, old problems re-emerge in new forms and new ones appear. They require continuing monitoring, an increasing capacity for farsighted and integrated understanding, and commitments to sustained yet adaptable management” (p. S127). Similarly, Cohen (2006) has explained how the constantly changing conditions of and emerging information about environmental governance requires such adaptivity:

This learning process will continue because new information on human-induced change and ecological conditions is continually becoming
available. This information will need to be summarized, disseminated, and 
understood by decision makers and the broader public in order for policy 
to adapt to the new information and conditions. (p. 17)

Oksanen (2007) has very simply stated that “what is sustainable must be adaptive” (p. 14). And, adaptive environmental governance requires the participation of all citizens.

Due to the great diversity of interests, values, experiences, perspectives and know-how within the citizenry at large, non-electoral citizen participation is an important source of information, critical-thinking and creativity, all of which are crucial for adaptive governance. Brand (2005) has pointed to the argument that “participatory democracy has the function of bringing together generalized (scientific) knowledge, professional expertise and local context-bound understandings of the environment as the condition of greater understanding and practical advancement” (p. 48-49). For these reasons, many highlight the importance of adaptivity and participatory democracy for effective environmental governance (Parson, 2000; Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Brand, 2005).

Adaptivity of environmental governance has also been recognized in the Agenda 21 that was agreed upon by the international community at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, which urged nation-states (as well as subnational governments) to adopt “flexible and integrative planning approaches that allow the consideration of multiple goals and enable adjustment of changing needs” (Section 1, Ch. 8.5) – in the very same Chapter in which it urged the guarantee of “access by the public to relevant information, facilitating
the reception of public views and allowing for effective participation” (Section 1, Ch. 8.4).

**Information and Education Intensity and Reflexivity**

The complexity, uncertainty and adaptivity of environmental governance makes the policy domain exceptionally information-intensive. Since everyone can contribute to the accumulation, dissemination and assessment of information and no single person or institution can possibly accumulate, disseminate and assess all available information, widespread and committed non-electoral citizen participation is necessary for these tasks, which are indispensable for environmental governance (McGarry, Brenner, Cowan, Harvey, McCarthy & Murphy, 2007; Parson, 2000; Brand, 2005; Cohen, 2006; Schwarze, 1996; Dujisin, 2001).

Like other characteristics of environmental governance, the information-intensity of environmental governance has also been strongly emphasized by the international community in Agenda 21:

Major efforts should be made to augment the capacity to collect and analyse environmental data and information and to integrate it with economic data” (Section I – 8.49) … “While considerable data already exist … more and different types of data need to be collected, at the local, provincial, national and international levels, indicating the status and trends of the planet’s ecosystem, natural resource, pollution and socio-economic variables. (Section IV – 40.2)
Agenda 21 also highlighted how information-intensivity of environmental governance makes participatory environmental governance more desirable:

In sustainable development, everyone is a user and provider of information considered in the broad sense. That includes data, information, appropriately packaged experience and knowledge. The need for information arises at all levels, from that of senior decision makers at the national and international levels to the grass-roots and individual levels. (Section IV – Ch. 40.1)

The international community has most recently and most emphatically reaffirmed these prescriptions and commitments to improve the quality and accessibility of environmental information – as well as informed citizen participation – in the 3rd Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters – a.k.a. the Aarhus Convention, which was originally signed in 1998 – that took place in Riga in 2008.

The information-intensivity of environmental governance has also been evidenced in the proliferation of laws that explicitly promote the accumulation, standardization and dissemination of environmental information as well as facilitate or ensure access to environmental information. Beyond the generally increasing use of quantitative and qualitative data in policy making processes and the development of transparency and freedom of information laws in most Western countries (Cain, Egan & Fabbrini, 2003), environmental governance has been exceptional in its emphasis on the role of information
for policy making. This has been manifested in the proliferation of environmental information legislation, offices and agencies, sustainability indicators, as well as the growing use of Environmental Impact Assessments for all sorts of projects (Barrow, 2005; McGarry, Brenner, Cowan, Harvey, McCarthy & Murphy, 2007; Parson, 2000; Brand, 2005; OECD, 1996; OECD, 2005a; OECD, 2005b; Dujisin, 2001; Brailovsky, 2004, 2007). In such processes of information accumulation and evaluation, all sectors of society and all individuals can and ought to contribute, which in turn makes the institutionalization of participatory mechanisms all the more desirable. As Sen (2000) has argued, “more informed and less marginalized public discussion of environmental issues may not only be good for the environment; it could also be important to the health and functioning of the democratic system itself” (p. 158).

Not only is environmental governance information-intensive, however; it is also information-reflexive. The complexity and uncertainty that characterize environmental governance makes information difficult to trust and easy to challenge. Opposing positions and statistics amongst scientists and experts leave the public and policy-makers without certain direction. Such information-reflexivity delegitimizes technocracy, strengthens the normativity of environmental governance and requires institutionalized means of consensus-building, all of which makes the institutionalization of participatory democracy more feasible and more desirable for environmental governance (Beck, 1994).
Intimacy/Spirituality/Religiosity

Although only occasionally addressed theoretically, it is frequently suggested and alluded to that humans are intimately, spiritually and religiously connected to and concerned about their environments. While one very well should distinguish between these three similar but different kinds of relationship, herein they will be treated together due to their shared characteristic of emotional and ethical – more so than rational – environmental value. This is perhaps best evidenced – if only anecdotally – by the fact that, since antiquity, the intimacy, spirituality and religiosity of the human-environment relationship has apparently been exceptionally present in human artistic expression, both literally and metaphorically.

Herein, intimacy is understood to have two meanings, which are not unrelated: proximity (spatial and temporal) and emotionality. In both of these senses of the word, humans generally have an intimate relationship with the environment. The former sense is reflected – although insufficiently – in Brand’s (2005) assertion that environmental concerns “have come to dominate everyday spatial politics” (p. 59). Unlike other policy domains (taxation, international relations, education, healthcare, etc.), social and physical

35 The degree of concern, however, is probably greatest for microenvironments and least for macroenvironments, except perhaps in the case of religiosity.

36 It is important to note that the emotional and ethical value derived from as well as contributing to these kinds of relationships (intimacy, spirituality, religiosity) with the environment does not preclude rational value, but rather that for the purposes of this argumentation emotional and ethical value especially compel citizens to participate in environmental governance. It is also true that 1) rational value of the environment can be both derived from as well as a partial cause of the intimacy, spirituality and religiosity of human-environment relationships, and 2) rational value of the environment also compels citizens to participate in environmental governance.
environments are inescapable all day, every day, at home, in the street, in adulthood, *in utero*, awake and asleep. Such spatial and temporal intimacy, probably explains, in part, the emotionality with which many humans experience their relationship to the environment; however, it is important to emphasize “in part” for at least two reasons. First, environmental deterioration and vulnerabilization, and the increasing awareness of these two processes, has intensified the emotionality with which many people experience their human-environment relationship. Beck (1994) has described this phenomenon quite poignantly:

> in ecological culture the most general and the most intimate things are directly and inescapably interconnected in the depths of private life. … The questions of a distant world of chemical formulas burst forth with deadly seriousness in the inmost recesses of personal life conduct as questions of self, identity and existence and cannot be ignored. … The philosophical issues of existentialism, for instance, become part of everyday life, almost burning issues. (p. 45-46)

Similarly, although more focused on microenvironments, Fitzpatrick & LaGlory (2000) have argued that:

> we are spatial creatures who seek satisfaction of our needs in places, and who have deep personal ties to home territory. More than spatial beings, we are place-oriented creatures. Place is the immediate and intimate portion of the lived environment. … Places are locations of felt value;
attachment to place is viewed as a basic human need, important for identity and connection (p. 50).

Second, the degree in which the second sense of intimacy (emotionality) is experienced seems to vary significantly while the degree in which the first sense of intimacy (proximity) is experienced does not\textsuperscript{37}. Nevertheless, both of these kinds of intimacy, it is argued, make participatory democracy more feasible and more desirable for environmental governance than for other policy domains.

Participatory democracy is more feasible for environmental governance since many individuals are compelled to participate in the governance of that which affects them so intimately (closely and emotionally). Tarak (1989) has argued this point quite concisely, alluding to both the proximity and emotionality of human-environment relationships:

\begin{quote}
While the varying degree of emotionality must obviously be due to multiple factors, the most commonly cited factor is gender. MacGregor (2006) has argued that “[s]ocial research provides empirical evidence to support the claim that women typically demonstrate a higher level of concern for environmental issues than men (e.g., Tindal, Davies, and Mauboules 2003; Hunter, Hatch, and Johnson 2004)” (p. 5). The emotionality with which humans experience their environments has been argued to be especially intense for women for a number of reasons, most notably their physical experience with reproductive cycles, giving birth and child-rearing (and the consequential greater relative concern about intergenerational equity), and to a lesser degree, their disproportionate responsibility for and, therefore, experience with food acquisition, cooking and household management. These reasons amongst others usually constitute the core basis of the philosophy of ecofeminism (Sandilands; Merchant; MacGregor 2006; Harvey; Plumwood; Valencia Hernández; Guha; Roussopoulos), whose underlying logic has been argued to explain the outstanding environmental leadership and courage of such women as Octavia Hill, Rachel Carson, Medha Patkar, Petra Kelly, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Waangari Matthaï and Alice Waters. However, since the emotionality of the human-environment relationship varies significantly amongst men and there are men that seem to experience the human-environment relationship with greater emotionality than some women, there must be many other factors involved that aren’t exclusive to women.
\end{quote}
the environment is intimately connected to the life of every person and their descendants. Becoming aware of the relationships of life between every environmental component and every person causes a process of stimulation that often motivates the necessity to participate in the shaping of that which surrounds a person\textsuperscript{38} (p. 177).

In addition to the argument that the intimacy (in both senses of the word) of the human-environment relationship motivates citizens to participate in the governance of the environment and, therefore, makes participatory environmental governance exceptionally feasible, the intimacy (in both senses of the word) of the human-environment relationship also make participatory environmental governance more desirable. Here the arguments vary depending upon the sense of intimacy, although they also seem to be interrelated. In the sense of proximity, the desirability of citizen participation is due to the unique knowledge that every person has about their environment, which they experience more closely and more constantly than any state possibly can (Merchant, 1996; as cited by MacGregor 2006, p. 4). In the sense of emotionality, the desirability of citizen participation is due to the normative guidance such emotionality can provide, which has already been addressed in greater detail in the section on normativity.

\textsuperscript{38} My translation of “el ambiente resulta íntimamente vinculado a la vida misma de cada persona y su descendencia. La toma de consciencia de las relaciones de vida entre cada componente ambiental y cada persona genera un proceso de estímulo que en muchos casos motiva la necesidad de intervenir en la conformación futura de lo que le rodea”.
While the word spirituality often signifies religiosity, its broader meaning does not limit itself to the organized dogmas and institutions of religions (Falk, 2003). In this broader sense of the word, spirituality seems to denote something in between emotional intimacy and religiosity, usually recognizing some thing(s) as sacred or deserving of reverence and respect. In this sense of the word, it is not difficult to see why people might consider the environment in general or some specific environments or environmental features as sacred or deserving of reverence and respect. This may seem especially true for Eastern (Massanari, 1998; Haberman, 2006; Guha, 1999) and indigenous (Menchú, 2001; Fishbane, 2009; Polgreen, 2009; Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000) societies, but it is by no means exclusively so. Consider the first of the 17 Principles of Environmental Justice, decided upon by delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991: “Environmental Justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species and the right to be free from ecological destruction” (Principles of EJ, 1991; Gottlieb, 2003, p. 497). The well-known co-founder of the German Green Party, Petra Kelly, asserted that a spiritual environmental perspective “is the foundation of Green politics” (as cited in Gottlieb, 2003, p. 501). Barrow (1999) has emphasized the importance of environmental spirituality within the deep-ecology movement:

Many deep-greens believe that ecological awareness is spiritual and that new ethics, vital for satisfactory environmental management, must be grounded in spirituality (Sessions, 1994, p. 21). Those who profess deep
ecology also seek a paradigm shift, to a philosophy which aims at a sustainable society based on material simplicity and spiritual richness (Dobson, 1995, p. 258). (p. 258)

Even in his very pragmatic and Western-oriented book on environmental policy, Cohen (2006) has made sure to include spirituality into his definition of “the environmental problem,” which he has asserted “can be defined as the set of interconnected issues that determine the sustainability of the planet earth for continued human habitation under conditions that promote our material, social, and spiritual well-being” (p. 4). Although nature may have been “desacralized” (Guha, 1999, p. 13) in many modern societies, the spiritual relationship between many humans and the environment is still very strong, as evidenced by the spiritual undertones of much of the environmental discourse and by the emerging environmentalism of many religions (Roussopoulos, 1993; Gottlieb, 2003).

The core beliefs of environmentalism seem to be universally shared by the main institutionalized religions of the world as well as most indigenous and aboriginal worldviews. In September 1986, the World Wildlife Fund organized the Religion and Nature Inter-Faith Ceremony, in the small Italian town of Assisi, Italy, where representatives (important within their respective hierarchies) of five of the world’s great religions – Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism – met in order to “‘celebrate the dignity of nature and the duty of every person to live harmoniously within the natural world.’ The ceremony started with sermons by leaders of the five faiths, explaining how their religious tradition could, and would, cope with the challenges of
environmental degradation” (Guha, 1999, p. 138; Palmer & Finlay, 2003). Similarly, in Pakistan, for example, Islamic law has been used successfully for environmental protection (Shelton & Kiss, 2005, p. 5). In the United States, Gottlieb (2003) has observed that “[o]ver the past several years, all of the major environmental magazines – including *Sierra, Audubon, Amicus Journal*, and *E Magazine* – have run features on the rise of religious environmentalism” (p. 494). Also, many religious leaders have become influential environmental activists, such as Leonardo Boff, Luc Bouchard, José Andrés Tamayo, Rev. Fletcher Harper, Dom Luiz Flávio Cappio and Marco Arana, just to name a few.

Not only does human spirituality and religiosity tend to be consistent with or favorable towards environmental ethics, many environmentalists share the devotion and ritual that define spirituality and religiosity. If we consider Merriam-Webster’s definition of religion – “a cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith” – then it is not difficult to understand environmentalism as a specific kind of religion. “At its core,” Goldberg (2008) has argued “environmentalism is a kind of nature worship. It's a holistic ideology, shot through with religious sentiment” (p. 1). John Muir, the great American naturalist and founder of the Sierra Club, for example, has been likened to a “religious zealot in his literal worship of nature” (Roussopoulos, 1993, p. 24). While some environmentalists are obviously more zealous than others, they all generally share a system of values, beliefs and rites that approximates religiosity.
Essentially, the intimacy, spirituality and religiosity of human-environment relationships should make people more committed to participate in environmental governance – therefore, making participatory environmental governance more feasible –; and, the intimacy, spirituality and religiosity of human-environment relationships should make governments seek such intimate knowledge and normative guidance for environmental governance – therefore, making participatory institutions more desirable for environmental governance. The intimacy, spirituality and religiosity of environments also further weakens the scientific and technocratic monopoly of environmental governance. As Prugh, Costanza & Daly (2000) have pointed out, “people often attach priceless values to aspects of their environment, rendering quantification meaningless” (p. 95). How does one measure the “trade-offs” of extinction of Cedars in Lebanon, Salmon in the Columbia River Basin, Condors in the Andes, Dolphins in the Mekong or Polar Bears in the Arctic, all of which are fundamental to the identity (not to mention livelihood) of millions of people? In this sense, the intimacy, spirituality and religiosity of environments reinforce the normativity of environmental governance and require institutions for meaningful and respectful non-electoral citizen participation in environmental governance.

**Heterogeneity**

Environmental governance involves all sectors of society, which entails the broadest and most diverse groups of stakeholders, who have myriad shared and not-so-shared interests, values and informational sources. Such diversity amongst stakeholders
can generate many conflicts, which require institutionalized mechanisms of conflict prevention and resolution. Active non-electoral citizen participation has been argued to be a key feature of environmental conflict prevention and resolution (Beck, 1994; Giovannini, 1998; Kiss & Shelton, 1997; Sen, 2000; Lewis, 2005; Brailovsky, 2007; Meadowcroft, 1999; Sabsay & Tarak, 1997). Giovannini (1998) has explained this aspect of environmental governance quite well:

A characteristic of environmental conflict is the many actors, with many different levels of power and influence. It can be very complex, touching a vast variety of interests, and it can also have a high level of uncertainty in its scientific aspects … A number of processes should then be instigated to avoid environmental conflicts. First, it is necessary to learn how to institute collaborative decision-making, not just solving the conflict once it exists, but trying to prevent it with a set of techniques. This means identifying the actors who will be important, communicating with them in time, building up the necessary relationships and networks, and preventing the problem arising before it has become a conflict. It is essential to gain a consensus through negotiation at the earliest opportunity so that a solution can be found. (p. 163)

Recognizing the heterogeneity of interests as well as values and informational sources, Kiss & Shelton (1997) have also stressed the importance of non-electoral citizen participation:
Within society there may be public pressure for environmental protection, consensus or lack of it among scientists and scientific organizations, and cooperation or opposition from business and industry; all segments of society can contribute to the development of environmental policy and law. (p. 72)

Beck (1994) has made this point in much sharper language:

[T]he conventional instrument of political consultation, the expert opinion, fails accordingly. Even the interplay between opinion and counter-opinion does not resolve the conflicts but only hardens the fronts. There are beginning to be cries for an ‘ecological trade union’ in many plants that deal with and in hazardous materials or products. It is the same everywhere: the demand is for forms and forums of consensus-building co-operations among industry, politics, science and the populace. For that to happen, however, the model of unambiguous instrumental rationality must be abolished. (p. 29)

Similarly, the heterogeneity – as well as complexity and dynamism – of environmental governance has led Meadowcroft (1999) to prescribe “the development of multi-actor governance networks” (p. 227) for environmental policy-making. This seems to hold true for both macro- and microenvironmental problems.

Moreover, it is argued that the heterogeneity of the actors, interests, values, and informational sources involved in environmental governance is not a problem to be
overcome or mitigated by institutions of participatory democracy, but rather that such heterogeneity is a good thing to be channeled and made useful by institutions of participatory democracy. It is precisely such heterogeneity that facilitates adaptive management and creative solutions and helps avoid tunnel vision and stagnancy. As Press (1996) has pointed out, “environmentalists’ preoccupation with biodiversity is based on the same ecological reasoning that concludes that totalitarianism is unsustainable; in essence, uniformity breeds instability” (p. 269). It is important to note that the institutionalization of participatory democracy for environmental governance must go beyond alternative means of preference aggregation. As Sen (2000) has so lucidly pointed out, the heterogeneity that characterizes environmental governance and requires institutional means of consensus-building facilitates exceptional opportunities for social choice formation:

the politics of social consensus calls not only for acting on the basis of *given* individual preferences, but also for sensitivity of social decisions to the *development* of individual preferences and norms. In this context, particular importance has to be attached to the role of public discussion and interactions in the emergence of shared values and commitments.

Our ideas of what is just and what is not may respond to the arguments that are presented for public discussion, and we tend to react to one another’s views sometimes with a compromise or even a deal, and at other times with relentless inflexibility and stubbornness…”

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[E]nvironmental challenges, when adequately grasped, raise some of the central issues of social choice and deliberative politics (p. 253, 329)

Essentially, such heterogeneity and ecological reasoning make diverse sectors of society willing to participate and make governments willing to channel such diverse sources of information and values by institutional means that promote participation, deliberation and social choice formation. These tendencies, in turn, make the institutionalization of participatory democracy exceptionally more feasible and more desirable for environmental governance.

**Urgency**

While this characteristic is especially applicable to macroenvironmental phenomena, it may also be applicable in some cases of microenvironmental phenomena as well if a micro environmental change, such an infrastructure project or the degradation or demolition of a historical site, for example, is perceived to be irreversible.

Nevertheless, macroenvironmental issues such as global warming and biodiversity loss, for example, are the most illustrative of this phenomenon; but, as previously discussed, all macroenvironmental phenomena have their most practical implications at the local level.

In the 1960s, Guha (1999) has explained, environmentalism began to take on a “new urgency” due to the rapid industrialization following the Second World War and its environmental impacts. He cites the pioneering urban ecologist Lewis Mumford, who wrote in 1973:
the chief effect of the regressive transformations that have taken place in
the last quarter of a century has been to change my conclusions from the
indicative to the imperative mood; not “we shall” achieve a dynamic
equilibrium [between humans and nature] but “we must” – if we are not
to destroy the ecological balance upon which all life depends (p. 77).
Since 1973, this perception\textsuperscript{39} of urgency has steadily increased. “Current environmental
health concerns,” Hanna & Coussens (2001) have asserted, “are conveying a sense of
urgency. The time to act is now before further damage threatens our physical and
emotional well-being” (p. vii). This perception of urgency and irreversibility, Brand
(2005) has argued, has become pervasive in contemporary discourse on environmental
sustainability:

This haunting sense of time and the perils of history permeate sustainable
development discourse. The urgency of the task at hand (the ‘we must
take action now’ imploration), along with the evident insufficiencies in
terms of the results of sustainable development practice, produce echoes
of disaster reverberating around the inner optimism of sustainability…

\textsuperscript{39} There also appears to be an overwhelming consensus among the scientific community that the
environment is objectively deteriorating in most important aspects (atmospheric stability, oceanic
chemistry, biodiversity, fish stocks, soil erosion, the proliferation and bioaccumulation of toxins
and endocrine disruptors, etc.); however, it is perception more than objectivity that motivates
political action. Of course perception and objectivity are not entirely unrelated, since perception
is to some degree shaped by the information provided by organizations and media that are
supposed to approximate objectivity.
Doomsday scenarios of the global catastrophe always lurk in the background of even the most official reports (p. 9).

The point here is that the perception of urgency and irreversibility that is exceptionally characteristic of many (though not all) environmental issues may be enough to motivate citizens who generally are reluctant to participate in governance. As Mutz (2006) has asserted, “not all citizens feel they can speak their minds freely without repercussions for their public and private lives” (p. 150-151). The consequent question, then, is: do the exceptional urgency and irreversibility of many environmental concerns incentivize risking the social repercussions of controversial political deliberation and participation? Many seem to argue that they do (Beck, 1994; Pepper, 1996; Brand, 2005; Narain, 2008). Beck (1994) has made this argument emphatically:

The ecological crisis produces and cultivates a cultural Red Cross consciousness. It transforms everyday, trivial, unimportant things into tests of courage in which heroism can be exhibited. Far from intensifying and confirming the general pointlessness of modernity, ecological threats create a substantive semantic horizon of avoidance, prevention and helping. This is a moral climate and milieu that intensifies with the size of the threat, in which the dramatic roles of heroes and villains achieve a new everyday meaning. (p. 50)
The urgency and irreversibility of environmental issues become clearest in those environmental conflicts in which actors perceive a serious threat to their survival, and this can occur for both macro- and microenvironmental phenomena. As Narain (2008) has asserted, “[p]eople live on the environment. Environment is their survival base. It is not a luxury… It’s a matter of survival… And in a democracy they will and are being listened to” (n.p.).

Regardless of whether or not an environmental issue is perceived as a threat to survival, if it is perceived as exceptionally urgent and irreversible then people will probably be more willing to participate in governance processes regarding that environmental issue. Similarly, governments are more willing to institutionalize participatory mechanisms for the governance of perceived urgent and irreversible environmental concerns in order to both improve and legitimate governmental decisions and actions regarding such important and controversial public matters. For these reasons, the perceived urgency and irreversibility of environmental concerns make the institutionalization of participatory democracy for environmental governance exceptionally feasible. On the other hand, if it is true that citizens, in all their diversity, can provide important information, normative guidance and support for decision-making, policy implementation and monitoring, then non-electoral citizen participation seems to

40 Despite Inglehart’s (1997) narrow-minded categorization of environmental concern as a post-material value, the environment is very material and its quality directly affects the possibility of survival, for individuals, communities and our species more generally. This has been most frequently and emphatically pointed out by theorists who have lived and worked in developing countries (Guha; Narain 2008).
be exceptionally desirable for public matters, such as environmental concerns, deemed to be urgent and irreversible.

**Transdisciplinarity**

Theorists and practitioners from a variety of academic disciplines and professions have pointed out the exceptional appropriateness of participatory democracy for environmental governance. The bibliography used herein, itself, attests to the transdisciplinarity of environmental concerns. To varying degrees, the environment is affected by all human activity and all human activity is dependent upon the environment in which it is carried out. Environmental governance, more than any other policy domain, is characterized by transdisciplinarity\(^4\); and effective transdisciplinary policy-making requires the institutionalization of non-electoral citizen participation (Brand, 2005; Hamel, 1998; Meadowcroft, 1999; Taylor, 2009; Cohen, 2006; Van Kersbergen & Van Waarden, 2004; Tassara, 2004; Parson, 2000; Giovannini, 1998; Guillette, 2000; Brailovsky, 2004; Loureiro, 2003; Boccardo & Corey, 1976; Barrow, 2005; Dujisin, 2001; Scholz, Lang, Wiek, Walter & Stauffacher, 2006).

In order to understand and improve environmental policy, Cohen (2006) has argued, “one must learn some science, engineering, economics, political science, organizational management, and even other branches of learning” (p. 9). He has also

\(^4\)Although tempted to include interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity in this section, I agree with Brailovsky’s (2004) argument in favor of the use of the term ‘transdisciplinarity’ rather than inter- or multidisciplinarity. Brevity, however, doesn’t allow a development of that argument herein. See Brailovsky, 2004, p. 19-21, as well as Scholz, Lang, Wiek, Walter & Stauffacher, 2006.
emphasized that “[p]aying lip-service to the notion that environmental problems are inherently interdisciplinary does little to amend the tendency to assume that one’s own discipline is central. When analyzing an environmental issue, ignoring other fields is an obstacle to better solutions” (p. 12). Similarly, Hamel (1998) has noted that the relationships between environmental problems, societal choices, models of urban planning and development “led many to express the view that environmental questions cannot be analyzed in isolation or separated out into a special sector” (p. 181). Brand (2005) has also emphasized the need for transdisciplinary environmental governance, as well as the innovation and networking that transdisciplinarity implies: “environmental knowledge and policy production require innovative institutional support such as interdisciplinary research groups, interdepartmental government bodies, multilateral development organizations, all interwoven into a loose network of organizations purportedly working towards the common goal of ‘sustainable development’” (p. 21). In a recent column criticizing contemporary academic specialization and proposing problem-based academic organization, Taylor (2009) has made the argument for transdisciplinary environmental governance (and education) quite effectively using the specific example of water management:

In the coming decades, water will become a more pressing problem than oil, and the quantity, quality and distribution of water will pose significant scientific, technological and ecological difficulties as well as serious political and economic challenges. These vexing practical
problems cannot be adequately addressed without also considering important philosophical, religious and ethical issues. After all, beliefs shape practices as much as practices shape beliefs. A Water program would bring together people in the humanities, arts, social and natural sciences with representatives from professional schools like medicine, law, business, engineering, social work, theology and architecture. Through the intersection of multiple perspectives and approaches, new theoretical insights will develop and unexpected practical solutions will emerge. (n.p.)

The international community recognized and emphasized this crucial characteristic of environmental governance throughout the Agenda 21. However, the document most clearly alludes to the interrelationship between transdisciplinary environmental governance and participatory democracy in Section 1, 8.4:

The primary need is to integrate environmental and developmental decision-making processes. To do this, Governments should conduct a national review and, where appropriate, improve the processes of decision-making so as to achieve the progressive integration of economic, social and environmental issues in the pursuit of development that is economically efficient, socially equitable and responsible and environmentally sound. Countries will develop their own priorities in
accordance with their national plans, policies and programmes for the following activities:

(a) Ensuring the integration of economic, social and environmental considerations in decision-making at all levels and in all ministries;

(b) Adopting a domestically formulated policy framework that reflects a long-term perspective and cross-sectoral approach as the basis for decisions, taking account of the linkages between and within the various political, economic, social and environmental issues involved in the development process;

(c) Establishing domestically determined ways and means to ensure the coherence of sectoral, economic, social and environmental policies, plans and policy instruments, including fiscal measures and the budget; these mechanisms should apply at various levels and bring together those interested in the development process;

(d) Monitoring and evaluating the development process systematically, conducting regular reviews of the state of human resources development, economic and social conditions and trends, the state of the environment and natural resources; this could be complemented by annual environment and development reviews, with a view to assessing sustainable development achievements by the various sectors and departments of government;
(e) Ensuring transparency of, and accountability for, the environmental implications of economic and sectoral policies;

(f) Ensuring access by the public to relevant information, facilitating the reception of public views and allowing for effective participation.

(Section 1, 8.4)

Essentially, if the state is incapable of knowing everything and all persons and organizations have information, opinions and normative guidance to contribute to a complex environmental policy concern, then there must exist institutions by which everyone can participate and make their contribution towards a concrete and unified policy objective. It is in this sense that the transdisciplinarity of environmental governance makes the institutionalization of participatory democracy exceptionally desirable and feasible.

Cosmopolitanism

Let’s reiterate Safier’s (2000) definition of cosmopolitanism as “the worldview that seeks to argue for the global unity of all humanity and consequently an acceptance of universal belonging and solidarity of all human beings as ‘citizens of the world’, equally deserving of recognition and respect” (p. 31). Environmentalism is, and environmental governance must be, cosmopolitan. Environmental governance requires understanding and collaboration amongst all of humanity, present and future. The universality of humanity’s biological and social dependence upon healthy environments has contributed to the increasing awareness of our shared humanity, our shared responsibility and the
decreasing significance of divisive nationalism. Inglehart (1997) has elaborated these cosmopolitan characteristics of environmentalism quite clearly:

The environmentalist cause is only one of many Postmodern issues favored by Postmaterialists. This electorate is distinctive in its entire worldview: they are relatively favorable to women’s rights, disabled groups, gay and lesbian emancipation, ethnic minorities, and a number of other causes. But the environmental cause has emerged as the symbolic center of this broad cultural emancipation movement: while many of the other Postmodern causes tend to be divisive, practically everyone likes clean air and green trees. Although these [green] parties reflect an entire worldview, environmental symbols capture the issue on which they have the widest potential appeal. (p. 244)

Similarly, Beck (1997) has argued that environmental concerns have a “leveling effect that whittles away some of the carefully erected boundaries between classes, nations, humans and the rest of nature, between creators of culture and creatures of instinct” (p. 11). Or, as Brand (2005) has stated more tersely, “[a]n environmentally responsible lifestyle … is perhaps the only one which dares to claim universal validity” (p. 55).

The uniquely cosmopolitan nature of environmentalism has been especially emphasized by those who have theorized and argued in favor of “cosmopolitan environmental citizenship” (Fensterseifer, 2004; Mason, 2008; MacGregor, 2004) and “post-cosmopolitan ecological citizenship” (Dobson, 2003). These authors also highlight
the extension and intensification of democratic participation as a fundamental component of environmental cosmopolitanism. Although the democratic participation implied by environmental cosmopolitanism is usually argued to take place at supranational levels by means of the global civil society, the democratizing effects would seem to occur at all scales of political activity, especially those scales, such as cities, where the political actors are exceptionally cosmopolitan. Similarly, environmental cosmopolitanism transcends the increasingly divisive and oppositional politics of identity (Castells, 2004; Tajbakhsh, 2000; Holston & Appadurai, 1999; Bondi, 1993; Brand, 2005). Therefore, the cosmopolitan values that are shared and promoted by environmentalism make the institutionalization of participatory democracy exceptionally feasible for environmental governance.

History and Historicity of Participatory Environmental Governance:

In order to appreciate the exceptionally positive historicity of participatory environmental governance, the broader history of environmental governance and its particularities must also be appreciated. The following historical processes are fundamental for such an appreciation.

Environmental Deterioration and Vulnerabilization

There is no doubt about the increasing deterioration and vulnerabilization of the planet Earth’s ecosystems and the physical conditions upon which the wellbeing of humans and other life depend – only uncertainty and debate regarding degree. There have been important cases of stabilization, restoration and improvement of people’s
environments; nonetheless, the planet Earth’s forests, wetlands, fisheries, glaciers, coral reefs, aquifers and arable soils are in a state of general decline and degradation. Climate change, stratospheric ozone depletion, biodiversity loss, habitat fragmentation, soil salinization, oceanic acidification, terrestrial desertification, estuarine eutrophication, etc. are generally contributing to the degradation and vulnerabilization of our global, regional, national, provincial, municipal, neighborhood, residential, and personal environments.

It is very true that the human population has multiplied exponentially in the last couple centuries, and is expected to continue increasing, in the short term at least, but these processes of environmental degradation and vulnerabilization are only partially due to population growth. Environmental degradation and vulnerabilization are most importantly caused by cultural and legal norms that promote wasteful, destructive and unhealthy economic activity, uncontrolled technological complexity and risk society (Kopits, McConnell & Miles, 2009; Speth & Haas, 2006; Parson, 2000; Lee, 2007; Choay, 2003; Fitzpatrick & LaGlory, 2000; Ways, 1978; Fischer, 2000; Beck, 1992, 1994, 1997; Satterthwaite, 2003).

Although a general process of environmental deterioration is undeniable, macro- and micro-environments may not always be deteriorating, in so far their capacity to fulfill society’s needs and wants. In fact, some environments or environmental services are improving rather than deteriorating. However, it does appear as though all environmental services are becoming more vulnerable and the quantity and quality of environmental risks and hazards are exponentially increasing. This is due to the increasing quantity,
speed, and complexity with which humans are transforming the planet Earth and its many physical (biological, hydrological, ecological, chemical, meteorological, geological, etc.) and social (economic, political, residential, familial, technological, recreational, etc.) systems that constitute the [general] environment and [particular] environments – from the most universal to the most particular, most macro and most micro, most objective and most subjective – and the insufficient provision of basic services that help avoid or mitigate environmental risks and hazards (Satterthwaite, 2003).

As Giddens (1994) has asserted, “[o]ne way to read human history … is as the progressive destruction of the physical environment. Environmental ecology in the current period has arisen mainly as a response to perceived human destructiveness” (p. 77). In addition to environmental destruction, however, it is important to recognize environmental vulnerabilization as a different although similar and interrelated phenomenon of equal, if not greater, significance. This distinction is essentially the same as the one Satterthwaite (2003) has made between environmental degradation and environmental hazards. The planet Earth as a whole as well as its countless microenvironments are increasingly vulnerable to significant changes of their physical conditions.

**Environmental Conscientization**

Respect and concern for the environment is not a new phenomenon. In fact, most cultures share some reverence for ‘Mother Earth’, ‘pachamama’, ‘lemanjá’, ‘God’s Creation’, ‘Gaia’, etc. (Gottlieb, 2003) and much artistic expression has been inspired by
such environmental reverence throughout history (Guha, 1999). Nevertheless, most people (especially in the United States) point to the decade of 1960s as the most important period of environmental conscientization and as the birth of environmentalism – exemplified by Rachel Carson’s publication of *Silent Spring*, the Wilderness Act and the first photograph of our planet from outer space, and culminated in 1970 with the selection of Barry Commoner for the cover of *Time* magazine, the signing into law of the National Environmental Policy Act and the first Earth Day. Making reference to the photographs of Earth, the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) asserted that:

> Historians may eventually find that this vision had a greater impact on thought than did the Copernican revolution […] From space, we see a small and fragile ball dominated not by human activity and edifice but by a pattern of clouds, oceans, greenery, and soils. Humanity’s inability to fit its activities into that pattern is changing planetary systems fundamentally. Many such changes are accompanied by life-threatening hazards, from environmental degradation to nuclear destruction. These new realities […] must be recognized – and managed. (n.p.)

And, since 1970, environmental degradation, vulnerabilization and conscientization have generally continued apace. In 1992, the international community reaffirmed their commitment to environmental education and conscientization in their final document, *Agenda 21*:
Countries, in cooperation with national institutions and groups, the media and the international community, should promote awareness in the public at large, as well as in specialized circles, of the importance of considering environment and development in an integrated manner, and should establish mechanisms for facilitating a direct exchange of information and views with the public. Priority should be given to highlighting the responsibilities and potential contributions of different social groups.

(Section 1, 8.11)

Guha (1999) has asserted “that of the ‘new’ social movements environmentalism alone has grown steadily in support and influence” (p. 81). The influence on politics, law and governance has been enormous. Parson (2000) has written that “[e]nvironmental protection is the most prominent new domain of politics and public policy to arise over the past few decades” (p. S123); Marchesan, Steigleder & Cappelli (2005) have argued that “[e]nvironmental law was without doubt the branch of Law that evolved the most in the last fifteen years” (p. 6); and, Barrow (2005) has observed that “[g]rowing concern for environmental quality and interest in pursuing sustainable development has prompted the inclusion of sustainability or environmental indices into development measurement” (p. 7). Today, most governments (from the UN to small municipalities) have ministries or

42 Of course, the impact of environmental conscientization has influenced many other aspects of society as well, such as business (Brand, 2005), religion (Guha, 1999; Gottlieb, 2003) and language (Fill, Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2006).

43 My translation of: “O direito ambiental foi sem dúvida o ramo do Direito que mais evoluiu no últimos quinze anos”.

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agencies dedicated to environmental governance. Similarly, academic institutions and news media have increasingly given more attention to the environment and its governance (Laska, 1973; Blowers, 1997; Pepper, 1996; Brand, 2005; Wolf & Stanley, 2003), and the corporate world is increasingly greening and greenwashing itself (Beck, 1994; Downton, 2009). Green parties have emerged in many countries, forcing other parties to consider – if not incorporate – Green policy demands and proposals (Peterson, 1995; Guha, 1999; Inglehart, 1997; Roussopoulos, 1993). As Guha (1999) has pointed out:

[w]hile opinion polls consistently show over two-thirds of the public in support of even stricter environmental measures … the green agenda is also influencing the outcome of local, state and federal elections. Politicians from both parties assiduously project a green image and cultivate a green constituency. It was a Republican President, George Bush, who famously remarked, ‘We are all environmentalists now’. (p. 2)

More revealing than formal Green Party politics, however is the assertion made by Batterbury (2003) that “the membership of environmental organizations is believed to be higher than the membership of political parties (Pepper 1996)” (p. 158). However, of the many impacts that environmental conscientization has had on politics, law and governance, three of the greatest are judicialization, glocalization and participatory governance. While the latter of these two phenomena is obviously the most central to the
purpose herein, the former also merits brief discussion for it is at the crux of the argument for urban environmental governance.

**Environmental Glocalization**

‘Environmental glocalization’ refers to the increasingly relative importance of global and local scales – and, thus, the decreasing (not disappearing!) relative importance of the national scale – for environmental governance. Environmental concerns tend to be either supra- or sub-national phenomena. Very few, if any, environmental concerns are strictly, or predominantly, national in scope (Wolf & Stanley, 2003).

This phenomenon has been most tersely alluded to in the all-too-popular environmental slogan, “think globally, act locally”\(^{44}\) (Pepper, 1996; Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Guha, 1999; Nordhaus & Shellenberger, 2007; Speth & Haas, 2006; Cohen, 2006; Stratford, 2004). The underlying premise of this slogan is that global environmental problems, such as global warming and stratospheric ozone depletion, cannot be resolved or mitigated without local action. “Small-scale decisions,” Speth & Haas (2006) have emphasized, “combine to have larger consequences, in terms of both public health and the broader health of the global environment on which human societies and their economies depend” (p. 1). At the end of the day global (and local) environmental quality is determined by the quotidian decisions of individuals, families

\(^{44}\) Some may be more familiar, however, with the version of this slogan promoted by local commercial interests: “think globally, buy locally”.

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and municipalities, not national leaders, multinational corporations or the UN – even if the latter do have a tremendous influence on individual and municipal decision-making.

Essentially, environmental governance has not diminished the absolute importance of the national level of environment, but it has diminished its relative importance to other scales, especially the local (urban and rural, although the former is of increasingly greater importance than the latter) and the global. Held (1995) has illustrated this fact quite well:

Environmental problems provide an obvious illustration of the necessity of pursuing democratic governance at these different levels. For example, factories emitting various forms of toxic waste can be locally monitored and challenged, nationally regulated and supervised, regionally checked for cross-national standards and risks, and globally evaluated in the light of their impact on the health, welfare and economic opportunities of others. Toxic waste disposal and global warming are examples of two pressing issues which require local as well as global responses if their consequences are to be contained and regulated. Democracy, thus, can only be adequately entrenched if a division of powers and competences is recognized across different levels of political interaction and interconnectedness. Such an order must embrace diverse and distinct domains of authority, linked both vertically and horizontally, if it is to be
a creator and servant of democratic practice, wherever it is locked. (p. 113-114)

Of course, environmental glocalization is not unrelated to more general processes of glocalization, the spread of cosmopolitan values and the “disaggregation of citizenship” (Benhabib, 2006). Nevertheless, amongst policy domains environmental governance is exceptional in its supra- and subnationality, due to its frequently multiscalar and territorial transcendence in the case of supranationality (Stratford, 2004) and due to its unique omnipresence and localness in the case of subnationality (Andrews, 1976).

Environmental Judicialization

Since World War II, the increasing activity and power of the judicial system (relative to the other branches of government) has been observed and documented almost everywhere; and, in large part, this has been attributable to the constitutionalization of rights, the establishment or expansion of judicial review, the delegation of legislative and executive authority and the liberalization or expansion of standing rules (Vallinder, 1994; Hirschl, 2000; Capelletti, 2001; Cichowski & Stone Sweet, 2003). While the judicialization of policy-making is not exclusive to the policy domain of environmental governance, it has especially affected and been affected by environmental governance.

According to Shelton & Kiss (2005), “[m]ore than 100 constitutions refer to a right to a clean and healthy environment, impose a duty on the state to prevent harm, or mention the protection of the environment or natural resources” (p. 7), and these authors have provided a plethora of examples of successful protection of such constitutional
environmental rights through litigation from throughout the developed and developing world. And, as these authors have pointed out, where environmental rights have not been explicitly consecrated in constitutional law citizens have appealed to other constitutional rights that have been interpreted to imply environmental rights:

Even where the right to a healthy environment is not expressly provided, other constitutional rights are being interpreted and enforced by courts in an environmental context. The Supreme Court of India was one of the first courts to develop the concept of the right to a healthy environment as part of the right to life guaranteed by the constitution. (p. 8)

Thus, the constitutionalization of environmental rights (or environmentally related human rights, such as that to life) that has taken place in recent decades has facilitated non-electoral citizen participation for environmental governance by judicial recourse.

Furthermore, participatory environmental governance by judicial recourse has been facilitated by broader standing rules. Whereas historically a plaintiff had to prove personal injury in order to bring a lawsuit to court, standing has been expanded in recent decades to individuals and groups that litigate on behalf of the public interest without necessarily proving personal injury (Cichowski & Stone Sweet, 2003; Shelton & Kiss, 2005; Chiras, 2006). “Increasingly,” Chiras (2006) has pointed out, “the distinction between private and public nuisance is fading; private persons can bring suit to stop a public nuisance. As a result, the private individual is gradually acquiring more power to stop polluters” (p. 607). Obviously, the expansion of standing rules to groups that defend
the public interest has been exceptionally important for the adjudication of environmental rights since 1) the violation of environmental rights is often difficult to prove by personal injury, and 2) civil society organizations dedicated to environmental protection and promotion are relatively abundant and powerful. There is no coincidence that the expansion of standing rules and increased public-interest litigation is almost always exemplified with environmentally related cases (Shapiro, 1994; Horowitz, 1977; Sunstein, 1982; Cichowski & Stone Sweet, 2003; Maurino, Nino & Sigal, 2005; Morag-Levine, 2003; Gilbert, 1976).

It is absolutely logical that citizens and citizen groups prefer to participate in environmental governance by litigation rather than traditional party politics. Since environmental concerns tend to be peripheral to and not sufficiently incorporated by mainstream political parties (Hirschl, 2000; Roussopoulos, 1993) – which might be explained by the fact that, as Rosanvallon (2006) has pointed out, “taking environmental problems seriously commits one to thinking in temporal horizons that are incompatible with those of electoral cycles” (p. 49) – the judicial means of citizen participation (amongst other non-electoral means) has proven to be a more effective means for citizens to participate in environmental governance than voting or party affiliation. As Sunstein (1982) has argued, “adjudication is no longer conceived of as merely dispute-settlement, but has assumed a place alongside voting as a means of influencing government policy” (p. 987). When voting and party affiliation aren’t effective means of participating in environmental governance, concentrating on litigation (as well as other non-electoral
means of participation) makes much more sense. Moreover, as Cichowski & Stone Sweet (2003) have pointed out, “the judicial route to policy reform can be maximally efficacious, since judicial lawmaking grounded in an interpretation of a constitutional right is immune from legislative override” and “such rulings can be changed only through a subsequent judicial decision or by constitutional amendment” (p. 197). Rosanvallon (2007) has been even more emphatic about the relative efficacy of litigation compared with voting.

While the efficacy of judicial means of citizen participation may apply to all or many policy domains and not just environmental governance, judicial recourse does seem to be exceptionally attractive for environmental governance due to the negativity of much environmentally related citizen participation. Citizen participation in environmental governance has been observed to be overwhelmingly negative rather than positive – that is, citizens tend to reject and oppose projects for environmental reasons more often than support and promote projects for environmental reasons (Beck, 1994; Dupuy, 1980; Fischer, 2000; Roussopoulos, 1993). In fact, the acronym NIMBY (not in my back yard) seems to be used almost exclusively for environmental conflicts. In his discussion of the great diversity of interests, values and methods of those who call themselves environmentalists or ecologists, Dupuy (1980) has emphasized that they “resemble each other by their rejections rather than their concrete proposals” (p. 23). Similarly, Beck

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45 My translation of: “Diversos nos seus engajamentos, assemelham-se mais por suas recusas do que por suas proposições concretas” (p. 23)
(1994) has asserted that environmental risks “tell us what should not be done but not what should be done” (p. 9). In this sense, citizen participation in environmental governance embodies what Rosanvallon (2006) has called “the triumph of negative democracy” (p. 197); and the institutionalized means of citizen participation par excellence in negative democracy is judicial recourse.

In addition to the most common signification of the term ‘judicialization’ as increased activity and power of the judicial branch relative to the other two branches, it is worth noting a second and less common signification of the term. Judicialization may also refer to, according to Vallinder (1994), “the introduction or expansion of judicial staff or judicial working methods in the administrative sector” (p. 93). Filho (1996) has referred to this secondary signification of ‘judicialization’ with some noteworthy examples:

[T]he term is employed to denote the adoption of procedures similar to those typical of the judiciary for the preparation of decision-making by administrative or legislative bodies. In this manner, in legislatures and administrative bodies, hearings are called in which stakeholders are invited to express their opinions and to be heard, as is done sometimes in the cases of urban renewal projects, expropriations for public works, projects that may impact the environment, etc.46 (p. 189)

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46 My translation of: “Num sentido mais fraco, todavia, a expressão é empregada para designar a adoção de procedimentos próximos aos típicos da Justiça para a preparação da tomada de
These examples are by no means coincidental. The use of public hearings and judicial-like procedures (such as citizen juries and citizen panels), as well as the expansion of judicial staff (such as attorney generals and ombudsmen), for environmental governance has been well documented (Shelton & Kiss, 2005; Konisky & Beierle, 2001; Crosby, Kelly & Schaefer, 1986; Sabsay & Tarak, 1997; Brailovsky, 2004; Tepedino, 1998; Cappelli, 2001).

While there is much debate regarding the benefits and dangers of judicialization tendencies, which cannot be addressed herein, access to judicial recourse is viewed by many as an important component of both citizen participation (Sunstein, 1982; Benhabib, 2006; Brailovsky, 2004; CELS, 2008) and environmental governance (Shelton & Kiss, 2005; Papadopoulou, 2009; Babich, 1995; Tepedino, 1998; Chiras, 2006). The relationship between access to justice and participatory democracy, as well as the relationship between both of these and environmental governance, should be evident enough by the title and content of the Aarhus Convention, as well as Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and Section 1, Ch. 8.18 of the Agenda 21 from the 1992 Earth Summit, which read, respectively:

States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and
administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided. (Principle 10)

Governments and legislators, with the support, where appropriate, of competent international organizations, should establish judicial and administrative procedures for legal redress and remedy of actions affecting environment and development that may be unlawful or infringe on rights under the law, and should provide access to individuals, groups and organizations with a recognized legal interest. (Section 1, Ch. 8.18)

Such historical, theoretical and international support for the judicialization of environmental governance seems to evidence the exceptional feasibility and desirability of participatory environmental governance, especially but not exclusively in its negative forms.\(^{47}\)

**Legal Frameworks for Participatory Environmental Governance**

The proliferation of environmental legislation that explicitly promotes and/or guarantees non-electoral citizen participation is also noteworthy. Shelton & Kiss (2005) have asserted that “[p]ublic participation is emphasized throughout international and national environmental law” (p. 29), and a recent OECD publication (2005b) has pointed out that “many environmental statutes include provisions specifically pertaining to public participation in policy making” (p. 175). This legislative phenomenon is by no means

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\(^{47}\) Many judicial and judicial-like participatory institutions allow for, if not facilitate, constructive debates and the advancement of proposals (such as public hearings, citizen juries, ombudsmen, etc.).
exclusive to OECD countries. Tanzania’s (1997) National Environmental Policy states that “[e]nvironmental issues are best handled with the participation of all citizens at the relevant level” and “[t]here is absolute necessity to exercise a bottom-up approach in problem identification, project planning, implementation and monitoring” (p. 14).


Furthermore, the international community has been exceptionally supportive of the institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation in environmental governance (Agenda 21, 1992; OECD, 2005b; Shelton & Kiss, 2005). Agenda 21 has recognized that “[n]ew forms of dialogue are also being developed for achieving better integration among national and local government, industry, science, environmental groups and the public in the process of developing effective approaches to environment and development” (Section 1, Ch. 8.2) and explicitly declares the international community’s overall objective “to improve or restructure the decision-making process so that consideration of socio-economic and environmental issues is fully integrated and a broader range of public participation assured” (Section 1, Ch. 8.3). The most advanced and emphatic demonstration of international consensus in favor of participatory environmental governance is undoubtedly the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.
The consequences of such widespread and emphatic international support for participatory environmental governance have not been insignificant. Brailovsky (2007) has argued that the expansion of institutions of participatory democracy, especially in the developing world, resulted from the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, and the demands made by environmentalists therein. In fact, it has been suggested by many that the main cause of institutional reforms that aimed to increase non-electoral citizen participation opportunities was the pressure for greater participation in environmental governance by civil society organizations and actors (Hamel, 1998; Victorino, 2003; Brailovsky, 2004). While such pressure has definitely come from individual citizens, it has probably been most formidable from the increasingly abundant and powerful environmental civil society organizations (Beck, 1994; Fredriksson, Neumayer, Damania & Gates, 2005; Guha, 1999). Nevertheless, some, like Rydin & Pennington (2000), assert that pressure for participatory environmental governance is coming from all sectors of society: “Calls for greater public participation in environmental planning are found everywhere, from policy documentation at the central and local level to academic literature, and from the publications of environmental groups to the pronouncements of the media” (p. 154).

Paradigm-Shifts

The increasing integration of environmental concerns into established disciplines and professions has resulted in a number of paradigm-shifts that seem to make participatory democracy more desirable. At a very general level, these paradigm-shifts were acknowledged by the international community in the Agenda 21:
In recent years, some Governments have also begun to make significant changes in the institutional structures of government in order to enable more systematic consideration of the environment when decisions are made on economic, social, fiscal, energy, agricultural, transportation, trade and other policies, as well as the implications of policies in these areas for the environment. (Section 1, 8.2)

More specifically, there seem to be three paradigm-shifts that especially reflect the transdisciplinarity of environmental concerns and promote the institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation for environmental governance.

**Paradigm-Shift in Health Care and Well-Being**

For too long, in the industrialized world at least, health sciences have been based upon increasing specialization rather than integration and health care has been based upon curative rather than preventive care. Environmental conscientization, however, is challenging and shifting this obsolete paradigm for human health. While it is true that the links between clean water and sanitation and human health have been generally acknowledged since the 19th century (Corvalán, Kjellström & Smith), in recent decades the complex links between physical and social environmental conditions and human health have gained both expert and lay attention and organizations such as the WHO are increasingly promoting more holistic approaches to health care (WHO, 2006; Corvalán, Kjellström & Smith, 1999; Levins, 2009; Hanna & Coussens, 2001; Fitzpatrick &
LaGlory, 2000; Guillette, 2000; Whitehouse, 1999). Levins (2009) has been very supportive of this paradigm-shift towards a more holistic approach to health care:

When assessing health … our task is … to confront health, society, and habitat as a whole, in its full complexity. Health is produced and eroded in a natural and social environment that varies in time, space, and according to the social locations of people in various hierarchical, cooperative and competitive relationships. External influences – chemical, physical and microbial – impinge on us in a pattern that depends on how we produce and consume goods and use our time.

The effects of environmental quality on our psychological, as well as physical, well-being has been highlighted by Beck (1994):

The pollution of air, water and foodstuffs certainly increases allergies in the medical, but also in the psychological sense of the word. Everyone is caught up in defensive battles of various types, anticipating the surrounding hostile substances in one’s manner of living and eating. (p. 45)

The international community has also acknowledged this specifically health-related paradigm-shift in the Agenda 21:

the linkage of health, environmental and socio-economic improvements requires intersectoral efforts. Such efforts, involving education, housing, public works and community groups, including businesses, schools and
universities and religious, civic and cultural organizations, are aimed at enabling people in their communities to ensure sustainable development.

(Section 1, Ch. 6.1)

The international community strongly reaffirmed their support for a more holistic, preventive care-focused, environmentally aware and participatory health care paradigm at the UN Habitat II conference in Istanbul in 1996 (Habitat Agenda, 1996).

A holistic, transdisciplinary and integrative paradigm for health care, it is argued, requires the institutionalization of non-electoral citizen participation. Corvalán, Kjellström & Smith (1999) have argued that “[s]uccessful public health interventions … are those that concentrate on improving human environments, a task that cannot be achieved by the health sector on its own” (p. 656). Clearly, in order to control the prevalence of asbestos, for example, the participation of the construction (and demolition) industries is essential. Similarly, the reduction of childhood exposure to lead depends on the participation of all involved with painting, whether it be of buildings or of toys. In this sense, the paradigm-shift of health care from a parochial, reductionist and atomized short-term approach to a more holistic and transdisciplinary long-term approach makes the institutionalization of non-electoral citizen participation more desirable and feasible.

Paradigm-Shift in Architecture and Urban Planning

Rapid urbanization requires humans to organize their built environments more efficiently, more safely, more equitably, more sustainably and more democratically.
Rather than producing solitary and detached lucrative projects or artistic expressions with little appreciation for surrounding environmental conditions, architects and urban planners and others responsible for the organization of built environments must contemplate myriad physical (e.g. mitigation and adaptation to global warming, resource management, energy efficiency, risk prevention, air quality) and social (e.g. crime prevention, public space) environmental concerns (Mongin, 2006; Brand, 2005; Magnaghi, 2005; Navarro, 2009; Diario El Día, 2009; Pickett & Cadenasso, 2008; Fitzpatrick & LaGlory, 2000; Fowles, 2000; Ouroussoff, 2009; Habitat Agenda, 1996).

Architecture and urban planning need to embrace urban ecology. “Like any ecological study,” Pickett & Cadenasso (2008) have explained:

the understanding of urban ecological systems is concerned with structure, function, dynamics and their relationships. Urban structure includes the buildings and infrastructure; urban function includes delivery of resources and removal of wastes; and dynamics includes turnover in building stock and development of new transportation corridors, for example. (p. 8-9)

Architecture and urban planning can no longer ignore the environmental impacts of their profession. Ellin (1999), for example, has illustrated this paradigm-shift by referring to a description of a 1994 ACSA/AIA teachers’ seminar that stated:

Architecture, once just a matter of style, is now a matter of survival. After eleven thousand years of building to protect ourselves from the
environment, we are discovering that our designs are diminishing our health and well being, as well as the carrying capacity of the planet Earth.

Many believe a major ethical and cultural shift is required (p. 67).

And, there is ample evidence suggesting that architecture and urban planning are in fact beginning to embrace ecological and environmental concerns, in developed countries (Beatley, 1999; Girling & Kellett, 2005; Navarro, 2009; Ouroussoff, 2009; Rosenthal, 2009a; Saulny, 2007; ICLEI, 2009) and developing countries (Diario El Dia, 2009; Economist, 2008; Falcó, 2009; Martignoni, 2009; Goh, 2009; Rosenthal, 2009b). “The green-building movement,” according to Manhattan borough president Scott Stringer, “is now commonplace” (Navarro, 2009, n.p.). Brand (2005) has described this paradigm-shift that has brought environmental concerns to the fore of architecture and urban planning:

Above all, the environment seemed to encapsulate, albeit in a confused and contradictory fashion, the idea that urban futures could be better… the environment was seen as a means to re-establish a sense of quality of urban life at community and individual levels, expressing both the practical concerns of citizens and what was left of the intellectual optimism of academics and professionals. The environment was holistic and inspirational, and the sustainable city arose as a new urban paradigm in the often bleak landscape of fragmenting postmodern urbanism. (p. xvii)
This paradigm-shift – like others motivated by environmental concerns and their transdisciplinarity – forces architects and urban planners to consult others, experts as well as laypersons. And, increasingly environmentally concerned and committed architects and urban planners can also participate in and contribute to urban environmental governance more generally (Fowles, 2000; Antoni, 2005; ICLEI, 2009). Therefore, this paradigm-shift that is increasingly incorporating environmental concerns into architecture and urban planning makes the institutionalization of non-electoral citizen participation more feasible and more desirable now than before this paradigm-shift began taking place.

Paradigm-Shift in Education

Last, but definitely not least, of the three paradigm-shifts that must be discussed herein, is that of education. In fact, the paradigm-shift in education and pedagogy is perhaps the most far-reaching and significant of these environmentally motivated paradigm-shifts since education has a so-called ‘multiplier effect’ on all other aspects of society. Former mayor of Curitiba, Jamie Lerner (2007), for example, has emphasized as key to the success of the city’s solid waste management and recycling program, “children learned about the program at school and helped mobilize their parents” (p. xxi). This influence of children on others, especially their parents and relatives, has been called the ‘multiplier effect’, but its reach goes far beyond recycling programs and other concrete environmental policy objectives. In a sense, this paradigm-shift that consists of the incorporation of environmental education and the promotion of environmental ethics and critical transdisciplinary thinking is the backbone of other environmentally motivated
paradigm-shifts, such as those related to health care and architecture and urban planning. Sen (2000) has alluded to this fundamental and far-reaching effect of environmental education:

For efficient provision of public goods, not only do we have to consider the possibility of state action and social provisioning, we also have to examine the part that can be played by the development of social values and of a sense of responsibility that may reduce the need for forceful state action. For example, the development of environmental ethics can do some of the job that is proposed to be done through compelling regulation.

(p. 269)

The far-reaching effects of environmental education make this paradigm-shift in education and pedagogy one of the most important phenomena in the history of environmental governance.

Like the other paradigm-shifts aforementioned, the incorporation and promotion of environmental education has received much support from the international community (Brand, 2005; Kiss & Shelton, 1997; Palmer, 1998). Kiss & Shelton (1997) have emphasized the role of the United Nations:

UNESCO places great emphasis on environmental education as an essential component of the curriculum at all educational levels. To this end, the International Environmental Education Program (IEEP) was established by UNESCO and the United Nations Environment Program
(UNEP) in 1975 to promote the incorporation of environmental education, as an interdisciplinary topic, into policy-making, planning, curriculum design, and teacher training within the member states of UNESCO. (p. xix)

National and subnational governments throughout the world have mandated the formal public provision of environmental education (Palmer, 1998; Padrón, 2004; Menegat, 2002; Loureiro, 2003). It has even become enshrined in the constitutional law of such countries as Brazil, Colombia, and Argentina. And, where legislation and implementation of environmental education has lagged, teachers and civil society organizations have often taken the matter into their own hands. This has been evidenced exemplarily by the popularity of the YouTube video “The Story of Stuff” in classrooms across the U.S. and elsewhere (Kaufman, 2009). Outside of the classroom as well, governments as well as non-governmental actors seem to be constantly promoting environmental awareness campaigns and events.

As discussed at length previously, access to quality education and information are crucial for effective citizen participation, be it electoral or non-electoral participation. This is especially the case for environmental governance due to its information-intensivity and transdisciplinary nature. In this sense, environmental education – whether in the classroom or not – prepares citizens to participate more effectively. Perhaps more importantly, however, environmental education tends to promote cosmopolitan values and civic responsibility. Therefore, this paradigm-shift in education and pedagogy that is
characterized by the incorporation of environmental concerns and values makes citizens more capable and more willing to participate in environmental governance; and, therefore, this paradigm-shift is making the institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation more desirable and more feasible. Therefore, it is not coincidental that, according to Loureiro (2003), “participation makes up, along with interdisciplinarity and ecological unity, the tripod of environmental education\(^{48}\)” (p. 51). Essentially, environmental education is applied civic education.

**Anecdotal Evidence**

In addition to the theoretical support for participatory environmental governance and the aforementioned historical tendencies in environmentalism and environmental governance that seem favorable for the institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation in environmental governance, the particularly strong relationship between participatory democracy and environmental governance has compelling anecdotal evidence as well (Meadowcroft, 1999; Hamel, 1998; Menegat, 2002; Brailovsky, 2004; Victorino, 2003; Asensio, 2005; Narain, 2002; Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Landau, 2008; O’Rourke & Macey, 2003; Branch & Bradbury, 2006).

Throughout the world, institutions such as public hearings, referenda, advisory boards, citizen suits, ombudsmen, citizen juries (or panels), monitoring/policing mechanisms, judicial recourse and citizen legislative projects are very frequently used for

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\(^{48}\) My translation of: “A participação forma, juntamente com a interdisciplinardade e a unidade ecológica, o tripé da educação ambiental.”
environmental governance. There are innumerable concrete cases of such institutionalized means of non-electoral citizen participation being used for environmental governance. The proliferation of multisector watershed management councils is one of the most commonly cited examples of the uniquely favorable relationship between environmental governance and participatory democracy (Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Konisky & Beierle, 2001; Nahrain, 2002; Gutiérrez, 2006).

While the historical evidence regarding the exceptional appropriateness of participatory democracy for environmental governance remains more suggestive than conclusive, the aforementioned historical tendencies and anecdotal evidence does give good reason for democratic theorists and political scientists to research the institutionalization of non-electoral citizen participation with particular attention to the environmental policy domain.

Chapter 4

Urban Environmental Governance

Urban environmental governance, consistent with definitions provided herein, refers not only to a specific scale and a specific policy domain of governance, but also to the sociological and ecological characteristics unique to cities. The modifier ‘urban’ not only refers to the scale of governance (principally, but not exclusively, municipal49) and

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49 The scale of urban governance is not always (and increasingly not) exclusively the municipality, since (increasingly common and complex) metropolitan areas can be governed by multiple municipalities and particular metropolitan jurisdictions. See Rojas, Cuadrado-Roura & Fernández Guell, 2005.
previously discussed sociological characteristics (proximity, publicity, heterogeneity, complexity, transdisciplinarity, network society, information intensivity, uncertainty, anonymity, cosmopolitanism, creativity), but also, and more importantly, to a broader meaning of the word ‘environment’. This broader meaning not only includes distinctly urban environmental phenomena but also questions the aforementioned ideological separation of nature and society, which has been criticized at great length by Heynen, Kaika & Swyngedouw (2006). These authors point out that:

Although many view the notion of urban environmental landscapes as an oxymoron, Jacobs (1992 [1961], p.443) long ago already suggested that urban environments “are as natural as colonies of prairie dogs or the beds of oysters”. David Harvey substantiates his claim that there is nothing intrinsically unnatural about New York City by suggesting that human activity cannot be viewed as external to ecosystem function (Harvey 1996, p.86). “It is inconsistent”, Harvey (1996, p.187) continues, “to hold that everything in the world relates to everything else, as ecologists tend to, and then decide that the built environment and the urban structures that go into it are somehow outside of both theoretical and practical consideration. The effect has been to evade integrating understandings of the urbanizing process into environmental-ecological analysis.” The conclusion then that there is nothing unnatural about produced environments like cities, dammed rivers, or irrigated fields comes out of a realization that produced
environments are specific historical results of socio-environmental processes. This scenario can be summed up by simply stating that cities are built out of natural resources, through socially mediated natural processes. (p. 4-5)

These authors are not alone in their promotion of an integral perspective of nature and society that rejects the separation of the two concepts (George & McKinley, 1974; Bookchin, 2007; Roussopoulos, 1993; Harvey, 1996; Giddens, 1994; Lockie, 2004; Munro, 2004; Flanagan, 2000), and such a conceptualization of urban environments broadens the horizon for what ought to be considered an environmental concern, especially in an urban context.

Essentially, “urban” no longer refers just to the “where” (scale) and the “who” (sociology) of governance, but also to the “what” (policy domain). Phenomena that are uniquely or disproportionately urban (mass transit, dense housing, antennae, electricity, waste management, industrialized production, noise, advertisements, violent crime, asthma, risk, etc.) have for a long time been primarily considered as technological, economic, criminological, medical and so on, and only secondarily or terciarily considered as urban environmental phenomena – if considered as such at all. This is especially evident in the aforementioned paradigm-shifts in architecture, urban planning and health care. Housing policies and building codes have a great impact on resource consumption and degradation, waste management, the proliferation of pests and disease vectors as well as many kinds of environmental risk. Similarly, preventive health care
and nutrition, hospital waste management, the proliferation of antibiotics and other health care concerns have enormous consequences for urban environments. As Flanagan (2000) has pointed out, “[h]istorians have examined urban architecture, planning, sanitation, and real estate development as separate fields, but have rarely examined the environmental context of these issues” (p. 160). However, the list of urban phenomena whose environmental aspects have been traditionally relegated or neglected is much longer than that provided by Flanagan. To the uniquely or disproportionately urban phenomena whose environmental aspects have been traditionally relegated or neglected that have been mentioned thus far, we could add economic development (Prugh, Costanza & Daly, 2000; Brand, 2005; Hamel, 1998; Helfand, Berck & Maull, 2003; Leff, 1994; Hardoy, Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 1992), transportation (Litman, 2003; Brand, 2005; Ellin, 1999; Parker, 2008; Rosenthal, 2009a; Rosenthal, 2009b; Kukaswadia, 2009), crime (Tonnelat, 2008; Baviskar, 2002), aesthetics (Andrews, 1976; Baviskar, 2002; Brand, 2005; Luongo, 2009), and social justice (Guha, 1999; Harvey, 1996; Brand, 2005; Baviskar, 2002; Pepper, 1999; Fitzpatrick & LaGlory, 2000; Gottlieb, 2009). Brailovsky (1997) has argued very clearly why it indispensable that we not neglect the environmental relevance of such urban concerns:

Until now, the big decisions that affect the environment have been taken elsewhere. Building codes, planning codes, zoning, shopping malls and hideous highways have been decided elsewhere. In other words, everything has been decided overlooking environmental policy. Therefore,
it is necessary that we consider environmental governance and urban

governance to be the same thing\textsuperscript{50}. (p. 140)

Similarly, Flanagan has concluded that “cities themselves are environmental spaces” (p. 160).

Thus, a broader understanding of urban governance as an object – in addition to

being a scale and a sociological category – of governance, makes apparent the

environmental significance of urban governance. And, a broader conceptualization of the

environment that recognizes human activity as environmental phenomena and rejects the

ideological separation of non-human activity and human activity as natural and artificial,

respectively, makes apparent the importance of urban society for (macro and micro)

environmental governance. Environmental policymaking can no longer relegate urban

governance, and vice versa. Furthermore, an integrated approach to urban environmental

governance reinforces many of the theoretical characteristics that make urban governance

and environmental governance an exceptionally feasible and desirable scale of

governance and policy domain, respectively, for the institutionalization of participatory
democracy.

\textsuperscript{50} My translation of: Hasta ahora las grandes decisiones que afectaban el medio ambiente se
tomaban en otro lado. Y en otros lados se decidían los códigos de edificación y planeamiento, las excepciones, los shopings y esas horribles autopistas. O sea, todo pasaba por fuera de la política ambiental. Por eso es necesario considerar que el manejo del ambiente y la política urbana son una sola cosa.
Participatory Urban Environmental Governance:

This research aims to provide the lacking synthesis of democratic theory, urban sociology and environmental governance in order to enrich and help guide democracy and development studies, and the unified theoretical framework which seems to have come closest to satisfactorily providing such synthesis, thus far, is that of *urban political ecology*, perhaps best articulated by Heynen, Kaika & Swyngedouw (2006):

The central message that emerges from urban political ecology is a decidedly political one. To the extent that cities are produced through socio-ecological processes, attention has to be paid to the political processes through which particular socio-environmental urban conditions are made and remade. From a progressive or emancipatory position, then, urban political ecology asks questions about who produces what kind of socio-ecological configurations for whom. In other words, urban political ecology is about formulating political projects that are radically democratic in terms of the organization of the processes through which the environments that we (humans and non-humans) inhabit become produced. (p. 2)

In their ten-point ‘manifesto’ for urban political ecology, these authors also highlight the importance of participatory urban environmental governance:

Socio-ecological “sustainability” can only be achieved by means of a democratically controlled and organized process of socio-environmental
(re)-construction. The political programme, then, of political ecology is to enhance the democratic content of socio-environmental construction by means of identifying strategies through which a more equitable distribution of social power and a more inclusive mode of the production of nature can be achieved. (p. 13)

Brand’s (2005) conceptualization of urban environmentalism, too, has contributed significantly to the theoretical synergy between urban governance, environmental governance and participatory democracy. Nonetheless, these authors don’t go into a detailed discussion of the unique characteristics of urban governance and environmental governance, as done herein, which helps explain why there is an apparent synergy between urban governance, environmental governance and participatory democracy.

Essentially, the proximity, publicity, complexity, uncertainty, heterogeneity, cosmopolitanism, transdisciplinarity, information intensivity, networking, anonymity and creativity which characterize urban governance reinforce and enhance the feasibility and desirability of participatory environmental governance at the urban scale and by an urban citizenry. And, the proximity, publicity, collectiveness, complexity, uncertainty, heterogeneity, normativity, adaptivity, cosmopolitanism, transdisciplinarity, information and education intensivity (and reflexivity), networking, intimacy, spirituality and urgency which characterize environmental governance reinforce and enhance the feasibility and desirability of participatory urban governance when dealing with environmental policymaking.
Just as the increased density and publicity of private matters in urban areas increases the scope and need of participatory governance, for example, the increased density and publicity of environmental concerns in urban areas makes participatory urban environmental governance even more feasible and desirable. Since the impact of environmental contamination depends on the dilution capacity of the environment, and urban environments tend to have less dilution capacity, environmental phenomena affect more people and tend to be more contentious in urban communities than in rural communities (Van Vliet, 2008). Such characteristic-specific synergies could also be provided for each of the characteristics analyzed herein (uncertainty, adaptivity, cosmopolitanism, etc.), and others perhaps. Hamel (1998), for example, has described how the synergetic effects of normativity and transdisciplinarity that characterize urban governance and environmental governance have promoted participatory urban environmental governance:

With the recognition of the interrelationship of the majority of urban and environmental issues, environmentalists demanded the introduction not only of additional values which can be added to the list of urban concerns… but also of new normative requirements on the ethical level, as well as the organizational and managerial levels by forcing managers to abandon their sectoral visions. (p. 174)

In this sense, there are synergetic relationships between urban governance and environmental governance that make urban environmental governance an especially
appropriate arena for the institutionalization of non-electoral citizen participation. Nevertheless, the theoretical synergies of the characteristics of urban governance and environmental governance that make urban environmental governance an exceptionally appropriate arena for the institutionalization of participatory democracy undoubtedly require more empirical support.

**History and Historicity of Participatory Urban Environmental Governance:**

For very practical reasons, urban environmental governance is one of the areas of governance that most merit the attention of democratic theorists and political scientists who study the institutional transformations of democratic citizen participation. When thinking of environmental degradation, the issues most likely to come to our mind are those of global warming or stratospheric ozone depletion, deforestation or desertification, or maybe the collapse of fish stocks. Or, very possibly, people might think of whales, elephants and other (usually exotic, emblematic or ‘cute’) endangered species, or maybe horrific environmental disasters such as Chernobyl, Bhopal or one of countless oil spills. However, the type of environmental degradation that few people would immediately think of is that of urban environments. As Brand (2005) has pointed out, “to include urban issues was a relatively late development in sustainable development discourse” (p. 29). This is somewhat surprising since urban environmental quality is not a new problem – in fact, it was given serious attention by some important 19th century writers such as Fredrich Engels and Upton Sinclair (Stevenson, 2003) – and it has become steadily more relevant to the human condition in recent decades.
Considering that over half of our species lives in urban environments and the urban population will continue to surpass the rural population in both absolute and relative terms, the awareness of and concern for urban environmental quality is strikingly low. The Executive Director of UN-Habitat Anna Tibaijuka (2005) has pointed out that “[i]n 2000, it was estimated that some 900 million urban dwellers lived in life-threatening conditions of deprivation and environmental degradation. This number is expected to double by 2025” (p. 24). While nearly a sixth of humanity suffers such “life-threatening” environmental conditions, many more suffer life-shortening and life-degrading environmental conditions. As humanity becomes increasingly urban, the quality of life for humans becomes inextricably linked to urban environmental governance. As the Brundtland Commission pointed out, “the future will be predominantly urban and the most immediate environmental concerns of most people will be urban ones” (Satterthwaite, 2003, p. 74).

In addition to the uniquely or disproportionately urban environmental concerns that make urban environmental governance a priority for the improvement of humanity’s conditions, even the most apparently non-urban environmental concerns have their roots and solutions in urban environmental governance (Satterthwaite, 2003; Habitat Agenda, 1996). While global warming may be directly caused by the emission of greenhouse gases and the reduction or degradation of carbon reservoirs that may be due to coal plants and deforestation in very remote non-urban areas, the demand for energy and forest products overwhelmingly comes from urban communities, especially from the most
wealthy countries. So the only way to reduce the demand for energy and materials is to make urban communities more environmentally aware, more environmentally harmonious, more energy efficient and more resource efficient (Hardoy, Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 1992; Van Vliet, 2008; Tibajjuka, 2005, 2007; Kahn, 2006); and, this is becoming increasingly common knowledge (Lee, 2007; Brand, 2005; Jacobi, 1995, 2000; Schneider, 2005; Navarro, 2009; Lubow, 2007; Saulny, 2007; Rosenthal, 2009a; Rosenthal, 2009b; Economist, 2008).

While the awareness of and concern for urban environmental governance may be strikingly low considering its increasing relative importance, in recent decades such a lack of awareness and prioritization of urban environmental concerns has began to subside and urban environmental concerns have become increasingly recognized and discussed by policymakers, academics, business elites, media, civil society actors and laypersons (Brand, 2005; Jacobi, 1995, 2000; Lee, 2007; Baviskar, 2002). Brand (2005) has explained this recent prioritization of urban environmental governance, by analyzing the activity of the international community regarding the matter:

The Earth Summit gave an important boost to environmental approaches to urban development, in that Agenda 21 formalized and structured the basic precepts and policy items of the urban environmental agenda. The period between the Brundtland Report and the Rio Summit had witnessed the production of position statements and policy documents from many multi-lateral development agencies, such as the World Bank’s (1990)
Urban Policy for the 1990s, the OECD’s (1990) Environmental Policies for Cities in the 1990s, and the CEC’s (1990) Green Paper on the Urban Environment. Policy statements such as these helped consolidate the urban agenda, and the challenge after the Earth Summit became one of implementation of the ‘brown agenda’: the pollution, risk and unhealthiness of settlements. Although recognizing the contribution of cities to the destabilization of global life-support systems (the ‘green agenda’ of deforestation, global warming, resource depletion, biodiversity, and so forth), the brown agenda highlighted the immediate social effects of urban environmental deterioration. (p. 33)

Furthermore, Brand (2005) has highlighted the emphasis on participatory democracy that has accompanied this recent emergence of an urban environmental agenda:

[U]rban environmentalism, far from having had a minimal effect on urban change, can be seen as forming a constitutive part of one of the greatest transformations of space in urban history. It has been hugely successful, not in its own overt reference to ecology, but in the sense of providing argumentative and representational support for the rebuilding of cities, the spatial restructuring of urban economies, new forms and techniques of government, urban lifestyles, a sense of citizenship and political subjectivities. (p. 23)
In the 21st century, the exceptional feasibility and desirability of the institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation for urban environmental governance seem to be no longer just theoretically reasonable, but also empirically observable (Brand, 2005; Hamel, 1998; Eckerberg & Forsberg, 1998; Menegat, 2002; Landau, 2008; Xie & Ho, 2008; Lerner, 2007; Callow, 1990; Velásquez, 1999; Balvín Díaz, López Follegati & Hordijk, 1996; Barrera, 2004; Keil & Boudreau, 2006; Counsell, 1999; Joas, 2001; Barrett & Usui, 2002; Sancassiani, 2005). Non-electoral institutions of citizen participation appear to be increasingly and disproportionately used for urban environmental governance. Public hearings, multisectoral advisory boards, participatory budgeting and planning, ombudsmen’s offices and judicial recourse seem to be the most frequently used participatory institutions for urban environmental governance, but there are also experiences with municipal referenda (Gómez, 2007; Reyes, 2007; Ramírez, 2009) and citizens’ juries (Kenyon, Nevin & Hanley, 2003; Font & Blanco, 2007) – and, surely other innovative institutions of non-electoral citizen participation in urban environmental governance.

Nonetheless, there don’t appear to exist analyses of such empirical evidence within a theoretical framework as detailed and synthetic as that developed herein. In order to verify, reject or clarify the theoretical assumptions and allusions that urban environmental governance is an – if not the most – exceptionally appropriate arena for the institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation, it is necessary to carry out quantitative and qualitative analyses of all cases of institutionalized non-
electoral means of citizen participation in a given territory that encompasses multiple scales of governance and all policy domains in order to conclude whether or not such empirical evidence supports the theoretical framework developed herein.

Conclusion

There are innumerable questions regarding the institutionalization of participatory democracy that merit serious research and debate. This thesis has merely aimed at researching the theoretical arguments and historical evidence regarding the most appropriate scale of governance for the institutionalization of participatory democracy and the most appropriate policy domain for the institutionalization of participatory democracy. Likewise, this research, analysis and synthesis of democratic theory, urban sociology and environmental policy, with constant reference to the history and historicity of each, is far from exhaustive, and hopefully such research, analysis and synthesis will continue to expand upon as well as deepen the concepts and arguments developed herein.

While all of the arguments and assumptions made herein need to be challenged and further researched, there are some questions regarding participatory urban environmental governance for which evidence is especially insufficient. Which participatory institutions are most frequently used for urban environmental governance? Which urban environmental concerns tend to be governed in part by direct democratic institutions and which tend to be governed in part by advocacy democratic institutions? Which types of political actors tend to use certain participatory institutions? Which participatory institutions are most suitable for governing urban environmental concerns at
the neighborhood scale as opposed to the municipal or metropolitan scale? These and other questions obviously merit greater research and this thesis has by no means been able to adequately and conclusively address them. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this thesis provides a better context within which these questions can be researched, analyzed and debated. In this sense, the aim of this thesis research has been to provoke further research, analysis and debate about such questions while attempting to focus participatory democracy studies research on the scale of governance and the policy domain of governance that are arguably the most appropriate for the institutionalization of participatory democracy.

The theoretical framework herein presented, that the institutionalization of participatory democracy is most feasible and desirable for urban environmental governance, does not mean that it is not feasible or desirable at other scales of governance or for other policy domains. In fact, there is ample evidence that non-electoral citizen participation is being institutionalized at supralocal scales and rural units of governance and that such institutions are being used for a number of policy domains other than environmental governance. Nor does the theoretical framework herein presented mean that urban environmental governance can be adequately addressed solely by the institutionalization of non-electoral citizen participation. Consistent with most participatory democracy theorists, the institutionalization of non-electoral citizen participation for urban environmental governance is understood herein as complementary to – as opposed to substitutive of – representative democracy and electoral citizen
participation. Nor does the theoretical framework herein presented imply that urban municipal (or metropolitan) institutions are sufficient for effective urban environmental governance. Supralocal forms of governance, including international and cosmopolitical institutions (Archibugi, 2000), are obviously necessary.

Essentially, the theoretical framework presented herein argues that contemporary transformations of the institutions of democratic citizen participation reflect a decreasing legitimacy and efficacy of representative democratic institutions and electoral citizen participation and an increasing institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation. The latter, however, seems to vary in quantity and quality by the scale (or unit) of governance as well as the policy domain of governance; therefore, it is imperative that democratic theorists study how the increasing institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation varies across scales and policy domains. Within the democratic theory, urban sociology and environmental policy literatures, many often explicitly argue or implicitly assume that urban governance is the most appropriate scale for the institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation and that environmental governance is the most appropriate policy domain for the institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation. Accordingly, this research has aimed to analyze such arguments and assumptions in order synthesize them into a more coherent theoretical framework for participatory urban environmental governance.
The theoretical framework that has resulted from such research, analysis and synthesis highlights a number of characteristics that are especially unique to or descriptive of urban governance and environmental governance and which make them, respectively, an exceptionally appropriate scale and policy domain for the institutionalization of participatory democracy. Furthermore, the characteristics that were found to be especially unique to or descriptive of urban governance and environmental governance were often the same or compatible. So, when considering urban environmental governance as one arena – that encompasses the particular characteristics of a certain scale, sociology, and policy domain – the particular characteristics of urban governance and environmental governance seem to reinforce and enhance the feasibility and desirability of the institutionalization of participatory democracy.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the available literature regarding case studies of institutionalized participatory democracy manifests ample empirical evidence of the institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation for urban environmental governance, as well as the use of such institutions. Moreover, the declarations of the international community as well as many national legal regulations seem to corroborate the exceptional feasibility and desirability of participatory urban environmental governance. Nevertheless, there don’t appear to exist empirical analyses of the institutionalization of participatory democracy across scales and policy domains within a theoretical framework as detailed and synthetic as that developed herein; and, in order to verify, reject or clarify the theoretical assumptions and allusions that urban
environmental governance is an – if not the most – exceptionally appropriate arena for the institutionalization of participatory democracy, it is necessary to carry out quantitative and qualitative analyses of all cases of institutionalized non-electoral means of citizen participation in a given territory that encompasses multiple scales of governance and all policy domains in order to conclude whether or not such empirical evidence supports the theoretical framework developed herein.

Of course, it is possible that urban environmental governance is exceptionally appropriate for the institutionalization of non-electoral means of citizen participation, but not due to the characteristics of urban environmental governance provided and analyzed within the theoretical framework developed herein. Nevertheless, the characteristics analyzed herein are those that are most prominent in urban and environmental sociology and urban and environmental policy literature. The theoretical synthesis and framework developed herein is by no means intended to be perfect and immutable, but rather to provide an exploratory and rudimentary synthesis of arguments and assumptions that has been lacking in the theoretical literature regarding participatory democracy and urban environmental governance. Therefore, more theoretical and empirical research is obviously necessary in order to better understand contemporary transformations in democratic institutionality, and it seems that participatory urban environmental governance merits prioritization within that academic research agenda.
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