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# Participate for Peace: The Impacts of Participatory Deliberative Democracy on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in Central America

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# PARTICIPATE FOR PEACE:

# THE IMPACTS OF PARTICIPATORY DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY ON POST-CONFLICT PEACEBUILDING IN CENTRAL AMERICA

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by
MARCIA D. MUNDT

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ABSTRACT

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May 2020

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Liberal peacebuilding is at the center of a critical debate amongst scholars and practitioners due to the horrific consequence of conflict relapse or escalation in the wake of failed international interventions. Despite international efforts to promote durable peace, empirical research suggests that up to one half of all civil wars relapse into conflict within five years of negotiated settlement (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002; Suhrke & Samset, 2007). As an alternative to top-down liberal peace, locally-led post-conflict peacebuilding has been proposed as an innovative solution (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013). Participatory deliberative democracy, when applied in post-conflict contexts, aligns with this 'local turn' by supporting 'hybridity' in peacebuilding practice. However, its potential for contributing to sustainable peace has not yet been empirically tested. This dissertation explores how two post-conflict nations in Central America—El Salvador and Guatemala—have implemented participatory deliberative democracy mechanisms following civil war and the impacts of these mechanisms on the long-term peace process. Combining theoretical frameworks from across political science,

economics, and conflict resolution disciplines alongside an international comparative mixed methodology, this study identifies the impacts associated with participatory deliberative democracy over time in two Central American post-conflict countries and the structural and contextual factors that influence deliberative decision making as a possible mechanism to support lasting peace following civil war.

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It takes an international network, and I thank all of you for joining me on this journey.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADESCO – Community Development Associations
ANAM – National Association of Municipalities
ANOVA – Analysis of Variance
ARENA – Nationalist Republican Alliance
COCODE – Community Development Council
CODEDE – Department Development Council
COMUDE – Municipal Development Council
CONADUR – National Urban and Rural Development Council
COPAZ – National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace
COREDE – Regional Development Council
DQI – Discourse Quality Index
DM&E – Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation
CQI – Contact Quality Index
GANA – Grand Alliance for National Unity
FISDL – Social Investment Fund for Local Development
FMLN – Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front
FODES – Social Development Fund
FUSADES – Foundation for Economic and Social Development
HI – Horizontal Inequality
ICMA – International City/County Management Association
IEP – Institute for Economics and Peace
IRB – Institutional Review Board
ISDEM – Salvadoran Institute of Municipal Development
JICA – Japan International Cooperation Agency
LAPOP – Latin American Public Opinion Project at Vanderbilt University
MINUGUA – United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala
NGO – Nongovernmental Organization
OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OLS – Ordinary Least Squares
ONUSAL – United Nations Mission in El Salvador
PDD – Participatory Deliberative Democracy
PEP – Participatory Strategic Plan
PIP – Participatory Investment Plan or Participatory Budget
SSDT – Sub-Secretary of Territorial Development and Decentralization
UK – United Kingdom
UN – United Nations
UNDP – United Nations Development Program
UNE – National Unity of Hope
UNODC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
URNG – Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity
US – United States
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
USD – United States Dollar

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

Improved peacebuilding and post-conflict development practices are a pressing concern across the global community. Since the introduction of the Marshall Plan following World War II, attempts to build peace in post-conflict contexts have been pursued largely by international actors in partnership with national-level governments and elites. Though the Marshall Plan is certainly considered a successful endeavor, having sowed the seeds of the European Union created mere decades after devastating war, the nature of conflict today has changed. Walter (2011) indicates that over 90% of modern-day wars are intrastate versus interstate conflicts. Thus, traditionally structured international interventions intended to help may not actually be turning the tide on the durability of peace in post-conflict nations. Ricigliano (2012) explains, "The international community is better at stopping violence than building or consolidating peace. […] The challenge is not making peace, at least in some partial sense; rather, the difficulty is making peace last" (p. 5).

Despite international efforts to promote durable peace, post-conflict societies have a track-record of recurring direct violence. In fact, empirical research suggests that up to half of all civil wars begin within five years of a prior conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002, p. 436). Even conservative estimates suggest a post-conflict relapse rate of 23% (Suhrke & Samset, 2007).

Rwanda is the most well-known case of failed peacebuilding prior to the genocide in 1994, though Walter (2011) finds that Ethiopia, Myanmar, and India are the most severe cases of conflict relapse and repeated civil war cycles.

Furthermore, conflicts have a lingering effect, especially in the wake of civil war. Junne & Verkoren (2005) describe a post-conflict context as "a conflict situation in which open warfare has come to an end (though) such situations remain tense for years or decades and can easily relapse into large-scale violence" (p. 1). Even in countries touted as cases of successful peacebuilding, violence can soar far above war-time levels. In El Salvador and Guatemala, gang-related crime has driven the current homicide rate to a record high within the top ten world-wide (UNODC Statistics, 2014). Fragile states, 70% of which have seen internal conflict since 1989, were the furthest away from achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 target date (OECD, 2010).

Throughout the last several decades, particularly in the aftermath of the Cold War, a growing debate about the values and strategies used to pursue peace has developed in both academic and practitioner circles. This debate is between those that approach peacebuilding as a top-down liberal project and those that support bottom-up local agency to consolidate peace. Participatory deliberative democracy (PDD), which encourages public engagement in the policy-making process by emphasizing political inclusion and citizen empowerment through deliberation, is a bottom-up approach that has been linked to improved political, social, and economic outcomes (Cini & Felicetti, 2018; Mundt, 2019). These links have been explored largely in studies on international development (e.g. Blair, 2000; Boulding & Wampler, 2010; Gaventa, 2004; Osmani, 2001; Schneider, 1999; Wampler, 2012), and several scholars have written theoretically about how it may (or may not) apply in divided societies such as Northern

Ireland (divided by sectarianism), Kenya or Bosnia (divided by ethnicity), or Columbia (divided by ideology) (e.g. Aragaki, 2009; Coelho & Waisbich, 2016; Delaney, Van Der Haar, & Van Tatenhove, 2017; Deutsch, 2000; O'Flynn, 2007, 2017; Siu & Stanisevski, 2012; Steiner, Jaramillo, Maia, & Mameli, 2017; Ugarriza & Trujillo-Orrego, 2018).

In Central American, PDD has been used to engage the public in policy decision making following civil war. Two nations in particular—Guatemala and El Salvador—have implemented PDD alongside their national peacebuilding processes and have not relapsed into civil war since their peace agreements were signed. While both nations passed laws calling for PDD, the way PDD has been occasioned, implemented, and enforced differs greatly between the two nations.

In Guatemala, the introduction of participatory democracy was called for directly in the Guatemalan Peace Accords signed in December of 1996. Development Councils with deliberative structures that scale within a hierarchy from each neighborhood to municipal, departmental, regional, and national level are the primary PDD mechanism in execution. Traditional forms of participation were also re-initiated such as open Town Hall meetings and public budget hearings. Over twenty years post-conflict, I spoke with eighteen of the country's municipalities, each one employing these same mechanisms with minor innovations in structure and implementation to adapt to local context and build upon the participatory and deliberative trajectory of citizen engagement established in the peace accords. PDD, in this case, has been pushed from the top-down with established funding pools, reporting requirements, and incentive systems to ensure implementation.

In El Salvador, PDD has developed through small-scale innovations by municipal officials and non-governmental organizations both local and international. While

decentralization of state power and government transparency was certainly propelled forward through the peace process and gradually institutionalized in law, PDD was not an explicit goal nor a mechanism envisioned as a tool for peacebuilding. Thus, each municipality and administration in succession has developed its own approach to engaging citizens in public decision making. Most PDD processes are built upon Community Development Associations and a plethora of mechanisms outlined in the Municipal Code. In this study, over twenty-five years post-conflict, I spoke with local officials in twenty-six of the nation's municipalities employing thirteen different participatory mechanisms with variation therein at the local level. While several mechanisms are unique to local context or a single mayor's vision, the most common mechanisms include public assemblies, Community Development Associations, and participatory planning. In this case, PDD has been developed from the bottom-up and its success or failure largely depends on the commitment and execution of municipal leaders.

Despite the distinct way PDD has been rolled out and sustained in both nations following civil war, we do not yet know the impact of PDD processes on each nation's progress toward building sustainable peace. It is unknown whether PDD is contributing to, or potentially detracting from, peace in these countries. The key research question explored in this dissertation is: *How, if at all, does the implementation of participatory deliberative democracy in post-conflict contexts impact peacebuilding?* In particular, this study explores how PDD is associated with what Galtung (1969) refers to as "negative peace," or the absence of violence, as well as "positive peace," which refers to social justice or improved quality of life.

Using a comparative case study and mixed methods research design, I find that PDD can indeed influence peace. In Guatemala, PDD took over a decade to show an effect on peace-related factors, but after twenty years I find that participation is associated with both political

and social dimensions of 'positive' peace. Although at first, PDD was associated with adverse effects on 'negative' peace, specifically PDD participants showed increased experience with violent crime, this association disappears over time. In El Salvador, PDD contributes positively to the political dimension of 'positive' peace both at fifteen and twenty-five years after the civil war ended. Similar to the case of Guatemala, El Salvador's PDD participants experienced and increased incidence of violent crime compared to non-participants in the early years of implementation, but this effect eventually faded out. Comparing structural factors of PDD design and contextual factors stemming from the two nations' peace agreements and political climates after the war, I find that both countries pursued a 'hybrid' approach to locally led peacebuilding via PDD spaces. However, the approach differed greatly between the two countries, and each PDD system offers important lessons for implementation in alternative post-conflict contexts.

**1a. Research Design Overview**

Building upon literature on peacebuilding and the interdisciplinary theories of deliberative democracy, horizontal inequality, and intergroup contact, I develop several hypotheses and propositions about the possible links between PDD and peace. I then use a comparative case study, each case explored with mixed methods, to identify how local-level PDD mechanisms used in post-conflict Guatemala and El Salvador are influencing peace. I then look to structural and contextual factors of PDD implementation to explain divergent peace-related outcomes in each nation.

My selection of case countries stems from three primary considerations: First, like any large-scale initiative designed to create behavioral change, peacebuilding investments take

time to show results; thus, I sought out countries that had been 'post-conflict' for at least two decades. Second, I selected countries that had instituted PDD programs in the post-war period. Third, I looked for case countries of a similar cultural and historical background to eliminate one of many factors that may influence the observed effects of PDD on peace. Post-conflict Guatemala and El Salvador were ultimately selected in alignment with these three criteria. By drawing comparisons across these two Central American countries, this study sheds light on which forms of PDD can be most effective in the aftermath of war and the contextual and structural conditions that promote the successful implementation of these policy initiatives as part of a larger peacebuilding agenda.

Using integrated mixed methods to delve into each case, I combine qualitative and quantitative techniques for data collection and analysis to allow me to answer two sub-research questions: 1) To what extent and in what ways does the implementation of PDD in post-conflict contexts impact peacebuilding?; and 2) How do structural design and contextual factors of PDD implementation in post-conflict contexts influence these effects? To answer these questions, I completed a two-time-period quantitative analysis of an internationally comparative secondary dataset and conducted original qualitative interviews and observations with municipal officials and PDD participants in each case country. Each of these components are further elaborated below.

To gauge the impact of PDD on peace, I developed several regression models to determine if there was an association between PDD participation and measures I tied theoretically with 'positive' and 'negative' peace. For 'positive' peace, I explore associations with political, economic, and social outcomes that reflect structural and social justice. Related to 'negative' peace, I investigate the association between PDD participation and individual's

experience with and perceptions of violent crime. Each of these measurers is operationalized using secondary data from the AmericasBarometer survey in 2008 and 2018. The AmericasBarometer survey is an internationally comparative dataset developed from a bi-annual survey coordinated by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) at Vanderbilt University. In 2008, 1,538 individuals in Guatemala and 1,549 individuals in El Salvador, a nationally representative sample in each country, were asked about their participation in three types of local PDD programs: community associations, open Town Hall meetings, and participatory budgeting and planning initiatives. I petitioned LAPOP to ask all three of these questions again in the 2018/19 survey round to 1,596 individuals in Guatemala and 1,511 people in El Salvador to enable a ten-year snapshot of the long-term effects of citizen participation in government decision making.

To identify the structural and contextual factors that influence PDD success in the two selected Central American post-conflict nations, I completed interviews with municipal officials and participants in PDD programs alongside observations of PDD in action in each country. Municipalities were selected first based on their inclusion in my secondary dataset and then in four strata based on majority rural versus urban composition and political party leadership (Guatemala/El Salvador) or indigenous majority (Guatemala). From June of 2017 to June of 2019, I conducted extensive fieldwork during which I visited eighteen municipalities in Guatemala and twenty-six in El Salvador. This fieldwork entailed interviewing thirty-one and thirty-seven public officials in each country, respectively, about their experiences and perceptions with PDD. Municipal questions largely focused on the implementation and observed impacts of PDD mechanisms. I returned to at least one community in each strata of my municipal selection matrix to observe PDD in action and completed subsequent participant

interviews with the aim of reaching saturation. In the end, I observed eighteen separate PDD processes and interviewed fifty-eight participants in Guatemala, and I observed sixteen PDD processes and spoke with thirty-six participants in El Salvador. The observations provided me with a more nuanced view of the dynamics of PDD in practice, and allowed me to rank different types of PDD mechanisms by deliberative and contact quality using Steenbergen, Bächtiger, Spörndli, & Steiner's (2003) Discourse Quality Index (DQI) and an original Contact Quality Index (CQI). Participant interviews explored individual interactions with government and neighbors in PDD programs and any impacts related to PDD involvement. In combination, these qualitative methods triangulated my data sources including elite and participant perspectives alongside my own observations for each type of PDD process.

**1b. Contributions of the Study**

This dissertation marks one of the first international comparative case studies on the relationship between local-level PDD and post-conflict peacebuilding. Indeed, this relationship has been largely unexplored in the literature to date. Theoretical research promoting the interdisciplinary study of these two fields in tandem is currently limited. There is a growing interest in how participatory deliberative democracy and conflict transformation theorists might offer insights to one another (Kiefer, 2015; Menkel-Meadow, 2006; O'Flynn, 2007, 2017; Ron, 2010). As forwarded by Menkel-Meadow (2006), deliberative democracy and conflict resolution fields converge in the belief that popular participation will produce better outcomes when the community engages in intergroup contact to develop and legitimize public investments on initiatives that maximize public benefit. Dryzek (2005) has long argued that deliberative democracy has the potential to "process what are arguably the toughest kind of

political issues, the mutually contradictory assertions of identity that define a divided society" (p. 218). However, theorists debate whether the two fields should even be in dialogue. A more thorough theoretical investigation of this link by Aragaki (2009) argues that there are strong normative differences between the two fields, which ultimately puts them at odds on the basis of each's understanding of conflict, the function of discourse, and the role of interest-based positions in dispute resolution. Though the two fields of study emphasize the role of discourse in the form of deliberation for deepening democracy and dialogue for advancing reconciliation, the theoretical link between the two has often been limited to elite level deliberation or negotiation in post-conflict contexts (Johnstone, 2007; Nakagawa, 2018).

Most scholars that study PDD explore its effects on democratic consolidation or deepening democracy in post-conflict contexts. They ask if PDD improves the legitimacy of local government and the democratic system more broadly. While there are many studies that explore how PDD has been implemented in these two case countries during the post-conflict era (e.g. Bird, 2001; International City/County Management Association, 2004c; Kapustin & Charles, 1997; National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 1995; Ucles, 1992; Wolf, 2009), only one author has started to explore how PDD processes are tied to peacebuilding focusing on the durability and sustainability of such initiatives in El Salvador specifically (Bland, 2011, 2017).

Those that study post-conflict peacebuilding typically focus on macro-level or national initiatives to consolidate peace, such as peace agreements, national elections, truth and reconciliation commissions, or demobilization efforts targeting the rebel and government armed forces. There is also a growing body of literature on civil society's role in peace processes, which is explored in greater depth in my literature review. There have been several

researchers to explore peacebuilding in both Guatemala and El Salvador (e.g. Pearce, 1998, 1999; Pérez, 2003; J. Pugh, 2009), but these studies merely touch upon or simply do not explore how PDD has been integrated into or impacted the peace process. One study that does make this connection empirically explores public participation and deliberation in Zones of Peace established to reduce violence in El Salvador as well as Colombia and the Philippines (Hancock, 2018). Thus, though these two cases have been explored previously in the literatures on both PDD and peacebuilding, my research question linking these two fields of inquiry has yet to be explored.

The research design used in this study is also quite unique for this area of research as it offers a comparative perspective on this question. I have encountered a handful of other studies looking into local-level participatory democracy and peacebuilding, but they tend to focus on just one case. For example, a few researchers are exploring the use of PDD in post-conflict Colombia (Dajer Barguil, 2017; Hancock, 2018; Ugarriza & Trujillo-Orrego, 2018). Additionally, I one article investigates deliberative democracy and peacebuilding in Kosovo (Delaney et al., 2017). However, there is a dearth of peer reviewed and formally published comparative work in this area. Likewise, in both other articles on this topic, researchers have shied away from the use of quantitative methods preferring a qualitative approach. The mixed methodology employed in this dissertation, therefore, brings a rare and powerful lens through which to explore this area in greater depth.

The primary aim of this study is to explore PDD as a mechanism to bolster the sustainability of post-conflict peacebuilding and to prevent and mitigate a return to violence following civil war. Given the empirical evidence on the failure of peace settlements and the possibility of post-conflict societies backsliding into violence, it is vitally important that

innovative mechanisms such as PDD be evaluated for areas of impact and optimal contextual and structural factors that may contribute to effective implementation in post-conflict settings. This dissertation advances both public policy and peace studies fields as it explores the implications of PDD in post-conflict Guatemala and El Salvador. While any post-conflict peacebuilding method applied to one conflict case cannot be applied directly to another due to the unique conflict characteristics in each circumstance, this research can offer insightful lessons learned and suggest policy implications for other cases in which PDD implementation is being contemplated in post-conflict contexts. Three current contexts, to my knowledge, exploring this option are Colombia (Dajer Barguil, 2017), Northern Ireland (Bohman, 2012; Hayward, 2014), and Israel/Palestine (Ahmed, 2005).

### 1c. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. From this overview provided in Chapter 1, I proceed in Chapter 2 with a discussion about how my research fits into the literature on a key debate about peacebuilding. Specifically, I place this study at the intersection between proponents of top-down 'liberal peace' approaches and bottom-up 'local turn' supporters. I also outline the theoretical links between PDD and peacebuilding across political, economic, and social dimensions of the peace process by combining deliberative democracy, horizontal inequality, and intergroup contact theory into a comprehensive framework to make a case for why PDD may be a promising method for peacebuilding and the potential impacts of its implementation in post-conflict contexts.

In Chapter 3, I outline my primary and secondary research questions, my hypotheses and propositions, and the research design I utilize for my analysis. The primary research

question guiding this study is: *How, if at all, does the implementation of participatory deliberative democracy in post-conflict contexts impact peacebuilding?* My research design is structured to answer two sub-questions: 1) To what extent and in what ways does the implementation of PDD in post-conflict contexts impact peacebuilding?; and 2) How do structural design and contextual factors of PDD implementation in post-conflict contexts influence these effects? Stemming from academic literature and practitioner experience to date, I hypothesize that PDD participation will improve peace through its influence on political, economic, and social domains that contribute to more just and peaceful societies. I also propose that various structural and contextual factors, such as the size and frequency of PDD mechanisms or national political systems, will make a difference in the outcome. To answer these questions, I outline how I combine a comparative case study and mixed methods to investigate PDD implementation in Guatemala and El Salvador.

The final three chapters reveal the results of my analysis. In Chapter 4, I discuss my findings in the case of Guatemala; and in Chapter 5, I share my findings in El Salvador. While there are many similarities in the two cases, such as the troubling finding that PDD participation is associated with increased incidence of violent crime during earlier years of implementation, I also find some key differences in the outcomes of these two cases. Most notably, I find that El Salvador's experience with PDD was more influential earlier on than in Guatemala and has generated far more variants of PDD. However, Guatemala's centralized and hierarchical PDD system has gained incredible strength with regards to its capacity to influence policy making and budgetary decisions at the local level. PDD mechanisms in both countries are currently associated with strong and multidimensional elements of 'positive' peace, but Guatemala's PDD system demonstrates a broader range of positive effects. I close

in Chapter 6 with an in-depth comparison of my findings in both countries and the structural and contextual factors that produce divergent results. I also share policy implications and a response to the literature for both practitioners interested in implementing PDD in alternative post-conflict contexts and future scholars interested in expanding upon this relatively new area of research.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2a. The Call for Peacebuilding

Galtung (1975) was the first to use the term 'peacebuilding' in reference to efforts to move toward sustainable 'positive' peace following conflict. "Positive peace" he defines as the "absence of structural violence," whereas "negative peace" is the "absence of personal [physical] violence" (Galtung, 1969). This typology is one of the most frequently utilized conceptualizations of peace in the field of conflict resolution today, as demonstrated by its recent use in the creation of the Positive Peace Index by the Institute for Economics and Peace (2016) designed to evaluate state stability (versus fragility). While ceasefires and peace agreement negotiations largely focus on the achievement of 'negative' peace through cessation of direct, physical violence, Galtung's conception of post-conflict peacebuilding aspires to go beyond 'negative' peace, to establishing 'positive' peace in which the causes of social injustice that gave rise to conflict have been adequately addressed and structures for the peaceful resolution of future disagreements have been installed.

In the realm of international relations and foreign assistance, peacebuilding was brought into the limelight by former UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali (1992) in *An Agenda for Peace* in which he describes it as "comprehensive efforts to identify and support

structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people." Touching upon the same core outcomes espoused by practitioners engaged in 'peace work' over a decade later, Ricigliano (2012) offers that "peace is a state of human existence characterized by sustainable levels of human development and healthy processes of societal change" (p. 15). Like Galtung, Boutros-Ghali and Ricigliano suggest that peacebuilding efforts should go beyond stopping violence to include structural change and development. More succinctly, rather than just seeking to stop violence, peacebuilding should enhance quality of life in post-conflict communities such that the root causes of conflict are addressed, and relapse is averted. Peacebuilding activities can range from reconciliation at the individual psychological level; to interpersonal restorative justice; and systemic structural change seeking to resolve the causes of conflict across political, economic, and social sectors (Pruitt & Kim, 2004, p. 253).

While peacebuilding aspires to 'positive' peace in the wake of conflict, there is not one defined set of measures for this concept. Lederach (1997, p. 75), a leading scholar in the field of conflict resolution, identifies ensuring the *sustainability* of peace and development as well as a *transformation* of confrontation to dynamic, peaceful relationships as key outcomes of long-term peacebuilding processes. Sustainability is frequently measured by the durability of peace agreements without relapse into conflict, which has been explored by scholars through various statistical models using datasets on war duration, battle deaths, and conflict termination (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002; Doyle & Sambanis, 2000). Lederach (1997) describes transformation as the "transition from emergency disaster response to relief operations and to rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development […] underscoring the goal of moving a given population from a condition of extreme vulnerability and dependency to one of self-sufficiency

and well-being" (p. 75). He goes on to explain that conflict party relationships across personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions signal progress toward this outcome.

Other scholars have offered alternative conceptualizations and operationalizations of peace. Przetacznik (1999) gives a detailed overview of definitions of peace over time and challenges Galtung's notion of 'positive' and 'negative' peace on the basis of semantics. He argues, "In the context of peace the wording 'negative peace' literally and in substance means the nonexistence of peace. There is no such thing as 'negative peace.' Peace either exists or does not exist" (p. 200). He also notes that international peace and internal, nation-state peace are quite different; limiting the idea of 'positive' peace to harmony within a state. Anderson (2004) also acknowledges that peace cannot necessarily be measured in the same way from macro- to micro-levels of analysis. However, he aligns his approach with Galtung's dimensions of peace to suggest two conceptualizations of peace: violence and harmony. He then outlines subjective and objective measures of each, including statistics on violence and an individual's own assessment of violence levels in a country or statistics on social integration and travel within a country and an individual's assessment of harmony within their home nation.

Within the last decade, two datasets have been developed to measure both 'negative' and 'positive' peace at a national level: the Global Peace Index and Positive Peace Index published by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). IEP also publishes US, UK, and Mexico versions of the Global Peace Index that compare 'negative' peace indicators at the state or regional level. The two most recent peace indices by IEP for Mexico have also included an assessment of 'positive' peace. However, there has not been a large-scale effort to measure 'negative' or 'positive' peace at the municipal or individual level. Various evaluation networks

have been established with the aim of formalizing peace measures for organizations dedicated to peace work. The Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Peace (DM&E for Peace) initiative as well as the Alliance for Peacebuilding's Eirene Peacebuilding Database project have sought to compile peacebuilding evaluation measures, methods, and outcomes. The Everyday Peace Indicators Project encourages evaluations to include 'bottom-up' indicators of peace developed by those living within the local conflict-affected context (Mac Ginty, 2014; Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016). For those working within the peace industry, the predominant approach is for each peacebuilding program to develop its own theory of change and associated impact measures with no steadfast options recommended across the board. In summary, no one operationalization of peace has been forwarded by the scholarly or practitioner community at this time, though the interest in measuring the impact of peacebuilding efforts is on the rise. Just as there is no one way of measuring peace, there is also not a consensus on how best to consolidate peace in post-conflict contexts, the topic explored in the proximate section.

**2b. Liberal Peace**

Early peacebuilding practice employed many approaches to assist the transition of post-conflict societies into sustainable communities from the top-down, bucketed under the 'liberal peace.' The liberal peace tradition is a vein of peacebuilding practice and scholarship that proposes a combination of liberal democracy and marketization to stabilize peace after conflict (Chandler, 2010, p. 138). It developed following observations and research indicating that democracies do not tend to go to war with one another, an association best known today as the democratic peace thesis (Doyle, 1983b, 1983a, 2005; Z. Maoz & Russett, 1993; Owen, 1994). Political transformation through the establishment of rule of law and legitimate institutions of governance, sometimes referred to as statebuilding or the liberal democratic peace, has been a

central element of post-conflict peacebuilding since its conception (Junne & Verkoren, 2005; Mac Ginty, 2011; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2007; Paris, 2002; Schirch, 2004). While disaster assistance and economic development are key to peacebuilding practice, statebuilding is often the focal point of international assistance following civil wars (Paris, 2004). Statebuilding often begins while writing peace agreements in which elites of the relevant conflict parties devise a means of power-sharing (Hartzell & Hoodie, 2003; Lijphart, 1969) and outline the terms of justice and reconciliation (Olsen, Payne, & Reiter, 2010).

Top-down statebuilding initiatives have come under harsh criticism within academic circles (Barnett, 2006; Jahn, 2007a, 2007b; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2007; M. Pugh, Cooper, & Turner, 2008; Richmond & Franks, 2009). Though the liberal approach preferences the establishment of a constitutional democracy and "republican representation" seen as necessary to fulfill the democratic peace (Doyle, 2005), the thesis has been partially debunked depending on the strength of the democracy (Mousseau, 2000). Additionally, liberal peace imposes Western values on societies that may not hold the same individualistic perspectives on life, liberty, property, and human rights. Above all, the approach does not have a great track-record of success. Call & Cook (2003, pp. 1-2) found that 72% of UN peacekeeping missions that have included a democratization component ended up with an authoritarian regime as of the early 2000s. Also, as noted above on the causes of war, recent prior conflict is a key predictor of 'new' conflict outbreaks suggesting that this predominant strategy may not be the most effective for building and sustaining peace.

Even when democracy persists, traditional representative elections in post-conflict societies have mixed effects (Lyons, 2009, pp. 91-92). Scholars have both theoretically argued and empirically linked elections with increased levels of violence both within (Bates, 1983;

Kumar, 1998; Reilly, 2004; Snyder, 2000; Wilkinson, 2004) and between states (Gaubatz, 1999). Political competition and its related incentives to incite violence as a tactic to build a loyal electoral base, often prompted by elite members of society, is central to these descriptions of conflict exacerbation in democratic nations and transitioning democracies (Human Rights Watch, 1995; Wilkinson, 2004). Scholars have therefore advised that the elite and top-down nature of representative politics, especially at a national level, should no longer be the central focus of statebuilding initiatives as part of the peace process. Collier, Hoeffler, & Söderbom (2008) have even suggested that elections should not be considered a mechanism for sustaining peaceful transitions post-conflict. Despite the evidence counter to this approach, practitioners continue to promote democratization as a means of conflict transformation (Lyons, 2009; Sandole, 2010). In response to these critiques and continued propagation of top-down liberal peace in practice, a new body of literature has developed promoting hybrid or multi-track or multi-level peacebuilding involving international supporters, elite leadership, and national governments as well as, and with emphasis on, grassroots civil society and local governments.

### 2c. A Turn Toward the Local

Approaching the turn of the twenty-first century, several practitioners and academics began to explore alternatives to the top-down, internationally enforced liberal peace. This series of literature has more recently been called the 'local turn' in academic peace studies circles (Feiock Richard C., 2009; Hughes, Öjendal, & Schierenbeck, 2015; Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013; Öjendal & Ou, 2015; Paffenholz, 2015; Randazzo, 2016; Schierenbeck, 2015; Wallis, 2017). Scholars in this tradition posit that mid-level and grassroots leadership (Lederach, 1997), civil society (Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006), religious leadership (Al Qurtuby, 2013), and the general public should be engaged in peacebuilding. For

some scholars, this translates to decentralization efforts such as holding local elections prior to national elections in line with statebuilding (Diamond, 2006), but for others it has come to mean the rise of social movements and civil society either in collaboration with or in contradiction to top-down efforts (Chesters, 2004; Hughes et al., 2015). Schierenbeck (2015, p. 1023) describes these two forms of local peacebuilding as "local institutions" versus a "radical or alternative" approach. A third set of locally-oriented approaches sits under the umbrella of "hybrid" peacebuilding, which acknowledges the role of the international community and top-down actors in the peace process alongside local leadership (Hall, 1999; Jarstad & Belloni, 2012; Mac Ginty, 2010, 2011; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2015; Nadarajah & Rampton, 2015).

One way of thinking about the 'local turn' as a response to top-down approaches is that it emphasizes the value of local knowledge. Scott (1998) describes "knowledge embedded in local experience" as *metis* as opposed to *teche* in the form of "abstract knowledge deployed by the state and its technical agencies" (p. 311). He further elaborates on the concept of *metis* as cunning, in that it's acquired knowledge such as habit developed through practice, and employing case-specific rules of thumb only known through informal norms. In post-conflict societies, though infrastructure and trust are severely broken, one's local culture survives and develops as a socio-psychological infrastructure designed to cope with and manage conflict in one's daily life and community (Bar-Tal, 2007). *Metis* extant in a post-conflict community is vitally important to understanding both the former culture of the community and how it has evolved over time. *Metis*, too, can help a community build systems and structures that meet the felt needs and cultural chemistry of the society. As Scott (1998) explains, "*metis* is most valuable in settings that are mutable, indeterminate (some facts are unknown), and particular"

(p. 316). While *teche,* with its precision and purported universality, is valuable in organizing concepts and building the steps of precise processes, it is not personal or adaptable enough to properly address the human needs of a community in reconstruction. The 'local turn' literature gives appropriate credence to the fact that only after a new culture of peace has been developed through *metis* can *teche* be useful in ensuring the sustainability of the organic recovery process.

While it is attractive to Western nations involved in humanitarian missions abroad to think that proven *teche* in our own communities will surely work in foreign lands, statebuilding as peacebuilding does not pass Scott's (1998, p. 323) "litmus test for *metis*": practical success. For this reason, both practitioner and academic communities now consider how to integrate *metis* at multiple levels of society into the work of peace. While literature in this tradition comes from within the critical epistemology focused on power and poor people's liberation (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013), peacebuilding actors have been quick to adopt the movement into the global peace and development agenda. Hughes et al. (2015) explain:

> The appeal of the local is in its relationship to core ideals of liberalism and democracy. The agency of the rational individual, and the representation of that agency via a hierarchy of aggregative forums, is the keystone of both liberal development and liberal peace making. […] In fact, the complementarity between liberal approaches to economics and public administration and local-level action has underpinned a wave of development interventions going back to the 1970s, promoting microfinance, decentralisation, civil society associations, social capital, and social accountability (p. 819).

To further underscore this point, the New Deal for the Engagement of Fragile States (OECD, 2011) specifically calls for "country-led and country-owned transitions out of fragility" (p. 1). Likewise, the US Global Fragility Act (2019) calls for a strategy to "encourage and empower local and national actors to address the concerns of their citizens" and "address the long-term underlying causes of fragility and violence through participatory, locally led programs" amongst other approaches.

The investigation undertaken in this dissertation acknowledges the value of local knowledge and agency, specifically the knowledge shared and developed through deliberation in locally-led spaces for public policy making, as vital to building both 'negative' and 'positive' peace. Placing this exploration within the local turn literature, I seek to further explore the peacebuilding potential of local collaborative decision making via dialogue as exchanged in spaces that promote participatory deliberative democracy.

### 2d. Participatory Deliberative Democracy as a Mechanism for Peacebuilding

In line with the local shift in peacebuilding, a participatory and deliberative approach to democratic decision making has evolved, what I refer to as participatory deliberative democracy. Various forms of PDD have been employed around the globe including deliberative polls, citizens' juries, Town Hall meetings, participatory budgeting, and participatory strategic planning processes, among others (see resources such as Coleman, Przybylska, & Sintomer, 2015; Gastil & Levine, 2005). PDD meets the call of critics of the liberal peace by decentralizing power over policy design to the local level and increasing citizen participation in public policy decision making.

Deliberative democracy has been defined and redefined over the last several decades. The term was coined by Bessette (1980). He described it as a decision-making processes

idealized by the US founding fathers in which representatives would deliberate to form a "public voice" by "taking longer to develop and resting on a fuller consideration of information and arguments," (p. 106) rather than jumping to ignorant or impulsive propositions as may be instigated by pure or direct democracy alone. More recently, scholars have developed a large body of articles and books describing the value of deliberation for engaging the public in policy-related dialogue and improving public policy choices. Besson & Martí (2006), for example, define it as "an ideal of political legitimacy […] which implies publicly exchanging arguments offered by and to participants who are committed to the values of rationality and impartiality" (p. xv). Lafont (2017) describes the ideal form of deliberative democracy as one in which "citizens must justify to one another–based on reasons that everyone can reasonably accept–the coercive policies with which they must comply" (p. 85). Common to all definitions is that deliberative democracy offers decision makers, whether politicians or the public, an opportunity to debate alternative approaches to community problems, which improves information access and rational decision making.

Though some scholars have forwarded the notion of representative democracy as a form of deliberative democracy (Barber, 1984; Bessette, 1980, 1997; Gargarella, 1998; Gregg, 1997; Wolfensberger, 2000), others have emphasized the participation of the public at large as integral to the deliberative ideal (Cini & Felicetti, 2018; Cohen, 1998; Cohen & Fung, 2004; Cohen & Sabel, 1997; Fishkin, 1991, 1995; Fung & Wright, 2001; Lafont, 2017). In line with Rousseau and Kant's conceptualization of self-legislation and the more modern notion of the discursive public sphere developed by Frobel and Habermas (Habermas, 1997), PDD as referred to in this dissertation aligns with the notion that "legitimate lawmaking issues from the public deliberation of citizens" (Bohman & Rehg, 1997, p. ix). I thus place a 'participatory'

emphasis on my own exploration of deliberative democracy. Authors Cini & Felicetti (2018) have undertaken a thorough theoretical analysis of the participatory and deliberative democratic traditions, carving out from the literature and debates between the two a participatory deliberative democratic tradition which aligns with the more "radical deliberative democrats." In full support of their analysis and approach, I concur that what distinguishes PDD is its focus on "social inclusiveness, political pluralism, and public activism. […] On the one hand, these deliberative positions point towards overcoming the elitist characteristics of deliberation by deepening the concept of 'political equality;' on the other hand, they propose to redefine the category of 'the political' in more extensive yet efficacious terms" (p. 10). As derived from the work of Cini & Felicetti (2018), I define PDD as a set of democratic mechanisms which encourage public engagement in the policy-making process by emphasizing political inclusion and citizen empowerment through deliberation (Mundt, 2019).

Given that PDD departs from both participatory and classical deliberative democracy traditions to promote both citizen empowerment and political inclusion, transformative moments (Steiner et al., 2017) within the deliberative space can take many forms. For example, though deliberative democracy does often involve voting to make a final choice on public spending or policy decisions (Besson & Martí, 2006), voting is not the focal point of the political process. As Farrelly (2003) explains, "the aggregative model conceives of voting as the primary political activity because it maintains that policy formation should be based on preferences of the majority [while] the deliberative democrat's conception of democracy places much more emphasis on the opportunities for effective participation and gaining enlightened understanding" (pp. 138-139).

Cini & Felicetti (2018) advocate the position that "alternative linguistic codes" should be given legitimacy in addition to rational argumentation, in effect "opening the public sphere to the entry of 'the other' and raising the level of political inclusiveness" (p. 11). Black (2012), a scholar arguably aligned with the radical deliberative tradition, suggests: "Deliberative theory is not limited to the analytical aspects of group discussion. Ideal models of deliberation also provide some guidance about the social process and relationships that are created and maintained through group members' communication" (p. 69). She goes on to describe how equality of participation, consideration and comprehension of alternative views, demonstrations of respect, emotional expression, and identity statements are all essential within deliberative spaces. Considering these critiques and expansions upon the classical conceptions of participatory and deliberative democracy, I take a more holistic approach in my exploration of PDD. I explore not only rational debate and appeals to Rawls' (1993) public reason, but also the social and emotional information exchanged in these spaces.

Citizen engagement can take on several forms, ranging from consultative to 100% citizen-controlled, depending on how the local government and communities design and interact in the PDD process (Arnstein, 1969). PDD mechanisms can engage citizens in dialogue about resource allocation or involve direct participation of community members in project design and implementation. The amount of control citizens have in each type of space differs widely. Town Hall meetings, on one end of the spectrum, are generally considered a form of consultation in which citizen input is collected, but decision-making power still sits with government. Whereas participatory planning and budgeting are often associated with greater citizen control and active participation in policy formation on the opposite side of the spectrum (Arnstein, 1969; Afonso, 2015, p. 8-9; Cabannes, 2004).

Additionally, it has been shown that the level of deliberation can change greatly within the course of a single discussion. Steiner et al. (2017) introduced the concept of "deliberative transformative moments" building on their observations of dialogue groups on peace across deeply-divided communities in Colombia, Brazil, and Bosnia. They noted that deliberation moves from low- to high- levels, even under conditions of deep division. The transformation of deliberation was driven by 'traditional' rational argumentation as well as storytelling, humor, and even silence. In their study, higher levels of deliberation allowed actors of both parties to reach agreements. This finding offers promise for the possibility that PDD processes applied in conflict contexts can result in public policy decision making of mutual benefit to parties on both sides of a divided society.

Given this background on participatory and deliberative forms of democracy, I posit that, alongside top-down negotiation and power-sharing of warring elites, PDD may offer an alternative democratic model for bringing together post-conflict parties in collective problem solving. Furthermore, I suggest that PDD has the capacity to reestablish the legitimacy of government, advance social justice, rebuild trust, and ultimately contribute to the consolidation of 'negative' and 'positive' peace in fragile post-conflict states. Participatory deliberative approaches can accomplish these aims in two ways.

First, PDD devolves decision-making power to everyday citizens. Hancock (2018) explores how deliberative governance integrated into peacebuilding processes can produce elevated levels of both local agency as well as internal and external legitimacy for the actors involved. Building local agency on equality of voice, respect, trust, and accountability are pivotal in post-conflict environments.

Second, PDD engages citizens in actionable dialogue. Addis (2009) and Dembinska & Montambeault (2015) have suggested that deliberative democracy promotes a view of pluralism that allows groups in conflict to 'hear the other side' through dialogue. When properly structured, dialogue and contact between parties previously in conflict has the potential to decrease prejudice and improve social relations between groups. These factors increase the likelihood that all voices will be heard, a demonstration of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988); that public resources will be directed toward the felt needs of community members, a form of distributive justice (Richmond, 2014); and that all groups can be formally recognized within the political system, an appeal to social justice (Fraser, 1996).

In summary, PDD can increase the likelihood that the root causes of conflict will be addressed—a central tenet of peacebuilding—because it allows for grassroots stakeholders to join in authentic discourse about their needs, preferences, and subjective reality in a way representative and electoral democracy does not. In the following three sub-sections, I review a series of literature that highlights the possible political, economic, and social impacts of PDD mechanisms in post-conflict contexts to further build upon these arguments. The sub-sections provide an overview of the underlying theory linking PDD and peacebuilding across each dimension, the critiques levied against the theories, and how empirical evidence either supports or challenges the proposed links.

### 2e. Political Impacts

Deliberative democracy is both a mechanism for citizen engagement, as described above, as well as a theoretical framework that centers on deliberation to increase public policy legitimacy. The theory of deliberative democracy is political at its roots. Fishkin (2011) describes the charge of deliberative democracy as "how to include everyone under conditions

where they are effectively motivated to really think about the issues […] to fulfill two fundamental values—political equality and deliberation" (p. 1). Deliberative democracy theory details the manner in which dialogue should be structured to achieve these ends. Cohen (2003, pp. 347-348) elaborates a theory of the deliberative ideal in which PDD procedures adhere to four key conditions: 1) participants engage freely and are empowered to act upon the results rather than by imposition of an authority, 2) deliberation involves reasoned debate in which all parties advance their positions and rationale for their choices, 3) parties involved are of equal standing, and 4) consensus should be the aim. Fung & Wright (2001, p. 24-25) outline the key components of existing deliberative democracy mechanisms which are much more granular and less grandiose than Cohen's ideal. However, Cohen and Fung & Wright coincide on the importance of dialogue and equitable power relations between participants as central to PDD processes. A Discourse Quality Index has been proposed as a means of measuring how a deliberative process adheres to these standards (O'Brien, 2007; Spörndli, 2003; Steenbergen et al., 2003).

The highly rational conception of deliberative democracy has invited substantial critique both normatively and on the basis of realism in practice. Mouffe (2000) suggests that democracy should promote differences of opinion and provide a structure within which divided communities can develop interest groups that respect the 'other' while maintaining their own varied identities, a democratic ideal she calls "agonistic pluralism." She argues, "Modern democracy's specificity lies in the recognition and legitimation of conflict and the refusal to suppress it by imposing an authoritarian order. […] A democratic society makes room for the expression of conflicting interests and values" (p. 756). The debate between those that emphasize consensus-building versus identify politics has sparked a series of articles and

books related to democracy and difference, often seeking a middle ground between political equality and agonism (Dryzek, 2001, 2005, 2009; Niemeyer & Dryzek, 2006).

Realizing that deliberation rarely adheres to an ideal form, Bachtiger et al. (2010) have developed a classification of deliberation into Types I and II (p. 33). Type I deliberation is modeled after the ideal Habermasean consensus model of rational debate, while Type II deliberation allows for emotional exchange and informal dialogue. With this classification, the authors attempt to reconcile the two schools of thought regarding what should be recognized as deliberative democracy by permitting storytelling and narrative as a form of deliberation while still upholding the deliberative ideal of rational and sincere communication. Based on these theoretical fundamentals and debates, PDD processes that are closer to the Habermasean ideal are presumably more likely to be effective in post-conflict contexts, with the caveat that an emphasis on equality versus difference may present a substantial challenge when two populations have competing histories of conflict.

Various authors have explored both short-term and long-term civic engagement impacts for the individuals directly involved in PDD processes. At the individual level, PDD has been linked to increased citizen empowerment and self-confidence (Alsop, Bertelsen, & Holland, 2006; Alsop, Dudwick, Bertelsen, & Nyhan, 2007; Pateman, 1970), improved civic education and understanding of the political process resulting in attitude transformations toward democratic governance (Blanco & Ballester, 2011; Daly, Schugurensky, & Lopes, 2009; Schugurensky, 2004), as well as a growth in community leadership among participants (Kasdan, Markman, & Convey, 2014). As governments increase their level of transparency and accountability through PDD processes (Avritzer, 2012; Cabannes, 2004; Wampler, 2012), individual citizens respond by increasing public engagement and trust (Hagelskamp, Rinehart,

Silliman, & Schleifer, 2016; Wampler, 2012). Font & Blanco (2007) outline three linkages between participatory forums, in their case citizen juries in Spain, and political trust by: "creating a sense of citizenship and engagement in public affairs; their influence in decision making; and their capacity to produce outputs that more closely mirror citizens' preferences" (p. 559). While public acceptance of PDD and its ability to achieve these aims is still being questioned and tested (e.g. Boulianne, 2019), the central argument here is that PDD can enhance the likelihood that decisions made within the PDD forum will be upheld in future policy implementation. Thus, as Cohen (2003) indicates, participants in deliberative democracy "prefer institutions in which the connections between deliberation and the outcomes are evident." A logical extension of these findings for a post-conflict context implies that individuals that feel politically empowered and heard by their governments are more likely to pursue democratic resolutions to disagreements versus returning to violence.

Pateman (1970) has suggested that participation has effects not just for individuals involved in PDD programs, but also for the community more broadly. In a qualitative study on participatory budgeting, Abers (2001, p. 139-140) outlines how these "cascade effects" can include increased civil society mobilization across neighborhoods and communities, improved democratic skills, and greater concern for the needs of others. Long-term, dynamic interaction between the government and citizens in PDD processes contributes to higher voter turnout in traditional democratic venues, increased tax revenue collections, a stronger record of good governance, and improved budgetary efficiency (Abers, 1998; Marquetti, Schonerwald da Silva, & Campbell, 2012; Wampler, 2012; Zamboni, 2007). All these impacts would greatly improve the capacity of communities to resolve conflicts in a sustainable fashion following civil wars.

One drawback to PDD is the shift it can create in traditional political power structures. As 'local ownership' is promoted, the legitimacy of external or national-level actors may come into question. For example, PDD mechanisms are thought to shift power to the mayor over Municipal Councils or city officials, as was the case in Brazil (Souza, 2001). This can be destabilizing, and thus PDD forums can be easily corrupted by local power struggles. It also limits the sustainability of these processes long-term (Johnstone, 2007), both fiscally and politically (Bland, 2011; Sintomer, Herzberg, Rocke, & Allegretti, 2012). Given the long duration of peace and reconciliation processes, PDD may not prove effective as a durable mechanism for addressing deeply rooted causes of conflict. Local governments can circumvent this outcome by partnering with local community-based organizations (e.g. Kasdan, Markman, & Convey, 2014) or building safe spaces for dialogue running alongside or parallel to public decision-making arenas (e.g. Holt-Shannon & Mallory, 2014). However, these partnerships can cause tensions between direct citizen voice and that of traditional civil society as outlined by Ganuza, Nez, & Morales (2014) and Hendriks (2002).

PDD initiatives can also undermine their own attempts at building grassroots legitimacy when organizers and volunteers are not adequately representative of the community or fail to appropriately engage marginalized populations. Participatory forms of deliberative democracy have been criticized for their potential to play too easily to the "tyranny of the majority" (Benhabib, 1996). This can be particularly troublesome in divided communities when parties to a dispute, or former dispute, do not perceive that they are on equal political standing (Siu & Stanisevski, 2012). As Siu & Stanisevski (2012) describe, "Deliberation could do more harm than good not only to the participants, but also to democracy; societal inequalities are inevitably brought into deliberative settings and could exasperate intercultural

conflicts" (p. 85). In a case study on Kosovo, researchers identified that inclusion and exclusion in deliberative spaces tended to follow the norm of existing social structures, thus limiting their exploration of true inter-ethnic deliberative governance (Delaney et al., 2017).

Polarization can bring out these inequalities even more in PDD forums. Ugarriza & Trujillo-Orrego (2018, p. 1) have highlighted this dynamic as an "ironic effect of deliberation" in which polarization can result in combative interactions and worsen perceptions amongst groups within the deliberative space. In New Hampshire, school board participation became hostile when religious conservatives achieved majority representation and sought to ban more liberal education curricula (Holt-Shannon & Mallory, 2014). In Spain's Basque Country, several iterations of deliberative forums were attempted and ultimately failed because the elite politicians controlling the participatory forums could not move beyond fixed, ideological positions. As Jeram & Conversi (2014) shared, "the main actors with a stake in the Basque conflict remained steadfast in their positions on how peace would be achieved, even if these were not in line with public opinion" (p. 70). As these cases reveal, it is possible that PDD creates more divisiveness in communities, which could have disastrous effects in societies already vulnerable to conflict relapse. The political effects of PDD in post-conflict Guatemala and El Salvador have yet to be explored, though the durability of the peace processes and political systems instituted after both conflicts is suggestive of a promising connection.

**2f. Economic Impacts**

PDD can be associated with economic outcomes relevant to post-conflict peacebuilding through Stewart's (2000) theory on Horizontal Inequalities (HIs), which states that perceived inequality running along identity lines between in- and out-groups is a key factor contributing to conflict risk. The literature on the economic impacts of PDD suggests that there are two

complementary ways in which PDD can influence economic circumstances: improving agency over one's economic conditions and increasing the effectiveness of local governments. If PDD successfully achieves these aims, then it could be tied to conflict prevention by decreasing perceived inequality between conflict parties.

First, PDD can enhance one's capabilities to improve his station in life, a concept stemming from the Capabilities Approach (Sen, 1999). Sen's (1999) Capabilities Approach considers economic factors such as income to be only a means to an end of being and doing. Individual agency to act upon desires, rather than access or resources, is central to economic development. Indeed, expanding one's agency or freedom to choose has been theoretically linked to poverty alleviation (Leßmann, 2011). As individual capabilities are combined to achieve a common policy goal, deliberative mechanisms develop "collective capabilities" that "allow poor communities to create and seize new opportunities to collectively invest in their financial, human, and social capital" (Ibrahim, 2006, p. 399). By allowing for public participation in policy making, PDD gives individuals and collective communities the agency to choose policy outcomes as they engage in empowered capacity building (Blanco & Ballester, 2011; Schneider, 1999; Schugurensky, 2004). Therefore, resultant public policies and services are more inclusive of would-be spoilers.

Fung (2015) and T. L. Cooper, Bryer, & Meek (2006) make similar cases for the value of participatory deliberation via "participatory multisectoral problem solving" or "citizen-centered collaborative public management" respectively, for improving the effectiveness of government. Fung (2015) describes how multisectoral problem solving through mechanisms such as dialogue circles can help to "identify the best solutions in terms of feasibility, effectiveness, implementation timeframe, cost, and the need for coordination" (p. 6) as a means

to improve governance effectiveness toward solving 'wicked problems.' T. L. Cooper, Bryer, & Meek (2006) build a conceptual model to classify a range of citizen engagement approaches, suggesting that deliberative approaches are more likely to positively contribute to improved public management. In summary, PDD allows public officials to more efficiently and effectively leverage local knowledge (Leßmann, 2011; Osmani, 2000, 2001; Schneider, 1999; Speer, 2012). Thus, a second way PDD can contribute to improved economic conditions is by enhancing public service management and delivery when bureaucrats actively listen to citizens and subsequently direct resources toward felt community needs.

Returning now to how improving individual as well as collective capabilities and improved government efficiency may influence peace, Stewart (2010) hypothesizes that "it is a combination of cultural differences and political and economic inequalities running along cultural lines that, at least in part, explain contemporary violent conflict" (p. 2). The theory follows that "horizontal inequalities" develop when there are "severe inequalities between culturally defined groups" (Stewart, 2002, p. 3), particularly "inequalities in access to, use of, and ownership of assets" (Steward, 2010, p. 2). When this type of inequality is combined with identity-based forms of exclusion, the population *en mass* is more likely to engage in conflict as a form of rebellion. In a longitudinal study of fifty-five nations, Østby (2008) finds that conflict is not influenced by political exclusion alone, though it is associated with increased conflict when combined with asset inequality. In a post-conflict context, PDD spaces can indirectly reduce participants perceived horizontal inequalities by increasing individual capabilities, with the effect of improving procedural justice, and improving the effectiveness of governance, with the possibility of influencing distributive justice. To achieve this aim, public deliberation must be designed to promote procedural and distributive justice by way of

giving access and opportunity to all groups to engage in public policy decision making and following-through with implementation, especially when policies and services take on a re-distributive nature.

While individual material wealth is not directly improved through participation in PDD, HI theory highlights the value of improving relative deprivation (Gurr, 1993) or perceptions of inequality between groups. Procedural and distributive justice are central to altering perceived, horizontal inequalities. The psychology of procedural justice applies to PDD as "decisions are more likely to be accepted when the procedure used to generate the decision allows for the participation of those affected" (Lind & Tyler, 1988, p. 8). PDD can influence distributive justice when it's "concerned with the distribution of the conditions and goods that affect individual well-being […] to include its psychological, physiological, economic, and social aspects," as outlined by Deutsch (1985, p. 31). As 'horizontal inequality' is one of the root causes of conflict, resolving inequity, even just the perception of inequity, can greatly improve the sustainability of peace processes.

PDD mechanisms are not always set up to improve inequality, however. Abdullah, Karpowitz, & Raphael (2016, p. 6) describe four reasons why public deliberation does not always support an equitable distribution of resources, real or perceived. First, there is often intentional exclusion of some voices. Second, marginalized voices are motivated just to be heard versus make policy. Third, the poor may make claims to security or vulnerability rather than principals to which all community members can relate. Fourth, misunderstandings in deliberation are likely. Deliberative theorists often tie these outcomes to the importance of how a deliberative space is structured. Arnstein (1969) describes how participatory spaces range from manipulative to genuine citizen control, with several rungs on her "ladder of citizen

participation" in between. The higher up the ladder sits a particular process, the more likely it is that the final decision is rooted in the actual information exchanged. Leighninger (2016) makes a case for designing process with both "thick" and "thin" deliberation, the former "intensive, informed, and deliberative" and the later "faster, easier, and potentially viral," as they are complimentary means of encouraging engagement that have different strengths and weaknesses in terms of balancing equal and equitable aims of public engagement in government decision making.

An alternative explanation for divergent equity and redistribution outcomes presented by Coelho & Waisbich (2016) is that political alliances and group mobilization outside deliberative spaces hold greater sway than the priorities forwarded within PDD processes. In Rwanda, for example, economic policies such as those surrounding land distribution instituted following the genocidal war have made some inroads to resolving geographically-based inequalities, but have not addressed the rural/urban divide which tends to separate ethnic groups (Leander, 2012). The capacity of local-level leadership to facilitate these processes may also be a contributing factor to the limits of PDD to improve economic inequality (Osmani, 2001, p. 129). Krenjova & Raudla (2013) outline several environmental factors within local governance structures that can influence their administrative capacity to carry out a PDD process including: financial autonomy, political will or culture of engagement by local authorities, community size, population diversity, and municipal prosperity. While these authors do not suggest an ideal formula for success, each of these factors is a valid avenue for exploration of the underlying processes that can contribute to PDD impacts on peace. The type of deliberation taking place within PDD processes, how communication outside the process interacts with decision making within the space, and the capacity of local leadership to

coordinate PDD are all key considerations making up the structural and contextual conditions of success for PDD in post-conflict contexts.

In practice, PDD has had community-wide economic benefits. Leighninger (2016) outlines numerous ways that PDD impacts economic outcomes including greater equality with more voices at the table, more economic opportunities through increased social capital, greater equity and fairness in distribution of public expenditures, and the generation of economic growth overall. He compiles evidence from several developing nations suggesting that "sustained patterns of engagement build social capital, which in turn has an impact on a range of indicators, including economic inequality and the distribution of wealth" (Leighninger, 2016, p. 1). Indeed, long-term participatory budgeting programs have been associated with addressing inequality by redistributing wealth to the poor and traditionally excluded (Abers, 1998; Marquetti et al., 2012). In her research on the evolution of deliberation in a poor rural community outside Porto Alegre, the birthplace of participatory budgeting, Abers (1998, 2001) describes citizens using complex prioritization or point systems to determine which neighborhoods or groups should receive public funds. Schneider (1999) reviews case studies on participatory engagement in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Malaysia, and the Philippines with links to poverty reduction by way of rooting policies in better information, ensuring that decision makers are committed, and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. Citizen councils implemented in some developing countries are focused explicitly on community dialogue and collaboration for economic development in rural areas of Uganda and Cameroon (Kakumba, 2010; Njoh, 2011).

True to the warnings of critics of PDD as a means to address horizontal inequality, not all evidence suggests that PDD can be advantageous for equity. Strongly noted in reports from

the global North on PDD implementation, these programs have not always achieved a prominent level of inclusivity across identity groups or socio-economic class. Hooghe (1999) points out that participation in deliberative democracy requires substantial time. Thus, individuals and groups already marginalized find it harder to participate, and the privileged continue to have an advantage with regards to access and voice in PDD spaces. Though some processes, such as those in New York City (Kasdan et al., 2014), have made successful inroads to integrating traditionally marginalized demographics proportionally in deliberative discourse, others such as those in Cambridge, Massachusetts have not (Mundt, 2017).

Challenges in the global South are similar, but PDD encounters greater difficulty in municipal capacity levels and support of national and local authorities. In a study on peacebuilding in post-conflict Nepal, Subedi (2012) points to the largely political and institutional focus of the peace process as "leaving the economic dimension of peace at the margins" (p. 314). The author, therefore, calls for future economic development and recovery programs in the country to involve inclusive measures to address the vertical and horizontal inequalities that are the root causes of the nation's conflict. However, according to Osmani (2001), Nepali efforts to decentralize democracy and bolster citizen participation have been challenged by poor technical capacity at the local level and unclear lines of authority between national and local administrations. This case suggests that PDD may not be an effective policy innovation to address the economic elements of peacebuilding. These same obstacles to participatory governance surface in case studies elaborated by Schneider (1999), Kakumba (2010), and Njoh (2011) as well. In each case, good intentions have fallen short in execution. Even in the birthplace of participatory budgeting, the flagship PDD model for public decision making in Brazil, Boulding & Wampler (2010) find that "state-sanctioned participatory

programs have made a small dent in the worst poverty, but these programs have not been able to address the basic and underlying inequality that starkly divides Brazilians, or greatly improve health, education, and income indicators" (p. 131). In Central America, the impacts of PDD on participant perceptions of economic well-being across conflict-party lines remains an open question.

**2g. Social Impacts**

Intergroup contact has been associated both theoretically and empirically with reduced prejudice and enhanced trust between parties in conflict (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). As spaces in which citizens meet with their neighbors to discuss community needs and areas of focus for government intervention, PDD forums may open a window of opportunity for individuals impacted by conflict to address the post-conflict needs for trust-repair, forgiveness, and reconciliation. In his seminal book, Allport (1954) describes the impact of various types of contact between majority and minority groups specifically in the context of racial desegregation in the United States. Though hesitant to define all types of human contact within his theoretical construct, he outlines how contact and its effects differ as the degree and intimacy of the contact increases from casual interaction to peer-to-peer coworker relationships in pursuit of common goals. He concludes that contact between in- and out-groups can have the effect of reducing prejudice when a set of three key conditions are met: 1) groups are of equal status, 2) there is institutional support for the contact, and 3) all are cooperating through dialogue to achieve common goals with implied common interests (Allport, 1954, p. 281). Many of these conditions overlap with the Habermasean ideal of deliberation, particularly equality and the use of dialogue with the goal of making collective choices.

Intergroup contact is not a silver bullet for conflict resolution and peacebuilding, however. For example, limited contact or mere proximity between two groups does not produce the effects outlined above (Allport, 1954). In fact, proximity without contact can exacerbate conflict (Stolle, Soroka, & Johnston, 2008). Additionally, intergroup contact has been tied to deferring structural change as group members develop affective friendships that may temporarily improve relations but fail to resolve the underlying causes of conflict that may have been addressed through collective action (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013; Dixon, 2006). Brown & Lopez (2001) suggest, in fact, that intergroup contact should emphasize difference politics to encourage majority members to recognize their privilege in mixed interactions. This is especially important in post-conflict contexts wherein historical legacies of conflict differ depending on one's group membership.

Various authors have set out to test intergroup contact theory with varying degrees of adherence to the ideal conditions outlined by Allport (1954) and in a variety of in-/out-group contact scenarios, many of which have been in post-conflict contexts. By and large, the theory has been confirmed with substantial empirical evidence. Pettigrew finds that contact works to reduce prejudice through affective friendship development and reduces anxiety between group members even when individuals are only connected through a mutual friend (Pettigrew, 1998; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). It also increases empathy and knowledge of other, which highlights mutual similarities.

Scholars have tested intergroup contact theory in post-conflict and conflict contexts as diverse as Northern Ireland (Tam et al., 2008), South Africa (Dixon et al., 2010; Swart, Hewstone, Christ, & Voci, 2011), and Israel-Palestine (Maoz, 2000). In South Africa, intergroup contact was associated with support for policies of redress amongst the white

majority, indicating that the effects of contact can translate to policy outcomes (J. Dixon et al., 2010). Studies have also shown that intergroup contact can reduce prejudice between groups even when not all of the ideal conditions are met, such as in unstructured environments (Everett, 2013; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008). However, intergroup contact is most effective when Allport's conditions are met, there is a balance of minority-majority group members in attendance, and participants' psychological triggers for empathy and anxiety reduction are integrated in the interaction (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013).

Evidence presented by PDD scholars indicates that enhanced community cohesion can result from the development of a public sphere for deliberation (e.g. Baiocchi, 2003; Wampler, 2012). As Baiocchi (2003) explained following a long-term observation of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, "Participants often mentioned a sense of belonging to a larger community of citizens who [were] facing problems together" (p. 62). In a study on two different forms of neighborhood councils in the Netherlands, participants reported that they saw the participatory, deliberative councils as a "social meeting place." Indeed, an explicit goal of councils in one mid-sized town was to foster social integration and connectedness between neighbors (Wagenaar, 2007, p. 20). Black (2012) writes about the value of discussion in building and maintaining social relationships when participants have "equal adequate opportunities to speak, understand and fully consider each other's views, and communicate respect for their fellow group members" (p. 69). Similarly, Warren (1999, pp. 340-343) posits that deliberative processes can create trust within society by opening spaces for exchanging perspectives, promoting face-to-face conversation, enhancing the transparency of trade-offs among interests, and encouraging promises between community members. As shared by Offe (1999), "Institutions, if appropriately designed, can enable us to trust persons whom we never

had contact with and with whom we share no relevant communal allegiance" (p. 70). Though theses authors have not cited intergroup contact theory directly as the mechanism underlying these findings, I submit that contact mediates the association.

The possible negative impacts of intergroup contact on peace stem largely from the extent and quality of the contact between groups and the importance of generalizing individual behavior to the 'other' more broadly. Even though PDD can facilitate intergroup contact in divided societies, there are those that warn of the possible negative impacts of PDD introduction in post-conflict contexts. Deliberative spaces tend to favor either the majority or the most powerful in cross-cultural or divided communities. As Siu & Stanisevski (2012) describe, "Participants from marginalized communities, if included in a deliberation, would not be treated fairly and would not be able to participate as equals" (p. 85). Indeed, a common critique of PDD in any context is that the majority will overrun all other groups at the table, a challenge also of import for deliberative democrats. Thus, Allport's first criteria for the success of intergroup contact could go unmet in PDD forums.

Additionally, given that PDD has not traditionally been designed with the goals and recommended structure of intergroup contact in mind, it may exacerbate divisions between conflict parties and their sympathizers by inciting debate rather than dialogue or simply being too large to allow for meaningful contact and relationship building. Hewstone & Brown (1986) have argued that "contact is not enough," stressing the importance of group salience, or identification of the individual with whom one is interacting with the 'other' group versus an outlier, as a moderating factor for extending one's interactions with an individual to characterizations or generalizations about a group overall. Along a similar line, Black (2012) warns that "participants could identify themselves as members of specific social groups and

provide arguments that serve their own best interest rather than sharing a common concern for their collective identity" (p. 75). In a post-conflict setting, unwavering identity politics may exacerbate conflict.

This insight is brought to life in the case of the Civic Forum in Northern Ireland, occasioned in the 1998 Peace Agreement. The Civic Forum was designed to bring together civil society leaders from North and South twice per year to deliberate on policy issues, but ultimately it became a "political football between unionism and nationalism." Like the Northern Ireland Assembly, it did not generate rational dialogue or reason-based debate. Instead the forum circled around identity and interest-based politics stemming from the Troubles (Hayward, 2014, p. 16-19). Thus, it is important that participants in any intergroup contact setting be viewed as both individuals, to build affective friendships, and representative of their respective identity groups, to promote generalization beyond the interaction itself (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Deliberation in post-conflict contexts should therefore be designed with a sensitivity to conflict dynamics to avoid the possible risk of undermining peace processes. It is not yet known if the PDD mechanisms instituted in Guatemala and El Salvador were structured with contact quality and equitable conflict party participation in mind.

### 2h. Conceptual Framework

The above literature review describes how local-level peacebuilding and PDD may well combine to create a more sustainable peace than top-down statebuilding models of peacebuilding, but there has not yet been a study that empirically tests the impacts of PDD on peace in post-conflict contexts. Participatory deliberative democracy has been shown to improve political, social, and economic outcomes for individuals and communities, but with the caveat that PDD implementation, structure, and context matters. To contribute to peace, I

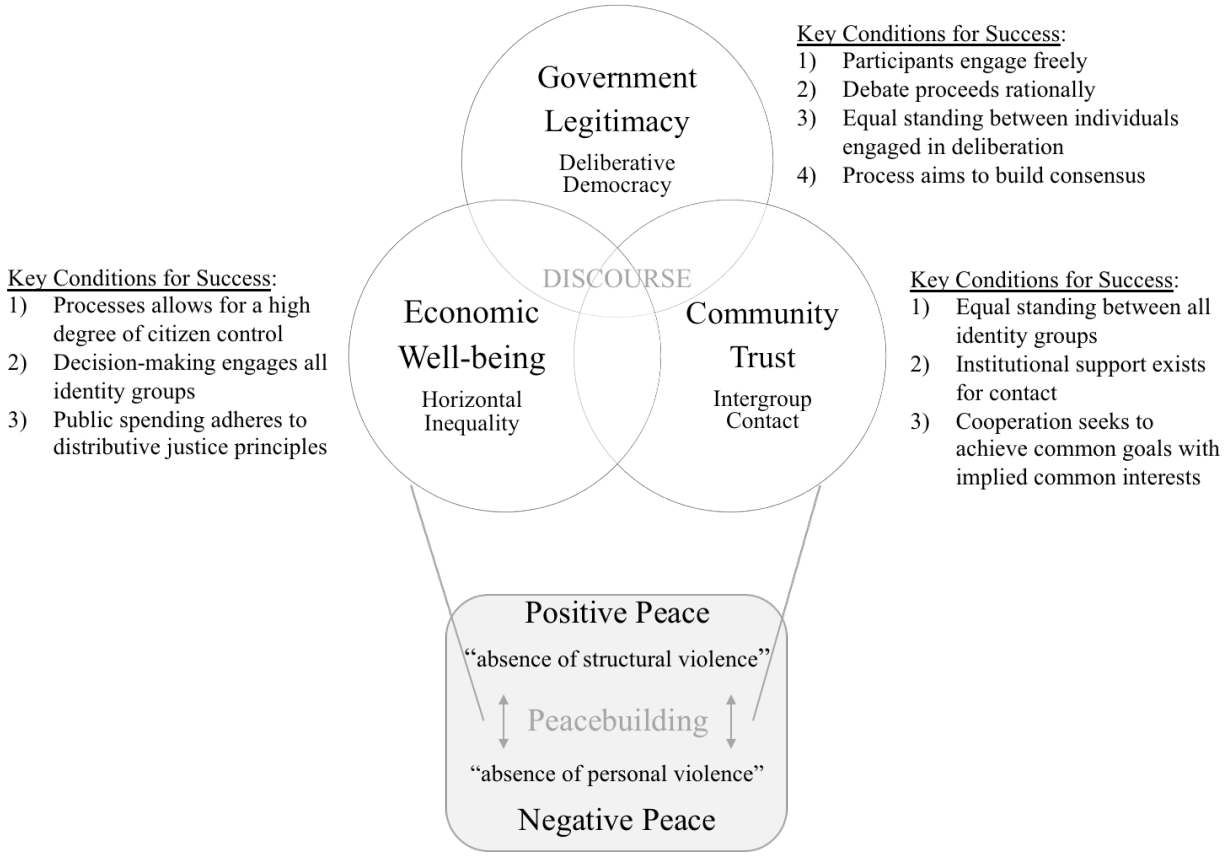
argue that PDD can facilitate structural changes across political, economic, and social dimensions of peace that together combine to decrease violence—creating 'negative' peace—and improve quality of life—building 'positive' peace. This conceptualization is rooted in Galtung's (1969) typology of peace, but takes the operationalization of peace one step further than Anderson (2004) by suggesting three key levers that contribute to sustainable peace.

Common to the three interdisciplinary theories that I suggest link political, economic, and social outcomes to peacebuilding is the use of discourse. Whether via deliberation to develop policy, distributive discussions about public resource allocations, or dialogue that builds empathy and relationships between participants; PDD opens a locally-defined space for discursive discovery and action between conflict parties with implications within and beyond the processes themselves. While systemic changes flowing from direct interaction between conflict parties in PDD programs are likely to take many forms in practice, I posit that there will be three key outcomes of PDD processes that link to the broader goals of building peace in post-conflict contexts politically, economically, and socially. Along the political dimension, increased confidence in local government will result from opening the policy-making process to public participation. Economically, improved perception of economic well-being will result from perceived or actual shifts in the distribution of resources as conflict parties listen to one another's felt needs. Socially, greater trust between neighbors will develop as PDD interactions reduce anxiety and initiate friendships across conflict lines. Ultimately, these outcomes will contribute to improved 'negative' and 'positive' peace.

The diagram in Figure 1 serves as a visual representation of the three-dimensional effect that PDD may have on political, economic, and social structures in post-conflict societies. It also shows the theory that I have drawn upon in each area to build this case

alongside its stated conditions for success. Discourse sits at the center of the diagram as the common element emphasized across theories. Demonstrated in Figure 1 as well, I metaphorically model how political, economic, and social levers united by the common thread of discourse in PDD forums can bolster 'negative' and 'positive' peace. Like a hot air balloon, the greater the effect of PDD on these political, economic, and social dimensions, the higher the level of peace.

***Figure 1: Projected Political, Economic, and Social Impacts of PDD on Peace***




Discourse has long been hypothesized to have favorable impacts on 'negative' and 'positive' peace in post-conflict contexts. Yet how discourse can make an impact can be seen

through different lenses. This conceptual framework highlights three different paths from discourse to peace. Deliberative democracy theory suggests that civic engagement via the rational exchange of public policy ideas and arguments can improve government legitimacy, promoting public official transparency and accountability and leading to greater trust in government. Horizontal inequality theory suggests that discussion spaces that promote citizen agency and public management efficiency while engaging identity groups equally in distributive decision making can reduce relative deprivation between conflict parties. Intergroup contact theory proposes that dialogue between conflict parties that equalizes status between parties and addresses common interests can have the effect of reducing prejudice, bolstering trust, and producing long-term affective friendships.

**2i. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature on peacebuilding and the call for local-level mechanisms to promote peace in post-conflict contexts. I suggest that participatory deliberative democracy may well be an appropriate response to this call. I then outlined three theoretical links between PDD and peace, making the case that discourse is an overlapping theme across theories. I also highlight that there are caveats to PDD's contribution to peace in deeply divided societies and intractable conflicts, as outlined by theorists and empirical evidence on PDD as applied in other contexts. Having explained the context and theory behind my research, I turn in the next chapter to my research design to empirically explore how PDD has been implemented in two post-conflict contexts in Central America and its effects on the multiple dimensions of peace I outlined above.

# CHAPTER 3

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS, HYPOTHESES, AND METHODOLOGY

The above conceptual framework is suggestive of some of the structural elements of PDD processes that may be important for building peace as well as possible PDD impacts in post-conflict contexts. My hypotheses and approach to measuring these key concepts is further detailed in the sections that follow. In section 3a, I share my primary and sub-research questions. In section 3b, I discuss the literature-derived hypotheses and propositions guiding my empirical investigation. I then describe a three-tiered research design which integrates an international comparative and mixed methodology in sections 3c-3f. I conclude in section 3g with a review of my research design.

## 3a. Research Questions

The primary research question for this study is: *How, if at all, does the implementation of participatory deliberative democracy in post-conflict contexts impact peacebuilding?* This question is purposefully broad to be inclusive of two sub-questions: 1) How do structural design and contextual factors of PDD implementation in post-conflict contexts influence peacebuilding effects?; and 2) To what extent and in what ways is PDD implementation in post-conflict contexts associated with peacebuilding? Table 1 below links my research questions with my proposed exploratory investigations and conceptual measures stemming directly from my review of the literature and conceptual framework.

***Table 1: Conceptual Measures and Investigations by Research Question***

| Secondary Research Question 1 | Exploratory Investigation |
|---|---|
| How do structural design and contextual factors of PDD implementation in post-conflict contexts influence peacebuilding effects? | Quality of Discourse |
| | Equal Participation/Standing between Identity Groups |
| | Institutional Support/Capacity |
| | Distributive Decision Making for the Common Good |
| | Community Demographics |
| | Factors yet to be Identified |

| Secondary Research Question 2 | Conceptual Measure |
|---|---|
| To what extent and in what ways is PDD implementation in post-conflict contexts associated with peacebuilding? | Confidence in Government |
| | Perception of Economic Well-being |
| | Community Trust |
| | Experience with and Perception of Physical Violence |
| | Satisfaction with Democratic System |
| | Perception of Peace |

**3b. Propositions and Hypotheses**

The literature suggests several factors I should explore to understand the underlying processes that produce, or fail to produce, effects on peace. Below I outline five propositions for the exploratory portion of my study:

1. *The quality of discourse permitted within a particular PDD forum will determine how influential or transformative the process will be for building peace in a community. The more closely the process adheres to the ideal Habermasean consensus model, the more likely it is that the PDD process will positively influence peace.*

2. *Participant equality in terms of participation and standing within the space will also influence the impacts of PDD on peacebuilding. The more closely the program design adheres to the ideal conditions of intergroup contact and promotes procedural justice, the more likely it is that the PDD process will positively influence peace.*

3. *Institutional support for and capacity to facilitate PDD spaces is central to creating safe and productive spaces for dialogue and decision making, implementing policy decisions made within the space, and sustaining the PDD process itself. The greater*

*the buy-in and capacity of local administrators, the more likely it is that the PDD process will positively influence peace.*

4. *As horizontal inequality has been identified as a cause of conflict, PDD processes should consider and address the root causes of inequality to avoid conflict relapse. The more consciously the municipality structures PDD processes to prioritize distributive justice through public spending allocation, the more likely it is that the PDD process will positively influence peace.*

5. *Community effects of PDD participation are often influenced by the demographic characteristics of the community itself. Small communities can reach more of the population through direct participation. Less ethnically diverse communities are more likely to achieve consensus in public deliberation. The less populous and less diverse the community, the more likely it is that PDD will positively influence peace.*

The above factors listed as propositions are anticipated to be influential on the associated effects of PDD on post-conflict peace. Bearing in mind the municipal variation in PDD implementation and approach, the conceptual framework and theory outlined above allow me to hypothesize several possible associations between PDD and multiple dimensions of peace. I use indicators of confidence in local government, perceived economic well-being, and neighbor trustworthiness as measures of the political, economic, and social dimensions that theoretically facilitate peacebuilding and conflict transformation in post-conflict societies. Given the complexity of measuring 'positive' peace, I operationalize self-reported satisfaction with the democratic system as an indicator of satisfaction with the broader political structure and therefore the "absence of structural violence" in alignment with Galtung's 'positive' peace. This selection notably aligns more with the democratic peace thesis, than it does with transformative or social justice conceptualizations of 'positive' peace. As the "absence of physical violence" is in alignment with Galtung's 'negative' peace and a common measure of peace outlined in the literature, I operationalize 'negative' peace using measures of one's personal encounter with violent crime and perception of violence in one's neighborhood. I also generate a 'peace perception index' which combines individuals' subjective perceptions of

political, economic, social, 'positive,' and 'negative' dimensions of peace as an additive measure of overall peace.

I hypothesize that the implementation of locally led PDD in post-conflict contexts will build 'positive' and 'negative' peace by increasing confidence in local government, improving perceived economic well-being, and bolstering neighbor trust. Though all individuals in my case countries have been exposed to top-down liberal peacebuilding efforts through the macro-level peace processes implemented in each nation, I anticipate that those who participate in PDD will demonstrate divergent outcomes across multiple dimensions of peace as compared to those that do not participate in PDD. Overall, I posit that *PDD is positively associated with peace among individuals with higher levels of PDD participation*. Specifically, I propose six hypotheses aligned with the dimensions of my conceptual framework:

- ***H1:*** *PDD is positively associated with increased trust in local political institutions, as measured by perceived municipal government trustworthiness among individuals with higher levels of PDD participation.*

- ***H2:*** *PDD is positively associated with reduced levels of relative deprivation, as measured by improvements in perceived economic well-being among individuals with higher levels of PDD participation.*

- ***H3:*** *PDD is positively associated with increased community trust, as measured by perceived neighbor trustworthiness among individuals with higher levels of PDD participation.*

- ***H4:*** *PDD is positively associated with 'negative' peace, as measured by the percentage of individuals reporting direct experiences with physical violence within the last year and perceived level of violence in one's neighborhood among individuals with higher levels of PDD participation.*

- ***H5:*** *PDD is positively associated with 'positive' peace, as measured by satisfaction with the democratic system among individuals with higher levels of PDD participation.*

- ***H6:*** *PDD is positively associated with peace, as measured by a higher additive index score across political, economic, social, 'positive,' and 'negative' dimensions of peace.*

### 3c. Research Design

This study applies an integrated mixed methodology to a comparative case study of two post-conflict Central American nations—Guatemala and El Salvador. While each of the methods employed are further elaborated below in the methodology section, it is important to note that I conducted this study at three complementary levels of analysis to gain a thorough understanding of how PDD may influence peacebuilding, if at all. Table 2 below summarizes the terminology I use to describe each level and the corresponding unit of analysis, method, and function served by each component.

***Table 2: Three Complementary Levels of Analysis***

| Level | Unit of Analysis | Method | Function |
|---|---|---|---|
| Macro | Country | Comparative Case Study | Identify national level factors that may influence peacebuilding more than PDD. |
| Meso | Municipality | Qualitative | Explore how PDD is implemented in practice and its community impacts from the perspective of local government officials. |
| Micro | Individual | Quantitative | Link individual participation in PDD forums to lived reality and perceptions from the perspective of PDD participants. |

I opted for this multi-leveled approach to both strengthen my analysis of this complex issue and to mitigate challenges in design and methodology present at any one level by providing a validity check or control at another level. King, Keohane, & Verba (1994, p. 116) suggest that in situations in which a researcher does not have a sufficient number of cases to show all variation, which is nearly impossible to control for when historical conflicts and

public policy are the dependent variables being used in case selection, then one should add observations at different levels of analysis into the study design. I therefore took this approach to manage case selection controls. Additionally, all methods have specific strengths and weaknesses that I sought to mitigate to address my central research question. By using different methods to guide my investigation at each level, I endeavored to play to the strengths and minimize the weaknesses inherent in each methodology. The multiple levels of analysis and integrated mixed methods approach strengthen my design.

While I am ultimately interested in how PDD has been employed in my two case countries and the impact this public policy approach has had on peacebuilding, I cannot control for dependent variable variation at the nation-state level. Additionally, I was only able to gather rich original data realistically at the municipal and individual level. Thus, I use the case study method at the macro-level to analyze the big picture factors that have influenced PDD implementation and alter its effects in each country. Although municipalities are the central policy actors implementing PDD at the meso-level, the number of possible municipal observations is too small for a robust quantitative analysis and there is limited solid data to guide case selection for variation on the type of PDD, or lack thereof, employed by each community. Thus, an exploratory qualitative approach is most appropriate to understanding PDD mechanisms in practice and associated community impacts. Finally, the individual level dataset that I use is limited by the fact that it is from a secondary source with pre-determined questions that I have operationalized to fit my dissertation research interests. Nonetheless, this dataset boasts appropriate variation in my dependent variable, suitable controls, and enough observations to allow for econometric analysis.

In summary, each level of analysis alone cannot provide a holistic picture of how PDD has influenced peacebuilding in my post-conflict case study nations. Only when used together do they present a detailed and nuanced case to either confirm or reject the propositions and hypotheses I outlined above. In the following section, I discuss the methodological approach I take at each level of analysis in greater detail.

### 3d. Methodology

The empirical investigation I undertake to complete this dissertation combines both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis in an integrated mixed methodology. Using both qualitative and quantitative techniques for data collection and analysis allows me to answer the two secondary research questions implied by the central research question as outlined above. While qualitative methods are used to answer the secondary question akin to 'how does it work?', quantitative methods are used to answer the secondary question akin to 'does it work?' (Starks & Trinidad, 2007; Yin, 2014). Combining methods in this fashion allows for a more thorough investigation of PDD and its impacts on my two case countries from the perspective of municipal officials and their constituents.

The qualitative and quantitative components used at varying levels of analysis are logically linked to the main research question and sub-questions as outlined below in Table 3.

*Table 3: Linking Research Questions to Methodology*

| Primary Research Question | Research Method | Data Sources |
|---|---|---|
| How, if at all, does the implementation of participatory deliberative democracy in post-conflict contexts impact peacebuilding? | Comparative Case Study | Historical and Administrative Document Review |

| Secondary Research Question 1 | Research Method | Data Sources |
|---|---|---|
| How do structural design and contextual factors of PDD implementation in post-conflict contexts influence peacebuilding effects? | Qualitative Interviews and Observations | Municipal Officials, PDD Forums, and PDD Participants |

| Secondary Research Question 2 | Research Method | Data Sources |
|---|---|---|
| To what extent and in what ways is PDD implementation in post-conflict contexts associated with peacebuilding? | Quantitative Analysis of Secondary Survey Data | LAPOP AmericasBarometer Survey |

Broadly speaking, the mixed methodology approach used for this study combines a macro-level historical case study of the conflicts and PDD policies implemented in Guatemala and El Salvador; meso-level original qualitative interviews and observations to understand how PDD is actually used in practice at the local level; and micro-level quantitative analysis of a secondary public opinion survey. DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz (2017) call this an "explanatory sequential design."

However, the execution of my research did not necessarily flow sequentially from qualitative to quantitative analysis due the timing of release and availability of the quantitative data and feasibility of access to human subjects in each country. Thus, in implementation, the design took on more of a multi-phased and cyclical structure. In spring of 2017, research for

this study began with a quantitative analysis of AmericasBarometer data from 2008. From summer of 2017 through summer of 2019, I completed qualitative interviews and observations of PDD process. In all municipalities, I used municipal official interviews simultaneously for data collection and to begin the process of building rapport with those individuals that would later facilitate PDD process observations. In autumn of 2019, I completed the quantitative analysis of AmericasBarometer data from 2018 as it was received.

Ultimately, the aim of this study is to compare PDD's effects in two distinct cases where it has been used alongside post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, versus making assertions about patterns extant in PDD implementation across a large set of cases both with and without former internal conflicts. Thus, this study seeks to replicate the investigation plan and sequence at each of three levels of analysis separately, multiple times. As such, each case study country followed the same step-by-step investigation. Data analysis was completed holistically case-by-case and comparisons were made across cases once all data collection and analysis on each case was complete. I intentionally made no attempt to aggregate data across national boundaries. My logic in taking this approach was that, if in each case the impacts of PDD were similar, there would be compelling evidence to suggest that various forms of PDD had comparable effects in multiple post-conflict contexts, perhaps even further afield than Central America. Such a result would provide robust support for the conceptual framework outlined above. If the impacts of PDD differed between the selected countries, it would be possible to identify the structural elements that contributed to noted differences in PDD effects or indicate that the theories driving the propositions and hypotheses outlined above require further exploration and refinement in future studies.

### 3e. Macro-level Comparative Case Study

Yin (2014) defines the scope of a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within a real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). In the case of linking PDD to peace, it could well be that the historical context of the conflict and peace process or national-level political systems in these real-world cases are more influential factors than individual participation in municipal policy decision making. As is demonstrated by the multiple theories employed to untangle the possible mechanisms at work in PDD forums used alongside peacebuilding operations, post-conflict recovery is an incredibly complex phenomenon in modern international relations. This comparative case study explores the civil wars and post-conflict peace processes pursued by the two nations at a macro-level to paint a picture in broad strokes of how peacebuilding has proceeded in each country.

The selection of the case countries for this international comparative study stemmed from four primary considerations. First, I selected case study countries that had formally ended an internal conflict within the last 20-30 years. Peacebuilding investments, just like any large-scale initiative designed to effect behavioral change, take a substantial amount of time to solidify; thus, the case countries needed to be 'post-conflict' for at least two decades. Second, each case country selected had instituted at least one PDD mechanism in the post-war period, though the format and commitment to implementation was expected to vary. Third, the case countries selected shared a similar cultural heritage to eliminate at least one of several mediating factors that could contribute to or shift the observed effects of PDD on measures of peace. I also prioritized my case country selection according to my regional experience. My Spanish language fluency and experience working and living in Latin America give me

increased access and an improved understanding of these contexts, which I would not have had in other areas of the world. In the following paragraphs, I speak broadly about the cases of Guatemala and El Salvador and how each aligns with the stated selection criteria.

Several Central American countries experienced politically motivated conflicts starting in the 1960s-70s and concluding in the 1990s. Two prominent conflicts in the region were the civil wars in Guatemala and El Salvador. In both countries, military dictatorships were met with left-leaning opposition groups fueling thirty-six-year and twelve-year conflicts, respectively, between the paramilitary organizations and the national armed forces. These politically motivated civil wars each ended in accordance with regional or national peace agreements and entered a process of peacebuilding. While neither country has fallen back into full-scale conflict, and both are touted as exemplary cases of successful liberal peacebuilding, each country continues to struggle with the recovery process politically, economically, and socially in the aftermath of war. A primary challenge for both nations has been the transformation of war-time violence into criminal activity which, though less intense, contributes to widespread anxiety about personal safety (Hume, 2007, 2008; Janzen, 2008).

As Pearce (1998) states, "If we take poverty and violence as indicators of what have been called 'positive' (i.e. a more equitable society, free from want) and 'negative' peace (absence of violence), it is evident that while Central America has ceased to be 'at war,' it remains anything but 'peaceful'" (pp. 589-590). Indeed, on the 2016 Fragile States Index, the two nations were listed at the "high warning" or "elevated warning" levels relative to the 178 countries evaluated by the Fund for Peace (2016), which combines twelve social, economic, and political indicators of risk and vulnerability to collapse and conflict. Additionally, both countries are listed as having low levels of 'positive' peace on the 2016 Positive Peace Index

by the Institute for Economics and Peace based on eight factors that contribute to the presence of "the attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies" (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2016, p. 4). As these facts and data suggest, these countries fit the aforementioned definition of post-conflict nations provided by Junne & Verkoren (2005). Peace has been achieved to the extent that no country has returned to war, but neither 'negative' nor 'positive' peace has been secured. Both liberal peace approaches and locally led PDD have not been fully successful in achieving a sustainable conflict termination or structures to uphold peace and prosperity long-term, though both countries have made substantial gains since the end of their internal conflicts.

Each nation approaches peace under different circumstances and continues to build peace today via alternative measures. With peace agreements signed across the region as the Cold War thawed, Guatemala and El Salvador introduced decentralized governance and local-level deliberative democracy mechanisms as their civil wars came to an end (International City/County Management Association, 2004c). Specifically, these two nations implemented forms of *asociaciones de desarrollo comunal/comunitario* or *consejos de desarrollo* (community development associations or committees), *cabildos abiertos* (open Town Hall meetings), as well as *presupuestos participativos* and/or *planificación participativa* (participatory budgeting and/or planning), often with the support of international assistance programs (International City/County Management Association, 2004c). Suitably for this study, each of these PDD mechanisms were designed to elicit the participation of community stakeholders in government decision making, they were widely applied, and they spanned all rungs on the ladder of citizen control (Arnstein, 1969).

In Guatemala, PDD implementation was heavily driven by the peace accords and laws

calling for citizen participation avenues to be established in the post-war era, but progress toward realization of these goals was hampered when the initial laws were declared unconstitutional (Bland, 2002; Muñoz & Velásquez, 2010). In the early 2000s, the proposed citizen participation structure of Development Councils was finally passed into law (International City/County Management Association, 2004b). A couple of academic studies have been published on the success of these councils, which were occasioned directly by the peace agreement and subsequent laws compelling their creation, citing little (if any) success in terms of their functioning capacity alone (Goldfrank, 2007; Speer, 2011). I did not come across any empirical research prior to embarking on this investigation connecting Guatemala's PDD mechanisms to peace-related effects.

In El Salvador, implementation of these processes was heavily supported by international actors like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) both before the war ended and after the peace agreement was signed. Various forms of PDD saw significant adoption in government policy and practice over time (Bland, 2011, 2017; International City/County Management Association, 2004a; RTI, 2005). Two academic studies have been completed on El Salvador's integration of PDD initiatives as it related to the peace process, specifically *presupuestos participativos*, both of which were written by the project's former technical manager as a five- and ten-year follow-up on the sustainability of the program post-intervention (Bland, 2011, 2017). While several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have also conducted their own evaluations of the PDD mechanisms they facilitated or supported in El Salvador, I did not come across an evaluation linking PDD process outputs or outcomes to impacts related to peace.

Each case country's conflict history and national peace process differed greatly, and

the way that each country embraced participatory deliberative democracy is widely divergent. Each case, therefore, illuminates a different aspect of the conditions and contextual factors necessary for the implementation of PDD in a post-conflict context. A more detailed description of each nation's experience with conflict, peace process, and PDD implementation is provided in the full case studies presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

Even though an in-depth historical and administrative document review can suggest broad-based differences and similarities between PDD in Guatemala and El Salvador, a case study only at the macro-level and based solely on secondary sources does not provide enough empirical evidence to answer my research questions. Peace agreements, laws, municipal codes, and project reports may look great on paper, but they could fall short in implementation. There was certainly evidence to suggest that, in both Guatemala and El Salvador, the national governments required the adoption of participatory policies at the local level in law, if not always in practice (International City/County Management Association, 2004, p. xi). Additionally, those that previously collected empirical evidence or evaluation data about PDD processes in these countries were not asking the same research questions. For these reasons, additional empirical data needed to be collected and analyzed at the meso- and micro-level.

### 3f. Meso-level Qualitative Interviews and Observations

For each case country, I began my qualitative data collection by completing interviews with municipal officials with the aim of understanding how PDD processes worked both in and across communities alongside the stated aims and outcomes of PDD for local government officials. These interviews were conducted with either the mayor, a designated Municipal Council member, or the coordinator responsible for PDD processes or transparency initiatives in each community. In several cases, I was invited to interview multiple officials within a

municipality, resulting in a higher number of interviews than selected municipal sites. Across all case countries and their selected municipalities, I completed a total of sixty-eight public official interviews. Municipalities were selected using three criteria based on my integrated mixed methodology and tied to theory: 1) inclusion in the AmericasBarometer dataset; 2) urban vs rural composition; and 3) a post-war conflict party proxy including political party as well as indigenous population in the case of Guatemala and just political party in the case of El Salvador. If proper data was available about PDD implementation across all municipalities in each country, I would have also selected municipalities to interview based on this criterion. However, such a database of municipal PDD strategies did not exist in either country.

Regarding the first criterion, I began the selection process by identifying those commonly surveyed during the AmericasBarometer survey cycles. There were two reasons for this initial selection. First, it was beneficial for me to have access to both qualitative and quantitative data for each municipality to cross-check my findings across levels of analysis and methodologies. This helped to ensure that the qualitative analysis could truly inform and integrate with the quantitative component. Second, even though approximately 60-80 AmericasBarometer municipalities are selected at random each survey round, there is a core set of municipalities that appear frequently given their particularly representative nature as determined by community characteristics included in the LAPOP sampling strategy. Thus, selecting from this pool ensured that I had a more representative sub-set of municipalities for interview. For this selection, I compiled a list of all municipalities surveyed starting in round 2004 through round 2016 in each country to identify the oft-surveyed communities. I was also provided a provisional list of municipalities scheduled for participation in the

AmericasBarometer survey in 2018 from LAPOP in the summer of 2018, which further narrowed my focus and selection to municipalities surveyed in the 2008 and 2018 cycles.

Majority urban versus rural composition of the municipality was the second criterion in my theoretical sampling strategy because the composition of the communities involved in participation can either facilitate or detract from PDD effectiveness as shown in the literature. For example, Conover, Searing, & Crewe (2002) test whether cultural biases and institutional arrangements differ by community type in the US and the UK, including in their analysis separate variables for urban, suburban, and rural communities. They find that community type impacts the issues discussed in deliberation, private versus public setting choice, and the amount of contested discussion, all at statistically significant levels. In the context of Central America, rural communities tend to have much lower levels of development and education. They also tend to be located further away from municipal offices. These factors were considered possible limitations on participation as compared to urban dwellers. Therefore, urban versus rural majority was the second selection criterion in my municipal site selection matrix.

Conflict party was my third municipal selection criterion, but the approach was slightly different in each country due to the history of conflict in the two case countries. Though both Guatemala and El Salvador experienced internal political-ideological conflicts between left- and right-leaning parties, the conflict in Guatemala is now widely considered to have been as much ethnically motivated as political (Eckhardt, 2005). As Eckhardt (2005) poignantly states, "The state actually didn't fight the insurgency – it fought the Mayan community" (p. 34). Thus, in Guatemala, it was important for me to design my sample to account for both political ideologies that could be traced back to the war-time era as perpetrators of violence and

indigenous communities targeted as victims. I therefore ensured that both political parties (left- and right-leaning) and ethnic populations (*ladino/mestizo* and indigenous) were represented equally in my selection of municipalities in Guatemala.

However, achieving this balance was more difficult in practice than in theory. Guatemala's post-conflict transition of war-era conflict parties into everyday politics and society was quite different from El Salvador, where tracing back a politician's ideological views to the war era was no more complex than asking their party affiliation. Guatemalan political parties were both numerous and notoriously short-lived during the period of my research. From one election cycle to the next, more than half of the existing parties were eliminated and a new set took their place. It was commonly said that political parties were merely a vessel for the rich and powerful to become a candidate for political office. Thus, only one party could be traced back directly to the war-era, and that was the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity or *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG) party, the opposition to the military-led government during the war.

Whereas other parties have come and gone over the years, the URNG continued to exist after 20 years post-war, albeit with limited numbers. Indeed, only three sitting mayors and just 13% of Municipal Council members were URNG party affiliates nation-wide as of the 2015 elections. Thus, while it was not possible to get a good-sized sample of municipalities led by the URNG to represent the modern-day left-leaning municipalities, I developed a creative solution. Digging a bit deeper into election records allowed me to see which municipalities ran a URNG candidate in the 2015 election, and I found that 34% of municipalities still maintained a URNG political presence. This was a large enough group to select from to ensure

representation of the war-ear revolutionaries in my sample, and I was easily able to identify parties representing the modern right-leaning equivalent of military and business elite.

While post-war party politics were weak and transitory, making that selection criterion a true puzzle to discern, my matrix was further complicated by the need to somehow incorporate a third conflict party: the indigenous population, the war-era victims. In the post-war era, Mayan populations held steadfast to their identity and rights as indigenous peoples, a fundamental pillar of the peace accords negotiated in 1995 (Jonas, 2000). Additionally, indigenous groups were specifically called out as the target beneficiaries of the primary PDD mechanism in Guatemala as outlined in Congressional Decree 11-2002, which mandated the creation of *consejos de desarrollo* or Community Development Councils "to constitute a permanent instrument of participation and representation of the Mayan, Xinca, and Garífuna peoples and of the non-indigenous population, as well as of the various sectors that constitute the Guatemalan nation." As such, percentage of indigenous population residing in each municipality, greater than or less than 50%, was my selected conflict party proxy for this population. I was unsure at first how I would be able to manage a matrix with this added criterion, but it turned out, perhaps not surprisingly, that the municipalities falling into the left-leaning quadrant of my matrix aligned almost exactly with those in the majority indigenous quadrant of the matrix. To ensure I had three municipalities in each quadrant–whether I used political party or indigenous population as my third criteria–I simply over sampled where the alignment was not exact.

In El Salvador, the left-leaning Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) guerillas transitioned into a well-established political party in opposition to the conservative and neoliberal Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA). Also, unlike the case of Guatemala,

El Salvador is largely homogeneous in terms of ethnicity. Thus, political party was the sole proxy for conflict party for post-conflict El Salvador. It is important to note, however, that left-leaning parties tended to be more receptive and supportive of PDD than right-leaning parties in El Salvador, as was the case historically in Latin America. In Brazil, for example, the left-leaning Workers Party was the first to develop and implement participatory budgeting. In El Salvador, therefore, I selected my sample from municipalities led by either left- or right-leaning mayors seeking to understand the perspectives of both conflict parties.

After making the first cut of possible municipalities to include in my samples in Guatemala and El Salvador, I then applied the two additional selection criteria including urban versus rural composition and political party proxies. These two criteria relate directly back to theory and historical experiences with PDD in the region. My initial intention was to create a two-by-two matrix as shown in Table 4 below; however, both Guatemala and El Salvador have a high number of "mixed" municipalities, with a nearly 50/50 split between rural and urban composition. As such, a third stratum had to be added to the selection matrix. In Guatemala, majority urban municipalities with majority Mayan/left-leaning populations did not exist within my dataset. Majority Mayan municipalities and left-leaning municipalities are all either mixed or majority rural, but never majority urban. Thus, I selected only fifteen municipalities to complete the matrix in Guatemala. In El Salvador, I set out to complete a higher number of interviews because at least eighteen municipalities needed to be included in the revised sample.

Multiple back-up cases were identified and recruited for each interview slot in case the first selected municipality declined participation. Only two municipalities, one in Guatemala and one in El Salvador, declined participation due to scheduling challenges. However, due to my extended time in the field and simultaneous recruitment strategy, I ended up interviewing

more municipalities than initially planned. In Guatemala, this was purposeful as I tried to ensure I achieved a good mix of all three conflict party proxies along both ethnic and political sway dimensions. In El Salvador, municipal elections in between my research stays and the evolution of my site selection criteria over a period of three years resulted in an even higher number of interviews as I needed to build relationships with new administrations to facilitate later observations and participant interviews. In the end, these factors meant that I interviewed thirty-one municipal officials across eighteen municipalities in Guatemala and thirty-seven municipal officials across twenty-six municipalities in El Salvador. The final sampling matrix for each country is shown in Tables 5 and 6 below.

***Table 4: Initial Municipal Interview Sampling Strategy***

| **Case Selection Matrix** | Majority Urban Municipalities | Majority Rural Municipalities |
|---|---|---|
| Left-leaning Municipal Leadership or Majority Mayan Population | x3 sites | x3 sites |
| Right-leaning Municipal Leadership or Minority Mayan Population | x3 sites | x3 sites |

***Table 5: Guatemala Municipal Interview Sample Matrix***

| **Case Selection Matrix** | Majority Urban Municipalities | Mixed Urban/Rural Municipalities | Majority Rural Municipalities |
|---|---|---|---|
| Majority Mayan Population | Not available | x3 sites | x4 sites |
| Minority Mayan Population | x4 sites | x4 sites | x3 sites |

***Table 6: El Salvador Municipal Interview Sample Matrix***

| **Case Selection Matrix** | Majority Urban Municipalities | Mixed Urban/Rural Municipalities | Majority Rural Municipalities |
|---|---|---|---|
| Left-leaning Municipal Leadership | x3 sites | x3 sites | x5 sites |
| Right-leaning Municipal Leadership | x6 sites | x4 sites | x5 sites |

Recruitment took place in three waves, and the strategy employed was highly effective in both case countries. Although I had few prior contacts established in each country when I first arrived, I completed the majority of the municipal level interviews over the course of two short trips to Central America, one in the summer of 2017 and the second in the fall of 2018. First, I mailed a formal letter of request for an interview approximately 1-2 months in advance of my arrival. Second, I followed-up with a round of emails and phone calls to confirm interest in participation and interview details. Third, I directly visited those municipalities that did not respond to either former communication to deliver a formal interview request. Having formerly served as a Peace Corps Volunteer and exchange student in Latin America with several years of experience living in the region, I suspected that the third recruitment strategy would be the most effective. Indeed, nearly 75% of my interviews were secured upon dropping off a formal interview request.

Development of the semi-structured interview protocol followed three phases. First, I participated in PDD programs in Cambridge, Massachusetts including the local participatory budgeting cycle to understand how these programs work in a North American context. Second, I conducted informal conversations with key informants from Mexico and USAID contractors

in Central America to get an initial understanding of how Latin American programs were designed, implemented, and evolving. Third and finally, I completed cognitive interviews with the key informants with the final set of questions to ensure they could be answered and understood by municipal officials. Interview questions focused on the role of the interviewed official with regards to citizen participation efforts, the implementation of PDD mechanisms, and the impacts of deliberation and participation on the community. Some interviews lasted for twenty minutes, while others took over one and a half hours. The average interview length for municipal officials was approximately forty-five minutes. The interview protocol is included in Appendix I. Given that the interviews did not involve the collection of personally identifiable information on human subjects, an expedited review of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was completed and approved.

All interviews were transcribed during my time in the field, with the assistance of a transcription service as funding allowed. Interview recordings and transcripts were stripped of any personally identifiable information to ensure confidentiality of the informants. Coding and analysis also took place throughout the fieldwork period. Coding was facilitated through MAXQDA, a software for qualitative research analysis, and proceeded from low-inference to higher-inference meaning reconstruction to develop cross-cutting themes (Carspecken, 1996, pp. 97-102). Abductive analysis was used to link identified themes back to literature in an iterative process of developing speculative theoretical hunches from unexpected findings and then checking for variation across the data (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). In practice, this involved bucketing quotes as examples or counter examples of the information shared during interviews to delve into the nuances of cases in which PDD had been successful toward building peace and where it had not.

While qualitative and quantitative methods each have their weaknesses, qualitative researchers have developed some checks and balances from within the subset of qualitative approaches to strengthen results. For example, interviews are often used in tandem with observations as complementary qualitative data collection techniques. Participant observation is thought to be a better technique for eliminating the added subjective filter of the interviewee; however, interviewing is better for recounting past experiences and gaining access to the subjective realities of participants (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014; Lamont & Swidler, 2014). While I did not have sufficient time in the field or resources to complete observations of every PDD mechanism in each of the municipalities selected for interviews, especially given that some PDD processes take place on annual or multi-year cycles, I sought out at least one opportunity for observation per sample matrix quadrant as a validity check on my municipal interview findings. In total, I conducted sixteen observations across seven municipalities in El Salvador and seventeen observations across seven municipalities in Guatemala. I also observed several PDD projects in execution.

Observations helped me to understand the quality of discourse and contact in these spaces, PDD program design and its influence on participation, and institutional capacity to facilitate these processes overall. Observations nearly always followed municipal interview data collection, as only through these contacts was I able to gain entrée to these spaces. Although PDD is by its nature open to the public, thus allowing me to enter the space with little logistical difficulty outside of travel to the site, my status as an obvious outsider precluded my ability to observe without disrupting the space. In terms of ethical research practice, personal safety, and entrée, it was necessary for me to attend PDD meetings with the support and approval of the municipal government. As a result, I was often introduced to participants

for the first time by a municipal official, although I made a conscientious effort to emphasize in my own introduction and follow-up narrative that I came to the space as an independent researcher.

Observations I completed were guided with the use of a fieldnote-taking tool I developed in the fall of 2017 while conducting participant observations of four types of PDD processes in New England. The notetaking instrument I developed was largely from a guide to writing fieldnotes by Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (1995). The four practice observations I completed were in open and official Town Hall meetings, participatory planning, and participatory budgeting processes. Observations in Central America were completed over the course of seven months, divided into three months in Guatemala and four months in El Salvador. Throughout this period, I kept detailed observation notes and typed up post-observation memos with the aim of describing interactions, participant dynamics, and my initial interpretations. As with the municipal interview data, I coded and analyzed observation memos using Abductive Analysis.

Additionally, I adapted the Discourse Quality Index (DQI) from the literature on deliberative democracy to see if the tool could help me link what I was seeing back to a central theory in my field. The DQI was developed by Steenbergen et al. (2003) as a quantitative measure of discourse based on Habermas' discourse ethics and ideal principles of successful deliberation. The authors used it to measure the quality of deliberation in videotaped UK parliamentary debates, and I adapted it for use in live observation. The tool is like a scorecard with seven categories including participation, level of justification, content of justification, respect between groups, respect for the demands of others, respect for counterarguments, and constructive politics. Under each category, a deliberation is given a higher number of points

the closer the exchange gets to Habermas' ideal. Designers of the DQI (Steenbergen et al., 2003) do not propose one single way that the DQI should be calculated. In their demonstrative use case, two coders tagged each speech act in the debate with a score in each of the seven categories. They then averaged the scores and suggested that an index could be created by adding up the average scores by category or creating factor scores to form a scale.

There were several challenges to applying these exact same procedures in my own use case. First, I did not have a second coder. Second, I could not reasonably videotape or record each PDD interaction as I did not want to disrupt the natural proceedings within the space, which is difficult to avoid as an obvious foreigner. Third, though I took detailed notes, it was not reasonable to assumption that I caught every word or exchange during my observations to code by individual speech act afterward. Thus, I opted for a simpler method of tagging and quantifying discourse quality in my field observations. After each observation, I wrote up detailed fieldnotes, and tagged the speech acts reaching the highest score in each of the DQI categories, if any. I then added up the high scores across all categories to calculate my adapted DQI. The range of this adapted DQI was 0-13.

I also used the DQI as a model to create my own Contact Quality Index (CQI) and observation tool to gauge the quality of intergroup contact based on Allport's (1954) conditions for success. The tool was designed to mirror the DQI scorecard with four categories in alignment with Allport's conditions and Hewstone & Brown's (1986) extension on those conditions indicating that social identities as in-group or out-group members should be capitalized on in contact situations so that interpersonal interactions are then generalized to intergroup relations. The four categories included on the final scorecard included equal status, represented by treatment toward majority and minority group representatives; institutional

support for the contact as demonstrated by the role of government officials in facilitating contact; cooperation towards common goals through appeals to mutual interests; and group salience shown by clear identification of participants as group representatives in the interaction. Under each category, speech acts I observed were allotted a higher number of points the closer they approached Allport's ideal intergroup contact conditions. Just as with the DQI, I tagged the speech acts reaching the highest score in each of the CQI categories, if any. I then added up the high scores across all categories to calculate my adapted CQI. The range of this adapted CQI was 0-8.

A copy of my fieldnote-taking tool, including my scorecards for the DQI and CQI is included in Appendix II. This pre-tested set of tools was useful for helping me to link my observation data back to theory as I wrote up formal memos. The DQI and CQI were also helpful as I looked for trends across PDD mechanisms used by multiple municipalities in each country. In the chapters to follow, I share the average DQI and CQI score for several types of PDD mechanisms by case country to capture and quantify the difference in discourse and contact quality I observed depending on the type of PDD forum observed.

Having developed a relationship with both the municipality and community through the local official interviews and observations, I was then able to set up interviews with individual participants to better understand lived experiences, perspectives, and perceived impacts of PDD. Typically, an observation was followed by semi-structured, in-person interviews of between 3-10 PDD participants. I used a purposive sampling strategy to select participants to the extent that it was possible, and a snowball sampling strategy where it was not possible. My aim was to speak with at least one citizen leader or facilitator of the PDD process observed and two participants representing different demographic qualities (such as

gender or age) and conflict party (represented by political party or ethnicity depending on the country). Though my relationships with officials and community members certainly took on a full spectrum of interactions, I developed a rapport sufficient to be invited into additional PDD forums not explicitly coordinated by the municipality, neighborhood and community events like soccer club games or Mother's Day festivals, and individual PDD participant homes. In many cases, interviewees would invite me to join them for lunch or dinner, introduce me to their family and community members, or provide tours of their communities as we talked about their PDD projects and experiences.

Recruitment was conducted within the PDD space itself either just after or just before the observation, depending on the preference of the municipal officials or leadership of the process. Each person was asked to 'sign-up' if they were willing to be contacted for an interview. The sign-up slips had columns for name, phone number, address, age, gender, and languages spoken for Guatemala, as a proxy for ethnicity, or party identification for El Salvador. After my observations, I reached out to the recruited individuals directly via phone to coordinate either in-person or phone interviews. If this procedure was not possible due to meeting size or logistics, I coordinated contact via the municipality. In these cases, I asked to speak with individuals in leadership roles and that would ideally represent different ethnic or political perspectives. I then had them complete the sign-up slip during the interview itself to ensure I had been introduced to a diversity of participants. In cases in which I had a higher level of interest in interview participation, I reached out to all those that had expressed interest. It was quite common to receive interest in participation, but to not receive a response to the formal invitation to interview. In four cases, participants declined the interview invitation once

they were provided with the informed consent. In total, I interviewed 58 participants in Guatemala and 36 participants in El Salvador.

In Guatemala, my interviewees were 58% male and 42% female, the vast majority of which were adults (79%) with a few youth (9%) and elderly (12%) participants. Those reporting participation in PDD processes during the 2018/19 AmericasBarometer survey cycle were 58% male and 42% female with an average age of 39 years, so my interview sample aligns well along these demographics with the nationally representative sample of the same period. In line with my overarching municipal sampling strategy, 50% lived in rural areas, 2% in "mixed or suburban" areas, and 48% in urban centers. This distribution intentionally does not align with the nationally representative sample of PDD participants from the AmericasBarometer, as 61% of PDD participants nationally live in rural areas while 39% live in urban areas. The ethnic background of participant interviewees, which I opted to ask rather than political party given my sampling strategy for this country, was 55% *ladino/mestizo* or a white/indigenous mix and 45% indigenous. Within the nationally representative AmericasBarometer sample, 47% of PDD participants identified as *ladino/mestizo* and 53% as indigenous. Thus, though slightly over-weighted toward *ladino/mestizo* respondents, my participant interviewee sample was within 8 percentage points of the nationally representative sample.

In El Salvador, I interviewed 54% female, 41% male, and 5% other gender identity participants, of which again the majority were adults (64%) with more youth (33%) than elderly (3%) individuals. Those reporting participation in PDD processes during the 2018 AmericasBarometer survey cycle were 53% female and 47% male (no "other" designation was recorded in this dataset), with an average age of 42 years. Thus, my sample interview aligns

well along these demographics with the nationally representative sample of the same period. In alignment with the sampling strategy employed, 49% lived in rural areas, 5% in mixed or suburban areas, and 46% in urban zones. My participant interview sample is quite like the nationally representative AmericasBarometer sample of PDD participants in this case, which shows that 46% live in rural areas and 53% live in urban zones. Given the political tension in the country, not all participants were willing to provide their political party affiliation (28%). Of those that did report their party, 31% affiliated with FMLN, 13% with ARENA, 10% with *Nuevas Ideas* or the *Gran Alianza por la Unidad National* (GANA) the party(ies) of the newly elected president, and 18% specifically noted no affiliation or a-political. Within the nationally representative AmericasBarometer sample, 7% of PDD participants affiliated with FMLN, 11% with ARENA, 14% with *Nuevas Ideas* or GANA, and 63% either did not respond or replied "not applicable" when questioned. In this case, there is a clear oversampling of individuals in my sample affiliated with FMLN.

Given that I needed to rely on my municipal contacts to gain access to PDD processes for observation and PDD participants themselves, there was bias introduced into my overall sample of participants. While I feel quite confident that I achieved a balance of voices amongst PDD participants in Guatemala, my sample of participants in El Salvador is clearly weighted toward the FMLN perspective. This was not an intentional over-sampling on my part; indeed, I interviewed an equal number of PDD participants in ARENA-led and FMLN-led municipalities. This skew instead represents a challenge I faced in the field in gaining access to ARENA PDD participants. There are two reasons, I hypothesize, that I encountered this dynamic.

First, I had to make a concerted effort to find ARENA participants in communities led by an FMLN administration. In one municipality, for example, I had to make explicit contact with an ARENA Municipal Council member serving under an FMLN mayor so that I could speak to ARENA PDD participants. I should note, my municipal contact hired by the mayor helped me to make this connection when I noted the emerging sample skewness. This could be because PDD spaces were set up just prior to the end of the civil war specifically in response to calls for increased spaces for political participation by the FMLN. Second, individuals living in municipalities run by ARENA administrations often declined to identify with a particular party. In two of the three ARENA-led municipalities that I observed for an extended period, the mayor had only recently taken office, which may have been a contributing factor because newer administrations have less time to influence local PDD leadership and participation than long-term incumbents.

I do not believe that I encountered this skewed distribution in my participant interview sample due to modern conflict dynamics specifically, however. Although the national government was led by ARENA party members and the military during the war, local government officials are not often associated with or considered culpable for past violence now, over two decades after the war. I did not encounter a single mayor or official that had held their office or position since the war-era. However, some modern public officials are well-known decedents from elite families that were key actors in the war or peace process.

Regardless of the specific reasons for the skew toward FMLN participants in the PDD processes I was able to access and observe in El Salvador, the fact that my interview sample includes more FMLN participants than in the PDD participants found in the nationally representative AmericasBarometer sample has one key implication for my conclusions. As

further detailed in the El Salvador chapter below, the PDD process in this country was established with the aim of opening political spaces for FMLN participation during the final years of the civil war. Thus, PDD participants that I interviewed identifying with the FMLN political party may well be more enthusiastic than others about these processes than those I was not able to access. As I discuss my findings in this case, readers should note that I attempt to balance the narrative by sharing quotes from both party members about PDD impacts even though I interviewed more FMLN representatives than I did ARENA representatives. I also make note of times when I was challenged to find ARENA PDD participants.

Development of the semi-structured interview protocol for PDD participants followed two stages to ensure a core consistency of information collected across cases and alteration for case-specific variation. The first stage of the participant protocol development was completed in the fall of 2017. In this phase, I created and tested an initial interview protocol with two individuals that had participated in two forms of PDD, one Spanish-speaking participant in a participatory budgeting program in Mexico and one English-speaking participant in an open Town Hall meeting in New England. After both interviews, I took feedback and recommendations on other questions to add and areas of hesitation or confusion for the interviewees. All recommendations were incorporated in the final interview protocol as seen in Appendix I. The second stage of protocol development involved updating the terminology for each case. As municipal interviews had been conducted prior to participant interviews, the municipal officials acted as a type of 'key informant' about how PDD processes worked and relevant terminology used in each country. Once municipal interviews had been conducted, I updated the protocol terminology to fit the local context. In practice, the interviews were semi-structured and included approximately 30 questions about the participants' experience with the

PDD mechanism observed, participation in other PDD processes as relevant, personal and community impacts of these processes, and overall perceptions of PDD. Interviews lasted from fifteen minutes to two hours, the average interview lasting approximately thirty-five minutes.

Participant interviews were completed during the same period as process observations, over the course of seven months divided into three months in Guatemala and four months in El Salvador. Throughout this period, I kept a series of voice memos on each set of interviews with the aim of describing interview context and dynamics as well as noting my initial perceptions of how their stories either supported, refuted, or added additional nuance to municipal interviews and observations.

Limitations of this portion of the study included access and sample bias. The municipal officials interviewed in both countries were all open to future follow-up, observations, and participant interviews. The only request from two municipalities was that I avoid visiting during the height of election season. This was an unexpectedly warm reception. However, when it came time to observe and conduct interviews with participants, some municipal officials were less enthusiastic about facilitating my entrée to the field. Although I was able to overcome this barrier with persistence in many cases, I sometimes had to swap out one pre-planned observation site for an alternative observation site to achieve my aims.

There were two other issues with access: site location and safety. Especially when arranging observations of rural locations, site location was a major challenge. In one particularly notable case, the only rural community engaged in a PDD pilot program I could observe was located high in the mountains off a very steep, mixed dirt-and-cobblestone road. Though I arranged to have a 4x4 truck for most of the time spent in the field, I fully lacked the necessary driving experience to access this site. While my municipal contacts in this case, and

others like it, were quite happy to bring me along to the PDD event in a municipal vehicle with an experienced driver, I was then reliant upon their time and availability to stay in the field long enough for me to conduct interviews. To complicate matters further, individuals in these sites often did not have internet, email access, or smart phones to enable me coordinate and conduct virtual interviews in alignment with my IRB protocols. A related access issue, both in cities and in rural areas, revolved around high crime and gang violence. To access some areas, I simply could not go alone without risking my own personal safety. One PDD observation site was located right in the middle of three rival gangs' territories. Crossing through one territory get to the other, with US license plates, was not recommended. Thus, due to site location and security issues, the number of interviews I could complete following some observations was limited by the time my contacts or their colleagues could dedicate to staying out in the field.

Indeed, as discussed in greater detail in the case studies to follow, municipal officials often exerted more control than I had hoped over which processes were observed and the individuals with whom I spoke. While local governments were inherently interested in the topic of PDD, they were not an unbiased partner. The views and perspectives of municipal officials were politicized and, especially when cross-referenced with participant interviews, frequently involved self-aggrandizement. It is certainly possible that PDD processes were manipulated to appear in ways untrue to the real processes prior to my arrival. Indeed, in some cases, I am sure that my access was facilitated to some spaces versus others specifically to cast the municipality in a better light. However, these cases were easy to identify through participant interviews, and often highlighted the more challenging aspects of the PDD implementation in the two post-conflict settings. I consciously sought out access to a diversity of observation spaces with a mix of individuals from across the political and demographic

spectrums. Though this dynamic certainly introduced bias into my sample in each municipality, the fact that I was guided to participant interviews through the municipal selection matrix and its balance of key characteristics meant that biases across municipalities, or case study wide, were less pronounced. As a result of this effort and the multiple validity checks built into this meso-level qualitative portion of my study, I am confident in saying that I completed my period of fieldwork with a full, if not always balanced, account of PDD processes, experiences, and perceptions of impact in both case study countries.

### 3g. Micro-level Quantitative Analysis of Secondary Survey Data

The final micro-level component of this dissertation sought to quantitatively analyze the association between PDD participation at the individual level and peacebuilding outcomes measured by the political, economic, and social factors contributing to 'negative' and 'positive' peace. The data I used in my analysis came from the AmericasBarometer, a secondary dataset collected by the Latin American Public Opinion Project at Vanderbilt University. The LAPOP AmericasBarometer survey has been conducted biannually across Latin American countries from 2004/05 - 2018/19 with a core set of questions and revolving country-specific inquiries. Survey questioning takes place in 3-to-4-month intervals in all Central American nations each survey cycle. The full round of surveys across all the Americas tends to take closer to two years versus one year to complete, using teams of local survey enumerators. The unit of observation for the survey is one respondent per household. The average annual sample size for each of the case study nations is ~1,500 individuals.

Although representative only at the national and departmental or regional levels from 2004-2010, the survey cycles conducted since 2012 employed a sampling design that reflects

population fluctuation and standardizes the sample size collected from each municipality. Specifically, data collected after 2012 is based on a multi-stage cluster sampling design that takes into consideration municipality size, urban/rural areas, and region (LAPOP, 2014, p. 2). The survey sample in both El Salvador and Guatemala is self-weighted each year given the sampling strategy employed. Technical information from earlier years provides further information on pretesting and question validity, available publicly at the Latin American Public Opinion Project website. Survey questions are asked face-to-face in Spanish and some indigenous languages depending on those most commonly used by country.

The survey cycles I used for the quantitative portion of this study were conducted in 2008/09 and 2018/19. Using the AmericasBarometer survey to compare data collected 10 years apart allowed me to test associations between PDD and peace over a finite period when both countries were engaged in post-conflict peacebuilding. In 2008, for the first time, individuals in Central America were asked about their participation in *comités o juntas de mejoras para la comunidad* (a proxy for community associations), *cabildos abiertos* (open Town Hall discussions), and the *elaboración del presupuesto* (a proxy for participatory budgeting and participatory planning initiatives) at the local level. Each of these questions were thus used individually as independent variables for various forms of participatory deliberative democracy and then combined into a single 0/1 indicator of participation in any form of PDD. While most of these questions were asked in a similar format in more recent cycles, I worked with LAPOP to re-introduce the survey question related to participation in municipal budget elaboration again on the 2018/19 cycle of the AmericasBarometer survey for a complete ten-year comparison. I started analysis on the 2008/09 survey data as of spring 2017. Cleaned

datasets from the 2018/19 survey cycle for each country were released in fall of 2019, at which point I was able to begin my multi-year analysis.

With the aim of identifying the associations between PDD and peace, indicators of multiple dimensions of peace (Galtung, 1969) were selected from within the 2008/09 and 2018/19 AmericasBarometer survey. The table in Appendix III provides each question, translated by the author, and operationalization of the key dependent variables. For the identified key levers or dimensions of peace from the conceptual framework, one's confidence in local government, perception of the economy, and neighbor trustworthiness were used as indicators. 'Positive' peace was measured by satisfaction with the democratic system, and 'negative' peace was measured via one's experience with violent crime and perception of violence in one's neighborhood. I also created an additive 'peace perception index,' both a count and percentage version, which sums up the subjective indicators of 'positive' and 'negative' peace alongside political, economic, and social dimension indicators. All indicators in the index were scaled to a 4-point scale (range 0-3) so that each had equal weight in the final index. The equation I used to create the additive 'peace perception index' is shown below:

$$Peace\_Perception\_Index = Muni\_Confidence + Econ\_Wellbeing + Community\_Trust + Sat\_Democracy + Violence\_Perception/15$$

As my focus was on the individual-level impacts of PDD on peacebuilding, the key variable transformation I made beyond cleaning the dataset for analysis was to create three types of independent variables for PDD participation. First, I created a dummy variable (0=no

participation, 1=participation) for each type of PDD separately. Second, given that there are three distinct types of PDD participation represented in the dataset, I created a new variable representing participation in any of the three forms of PDD as a simple dummy variable (0=no participation, 1=participation). Third, I generated an additive discrete variable for participation in all three forms of PDD participation. The equation I used to create the additive, discrete PDD variable is shown below:

$$PDDPart = Town\_Hall + Comm\_Assoc + Part\_Budget$$

Respondents' calculated PDD participation variable ranged from 0=no participation, to 3=participation in all three forms of PDD included in my analysis. Using this variable construction, I was able to test for the extent to which participation in multiple forms of PDD influenced the hypothesized outcomes versus those reporting only one form of PDD participation.

Beyond the measures specifically operationalized and linked back to the theoretical outcomes of PDD on peace for this study, each cycle of the survey included data on key community characteristics and individual demographics used as control variables in my statistical models. Community characteristics included in my models were urban versus rural setting, running water, and internet usage as a proxy for development level. Individual demographics included in my models were age, education level, gender, race, religion, and news/media consumption. I also included three types of theoretical control variables for each of my proposed outcome measures along political, economic, and social dimensions: political

party, monthly income, and participation in other types of community groups such as parent's groups, women's groups, or religious organizations.

My analysis began with a set of descriptive statistics of the key dependent, independent, and control variables to be included in the regression model. Quantitative interval (and ordinal) variables were described by reporting the mean data points within the sample. Boxplots and histograms were employed in Stata to visually inspect each variable for outlier cases, skewness, and tendency to fall along a normal distribution. Qualitative categorical variables were described with the use of frequency distributions shown as both the number of cases in the sample and by percentage. Outliers were not removed. Appendix IV includes a full set of descriptive statistics for each variable included in my statistical models.

Following on from the descriptive analysis, I proceeded with two types of inferential statistics to gauge the impact of PDD on my selected peace-related indicators. Given that PDD participation was operationalized as a 0/1 categorical variable or a 0-3 discrete variable, I started by running an analysis of variance (ANOVA) model to analyze the difference of group means between individuals reporting participation in one or more PDD programs and non-participants. Completing these tests for each combination of dependent variables and independent variables provided initial insights into the relationships that might result in statistically significant associations in the final regression model. I then built five sets of six statistical models that included one of the five measures of individual participation in PDD as my independent variable and the aforementioned indicators of political, economic, social, 'negative,' and 'positive' peace as dependent variables. Ordinal multiple regression, or logit (*) for the sole binary dependent variable, was utilized for each set of models. Inserting each of the six dependent variables into the same model in turn, I determined the association

between each dependent variable and PDD participation, if any. Each model equation by dependent variable is depicted below:

$$Muni\_Confidence_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Econ\_Wellbeing_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Community\_Trust_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Sat\_Democracy_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$* \ Exp\_Violence_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Violence\_Perception_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Peace\_Perception\_Index_{\ i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

These models estimated the impact of PDD participation on the selected measures of 'negative' and 'positive' peace as well as the three identified political, social, and economic key levers underlying peace for each case country. To interpret my results, I reported

coefficients for ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models and odds ratios for logit models. To test my hypotheses, I looked for statistically significant associations between the variable for PDD participation and the variables measuring social, political, economic, 'negative,' and 'positive' peace outcomes. When using the 0/1 categorical variable for PDD program participation, I expected to see that participation in any form of PDD would show positive associations with the dependent variables. Upon inserting the discrete additive variable for PDD program participation, I anticipated that participants in more forms of PDD would demonstrate stronger associations with my outcome indicators. Based on theory, associations would be stronger for political and social cohesion variables and weaker for violence and economic variables. Appendix IV includes a table with the anticipated sign of each independent and control variable in the models. The result of these tests provided evidence to either reject or accept the hypotheses outlined above.

There were two primary limitations related to my quantitative analysis. First, as with any proposed quantitative methodology, there was a possibility of multicollinearity or confounding variables, a threat to internal validity (Yin, 2014). To manage this limitation, I used standard tests such as bivariate correlations in early analyses and various tests of model fit for my regressions. I also added several contextual variables related to community characteristics as well as individual demographics in my regression models to help identify and control for potential sources of multicollinearity. This is why I specifically identified and included three theoretical controls—political-ideological sway, household monthly income, and participation in other types of community groups—which are hypothetically just as likely as PDD to impact each of the variables for the political, economic, and social dimensions of peace included in the models. Each theoretical control is further elaborated and justified below.

While PDD participation can potentially increase trust in local government, political party affiliation that either aligns with or goes against the mayor may influence the effectiveness of PDD if participation in these spaces is either intentionally limited or curtailed due to a self-selection bias related to affiliation. Similarly, PDD participation can theoretically influence horizontal inequality, but it is possible that one's income has a greater influence on perception of economic well-being more so than PDD. Finally, it is likely that individuals involved in PDD are also more socially engaged in general. Thus, participation in other types of groups may influence neighbor trust more than PDD. Even though the inclusion of these three theoretical control variables improves the stability of my models and lends support to my findings, there are still other macro-level factors I cannot control for completely in my model. As such, merely an association between economic, political, social, 'negative,' and 'positive' peace indicators and PDD participation can be suggested.

Second, each of the variables selected for operationalization are not perfect measures of the multiple dimensions of peace. As with any study conducted using secondary data, creativity was employed to select the variables that most closely aligned with the proposed theoretical constructs. For example, Allport's theory of intergroup contact is largely supported by evidence using psychological laboratory experiments and quasi-experiments in the field with interviews and surveys that directly ask participants in contact scenarios about their views of a defined 'other' (white Americans rating their feelings toward black Americans, Israeli students asked about Palestinian students, etc.) rather than their trust of 'others' generically (Pettigrew, 1998). Additionally, researchers that study trust (e.g. Lewicki & Tomlinson, 2014) have identified a difference in calculus-based trust, granted when the 'other' faces consequences for breaking with agreed upon expectations, versus identity-based trust, in which

one grants trust due to affinity with the 'other' over time. It could be that municipal trust is interpreted on a calculus-based spectrum whereas trust of 'others' in general is interpreted on an identity-based spectrum in the minds of respondents. In short, given that the AmericasBarometer is a secondary dataset, the measures are not as precise as they could be in an original survey. A survey tool modeled after those used by subject-matter experts exploring these theories directly may produce more consistent and comparable results with former studies, though such an endeavor is outside the scope of this dissertation.

### 3h. Conclusion

In this chapter, I stated my main research question and two related sub-questions which lend themselves to different research methodologies. I proposed several hypotheses about the possible links between PDD and peace and suggested a set of propositions about the factors that may influence the outcomes. I then described my research design, which combines an international comparative case study and mixed methods to explore the macro-level context of PDD implementation, meso-level structure and impacts of PDD from the view of municipalities and their constituents, and micro-level impacts for individual participants. I employed this multi-layered and mixed methods design to strengthen my analysis of this complex issue and to mitigate challenges and weaknesses at any singular level. Ultimately, I used each level of analysis as a validity check or control for the other levels. In the following two chapters, I discuss my findings in Guatemala and El Salvador.

# CHAPTER 4

# GUATEMALA: PARTICIPATORY DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY FROM THE TOP-DOWN

*Los consejos comunitarios tienen que existir, no hay vuelta de hoja.*

Community Development Councils must exist, we cannot turn back the page.

*Antes, mucha gente no conocía ni la municipalidad, hay mucha gente que era muy tímida. La daba miedo para hablar. Mucha gente que venían, se quedaban paraditos en la puerta, eran muy tímidos para entrar ¿Verdad? Ahora, cuándo vienen, directo para adentro.*

Before, most people did not even know the municipality, many people were scared. They were scared to speak up. Many people would come, standing in the doorway, but they were scared to enter, right? Now, when they come, they come right inside.

In Guatemala, participatory deliberative democracy was implemented from the top-down as a component of the peace accords following the country's thirty-six-year civil war. While the implementation of new PDD mechanisms, which sometimes clashed with traditional leadership structures in local communities, was slow and at first did not show strong effects, it has gradually come to play an integral role in sustaining and advancing peace. Impacts of PDD participation were limited, and even troubling, in 2008 when new mechanisms for citizen participation were still being introduced across the country's municipalities. By 2018, the positive effects of PDD on peace have emerged.

Modern day PDD in Guatemala has a positive influence on political and social domains associated with peacebuilding, contributing to a boost in overall perceptions of peace. PDD participants demonstrate higher levels of trust in the municipal government than those that do not participate, fueled by improved communication, transparency, accountability, and citizen empowerment engendered in these forums. Though there is certainly a long way to go to improve quality of life in Guatemala, PDD is reportedly helping to improve services, bolster investment in local labor markets, and hasten the pace at which development projects are achieved. Socially, participants build trust and cohesion through cross-community relationships, and they increase their individual social capital in PDD forums. While participants themselves were exposed to increased vulnerability to crime when PDD was first introduced, my interviewees indicated that the benefits outweighed the costs. In 2018, there was no greater risk of falling victim to crime for PDD participants versus non-participants. The ambitious deliberative project in post-conflict Guatemala provides a persuasive case for an intentionally hybrid approach, one that combines top-down statebuilding efforts and with participatory deliberation from below.

In the sections to follow, I outline the macro-, meso-, and micro-level implementation of PDD in Guatemala and its impacts on various dimensions of peace in this post-conflict context. In section 4a, I discuss how PDD was propelled forward as key component of the peace accords that brought Guatemala's civil war to an end. I then outline, in section 4b, how PDD implementation was experienced as a clash of old and new participatory systems with gradually building acceptance by municipalities and participants on the ground. Next, I discuss the various forms of PDD that are used in present-day Guatemala in section 4c, focusing on the prominence of the mechanisms occasioned in the peace agreement. Section 4d provides an in-depth look at the impacts of PDD using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis at the individual level. I conclude in section 4e by summarizing the key lessons from this case study.

**4a. Context: PDD as Integral to the Peace Accords**

Beginning in 1960 with an insurgent movement seeking to overthrow a US CIA-installed autocratic administration, Guatemala endured a thirty-six-year civil war characterized by military repression and gross human rights violations. The two main warring parties to the conflict were the URNG, a conglomerate of four guerilla groups, and the military-backed Government of Guatemala. As the site of a proxy war in the Cold War era, the United States played a predominant role in the conflict to protect its political and economic interests, specifically through the provision of military assistance to its backed regime. Jonas (2000) describes the evolution of the civil war in four phases, the most repressive and violent episodes taking place in the early 1980s. By the end of the war in 1996, the death toll of the civil war surpassed 200,000. Ninety-three percent of the recorded human rights abuses were attributed

to the Guatemalan Government by the United Nations Truth Commission established following the peace accords, earning the internal conflict the label of genocide (Janzen, 2008).

As a country with a large indigenous population, Guatemala's conflict was fought along ideological and ethnic lines. Most of the indigenous population identified as Mayan, speaking one or more of the twenty-two Mayan languages used in the country, although other indigenous ethnicities and languages are also present in the demographic mix. Between 1964 and 2002, Guatemala's indigenous population ranged from 41-44% of the nation's total population. Though often described as a political war between left- and right-leaning ideologies like many Cold War-era internal conflicts, most of the violence and systemic repression targeted the Mayan population (Eckhardt, 2005). Eighty-three percent of the recorded victims during the civil war were indigenous, and although the guerillas were largely defeated in the early 1980s, oppression and outright violence against indigenous populations continued throughout the remainder of the war (Clouser, 2009).

While US intervention in Guatemala's domestic affairs certainly sparked the war, a history of colonization, inequality rooted in land rights and economic structures, and poor governance fueled the conflict long-term (Cullather, 2006; Viscidi, 2004). By the time the peace accords were negotiated, the state had largely defeated the resistance and only 3,600 individuals were outwardly affiliated with the URNG (Clouser, 2009; Janzen, 2008). In 1996, the conflict ended with the Guatemalan Agreement on Definitive Ceasefire. The peace process in Guatemala was largely driven by the United Nations, at first a mediator during negotiations and, after the accords, the organizer of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala or the *Misión de Verificación de las Naciones Unidas de Guatemala* (MINUGUA).

However, as highlighted by Steinberg & Taylor (2003), little had changed since the war began in the 1960s with a continuation of the same power structure the rebels had fought against. For the first six election cycles following the end of the nation's thirty-year succession of military dictatorships, the right maintained power over the executive. Over ten years after signing the peace accord, in 2007, President Álvaro Colom was the first left-leaning social democrat to be elected to the executive office. However, even as of 2019, the country struggled with a corrupt and elitist political system in which the role of political parties was seen merely a vessel to become a candidate for political office, while money and circles of elite influence were the keys to getting elected. Indeed, in 2016, several electoral reforms were passed to open elections to a greater diversity of candidates and parties, with a focus on ensuring that government officials would be truly representative of their constituencies. Unfortunately, the reforms appeared to have little positive impact on the 2019 national election cycle as the general public in Guatemala expressed ever-more disillusionment. Only 42% of the population voted in the August 2019 presidential runoff election (Cuffe, 2019).

Decentralization of state power began during the war-time era. In 1985, municipal autonomy was re-established after many years of mayors being directly appointed by the executive with a new national constitution. To finance municipal operations, various national funding mechanisms were established. Specifically, a national Value-Added Tax, which provided a set percentage of funds to municipal governments, and a Single Real Estate Tax at the municipal level were both proposed in 1994. Municipalities in Guatemala generated a minor percentage of their own revenues through taxes; most funds coming through these transfers. Only education and health functions were at first decentralized to the municipal level in addition to existing service delivery functions such as water management, waste disposal,

and permitting. As of the 2000s, parks and recreation, police, and libraries were added to municipal responsibilities, often still shared with national government (International City/County Management Association, 2004).

Local Community Development Councils or *Consejos Comunitarios de Desarrollo* (COCODEs), the base unit of Guatemala's present-day PDD system, were initially proposed in the late 1980s under the Councils for Urban and Rural Development Act (decree 52-87), but they were declared unconstitutional in 1988 as they were considered a threat to municipal autonomy (Muñoz & Velásquez, 2010). The 1996 peace accords themselves included several provisions on decentralization such as the creation of an Association of Municipalities and recommendations to allow municipalities to collect their own resources. Most importantly, in terms of PDD, the first article of the peace accords called for local-level participation in "how funds are designated, the way projects are executed, and the priorities and characteristics of governmental programs and actions." A full decade and a half after their initial introduction in law, the creation of COCODEs was finally permissible by law with the renovation of the Councils for Urban and Rural Development Act in 2002. Despite this gain for PDD, onlookers were not hopeful about the prospects of participation for indigenous populations. As the United Nations reported in 2002, "Although recent approval of the Urban and Rural Development Councils Act may strengthen the capacity of indigenous peoples to engage in dialogue with the State, there are, as yet, no mandatory consultation mechanisms guaranteeing participation by indigenous peoples" (United Nations, 2002).

Many other PDD mechanisms were introduced following the war. *Cabildos abiertos,* open Town Hall meetings, were a traditional mechanism for public engagement, though rarely used. This mechanism was strengthened and additional PDD processes were introduced with

the Municipal Code in 2002 including: community associations, recognition of indigenous and community mayor's offices, mandated consultation upon community or indigenous authority requests, municipal planning offices, and a hierarchical system of Development Councils scaling from local COCODEs to a national CONADUR. A successful mechanism from early in the implementation process was the creation of planning offices to engage citizens in "coordination roundtables," effectively participatory planning processes in which citizens prioritized their needs and created investment proposals for the mayor. As of 2000, around 40% of municipalities had such a offices in operation (International City/County Management Association, 2004, p. 22). However, as of 2004, the rest of these mechanisms were still not fully operational at the local level (International City/County Management Association, 2004).

Goldfrank (2007) wrote about the relative success of Guatemala's local Community Development Councils, which he classified as a form of participatory budgeting given their role in making municipal spending recommendations, arguing that this post-conflict nation had experienced the "least success with participatory budgeting" (p. 26) of the five countries whose participatory budgeting processes he compared across Latin America. He indicated that the top-down nature of its implementation and the requirement that municipalities have councils to receive funding transfers from international partners were factors contributing to little commitment or real engagement by mayors or the public at large. Speer (2011) cited a weak civil society, low level of education, and poverty as reasons PDD had been difficult to implement in rural Guatemala. Given its administrative track record and largely negative reports in academic literature, I came to the case of Guatemala with tempered expectations about PDD's potential impacts on peacebuilding, although the nation's laws related to decentralization and PDD were comprehensive and numerous at the macro-level.

**4b. Implementation: The Evolution of Nation-wide PDD from the Field**

In 2018-2019, over twenty years after the conflict in Guatemala ended, I interviewed thirty-one officials across eighteen of the country's municipalities and fifty-eight PDD participants across seven municipalities to get a better understanding of how PDD was implemented, how it was functioning across the country, and the impacts of mechanisms created to engage citizens in policy decision making. Table 7 below shows the number of municipalities I interviewed, and Table 8 provides the number of municipalities that I observed in each box of my case selection matrix at the meso-level.

***Table 7: Guatemala Municipal Interview Sample Matrix***

| **Case Selection Matrix** | Majority Urban Municipalities | Mixed Urban/Rural Municipalities | Majority Rural Municipalities |
|---|---|---|---|
| Majority Mayan Population | Not applicable | x3 sites | x4 sites |
| Minority Mayan Population | x4 sites | x4 sites | x3 sites |

***Table 8: Guatemala Municipal Observation Sample Matrix***

| **Case Selection Matrix** | Majority Urban Municipalities | Mixed Urban/Rural Municipalities | Majority Rural Municipalities |
|---|---|---|---|
| Majority Mayan Population | Not applicable | x1 site | x2 sites |
| Minority Mayan Population | x1 site | x2 sites | x1 site |

In Guatemala, my participant interviewees were 58% male and 42% female. The vast majority of participants were adults (79%), with a few youth (9%) and elderly (12%) represented as well. As stated previously in the research methods chapter, these demographics largely align with the nationally representative sample of PDD participants from the 2018/19 AmericasBarometer data. In my sample, 50% lived in rural areas, 2% in mixed or suburban areas, and 48% in urban centers, an intentional oversampling of urban areas by design. Likewise, with regards to ethnicity, I sought to recruit an evenly distributed sample of *ladino/mestizo* and indigenous PDD participants, at 55% and 45% respectively. This resulted in a slight over-sampling of *ladino/mestizo* participants (8 percentage-points) as compared to the nationally representative AmericasBarometer sample, which is not surprising given that the construction of my sampling matrix included one extra quadrant for majority urban centers home to majority *ladino/mestizo* populations because there are no large urban centers with majority indigenous populations in this country.

Each municipality I interviewed employed one or more PDD mechanisms with minor innovations in structure and implementation to adapt to the local context and build upon the participatory and deliberative trajectory of citizen engagement established in the peace accords. In Guatemala, municipal officials I interviewed confirmed that the introduction of PDD was tied directly to the call for greater citizen participation in the Guatemalan Peace Accords signed in December of 1996. Indeed, seventeen of the thirty-one officials I interviewed referenced the 2002 Councils for Urban and Rural Development Act as having occasioned the creation of local COCODEs with hierarchical participatory forums linked through the broader national system of Development Councils that now scale from each neighborhood COCODE to municipal COMUDE, departmental CODEDE, regional

COREDE, and national CONADUR levels. Though municipal officials and participants noted that the implementation of PDD at all levels took several years, COCODEs emerged as the primary PDD mechanism in use across all municipalities I interviewed. In some, though certainly not all municipalities, traditional forms of participation were also still in use or had been formalized in the post-war era.

As officials and participants in PDD processes mentioned, Guatemala did not enter the post-war era devoid of experience with PDD mechanisms. This theme came up in five majority indigenous communities and two majority *ladino/mestizo* communities. Decades before the civil war, they explained, indigenous communities across the country already had a system of community mayors, often a role passed down via lineage within a family or appointed within a small village community. Community mayors were more common in rural areas because urban areas were largely governed by Spanish conquistadors with Western-style representative democracies. Over time, the patriarchic way power was passed down through the community mayor system became less common as local ordinances established the requirement that these community leaders be elected. During the war itself, the community mayor system stayed intact in many communities and it continued to exist throughout my time in field.

A second community participation mechanism also existed during the war era called the Pro-Improvement Committees. This mechanism came up in three majority indigenous communities, but never in *ladino/mestizo* communities. Engagement in these forums typically revolved around a petition for a single community project or a thematic issue. Thus, when the COCODEs were introduced in 2002, it was not an entirely new concept to the Guatemalan public. However, as municipal officials pointed out, the COCODE mechanism was far more formalized and democratic in nature than either of the two traditional PDD mechanisms. As

one municipal official described succinctly, "Now they are elected … before they were named."

Given that the COCODE system grew out of traditional indigenous leadership structures but was also in competition with existing mechanisms in terms of legal status and power, two local-level implementation challenges immediately influenced the dynamics surrounding their introduction in the post-war era. First, COCODEs were seen as a threat to the community mayors and Pro-Improvement Committees because they took their place as the highest community-based authority in most municipalities; indeed, in all but one that I interviewed. COCODEs either needed to distinguish their role from that of the, largely rural and indigenous, community mayor system or integrate with them. COCODEs became the only PDD mechanism in majority *ladino/mestizo* communities because, in all but one case I encountered, indigenous citizen participation systems did not exist previously. In one indigenous community I interviewed, COCODEs replaced every other PDD mechanism including the existing community mayor and Pro-Improvement Committees. In the remaining six communities, COCODEs had to carve out a place at the table, often competing, with traditional community mayors. Second, both Pro-Improvement Committees and community mayors were targets of violence during the civil war as leaders within the indigenous community. Thus, although the post-war COCODEs offered a new brand for PDD, there was substantial fear initially that involvement risked a future resurgence of violence. As one municipal official recounted:

> With the incorporation of the Development Councils Law [Councils for Urban and Rural Development Act], and even in the years prior to signing the peace agreements, there were some years where we tried to change the system but

> always within the Pro-Improvement Committees. In those years, what we saw here was that the role was no longer imposed or handed down, we promoted instead that they be elected. But it did not work. It didn't work because nobody dared to assume this kind of leadership because everything had a cost… everything had a cost. For us here, the cost was in lives—as in many parts of the country—those who assumed those leadership roles ran the risk. Unfortunately, the war years of Guatemala are now etched in time, but the consequences continue. So still to date many people still feel some suspicion, resentment, and fear because what they had to live through was not easy. So then, we were all marked by it.

Given the historical roots and conflict dynamics so intimately tied up with PDD in Guatemala, communities rolled out PDD on varying time scales over the years in the post-war era. In my interviews, it was rare to come across someone who had been working with the municipality since before COCODEs had been introduced. However, some participants were able to provide me with a detailed account of the implementation of the Councils for Urban and Rural Development Act in their communities. The following two implementation stories stood out as particularly vivid examples of how COCODEs arrived on the scene in divergent ways during the post-war era.

In one largely *ladino/mestizo* community with an existing pre- and post-war system of community mayors, I spoke with the founder of the very first COCODE of his village, which began as of 2006-2007 as he recalled, around four years after the law was passed. At that time, a local business owner sparked community member interest in forming COCODEs, “People,

yes, were interested in the COCODE. They were interested in the COCODE because they knew that it brought many benefits for the villagers, there'd be development, supposedly." However, the participant shared that the original enthusiasm for the COCODEs was dampened because the local mayor at the time, who would later go to trial for corruption, would only allow COCODEs to form if they were supporters of his political party, going so far as to offer monetary bribes to COCODE leadership for public support and votes. In this local leader's case, he refused the bribe, but his community paid the price. One year for Children's Day, an important day of recognition for kids and youth throughout Latin America, the municipality handed out gifts to be distributed to the children of each village, but his village only received a small portion of the gifts designated. This was viewed as a political stunt by the participant and his neighbors, compelling him to act. He described, "I talked to my sister and some acquaintances and I told them: 'Let's celebrate Children's Day ourselves because this happened,' and they said 'Yes.' And we celebrated it the following week. I even had 50 toys left over! We gave them to the children and celebrated everything. Then I decided to get into this, so that those things no longer happened."

Eventually, this leader became the elected deputy mayor for his village, a position with greater power than the COCODE president in this particular municipality. Interestingly, once in this position, he opposed the next evolution of PDD in the community approximately four years later in 2010-2011 as they formed the first municipal-wide COMUDE. He explained, "Well, it was said there that they were making rules, set down in an article, that said that the projects that the deputy mayor requested in the municipality had to be reviewed in the COMUDE for approval. I got up and told them a lot of things because for me, there's money from the [departmental] CODEDE for that, and the municipality money is for the deputy

mayor. Why are they going to approve the projects that I request as deputy mayor?" Ultimately, the COMUDE was formed, and in this community as of 2019, it had substantial precedence over municipal-wide budgetary and policy decision making despite the continued opposition of the deputy mayors. This is in large part because of the leadership of urban COCODE leaders. They developed a COMUDE Board of Directors and Pre-COMUDE forum in 2014-2015 specifically to leverage the collaborative voice of the people to influence municipal action. As this vignette demonstrates, the system of local Community Development Councils evolved slowly; however, it gained increasing power, even when faced with the challenge of confrontation with the traditional community mayor system.

In a second majority indigenous community in the northern mountains, I spoke to the founder and co-founder's son of a suburban COCODE, formerly a Pro-Improvement Committee, who presented an alternative story of how the Development Councils developed in their municipality. As we sat down in the usual meeting place of the COCODE, overlooking an ongoing community development project requested and overseen by the COCODE leadership, the two men shared their story. "You are going to meet, in other communities, those that still use the figure of deputy mayors. There is the COCODE, and then there is the deputy mayor ... he is the one who will act on behalf of the municipal mayor, say within his community. However, right now and here, because we are close to the municipal capital, we stopped using the term deputy mayor and focused only on Community Development Councils." Pulling out their meeting minutes, dating back to the mid 1990s, they described how eventually the deputy mayor system was phased out in this municipality:

> What happened here with my colleagues, was there was always a deputy mayor, but now came the COCODEs, which since '95 according to the dates there,

were the Pro-Improvement Committees that we had before. We had a certain recognized place, but we did not have the legal basis as in the case of COCODEs now, which are recognized in the Development Council Law. So that is the difference, which came from the creation of the law. The mayors before loomed large over the community, they felt they had all the power in their hands and began to abuse it over anything. So that's why they were left behind. The neighbors said: 'how awful it is what the mayors are doing,' and everywhere, not only here, for any problem, the mayors would beat them. The neighbors felt humiliated; that's why they all changed. If we had not, right now still with those mayors, then there'd be more problems because they only wanted to command, and sometimes their ideas did not mesh with ours. So, we did not agree. That's why we changed, we created COCODEs, to make our ideas equal… the change was for us to be united. All the neighbors understood that it is easier that way because we all have participation, and we've stayed that way since.

As I learned in several interviews in this community, the system of appointed deputy mayors fell out of favor as participation increased. Both deputy mayors and Pro-Improvement Committees slowly morphed into one coherent system of COCODEs represented in the municipal COMUDE. However, only within the last three years had the COMUDE in this municipality become more organized under the leadership of a young visionary in the municipal Planning Office who set out to ensure that rural villages and urban center neighborhoods had equal voice and vote at the table. At the time of our interview, the COMUDE had organized into allied regions based largely on geography. I witnessed their

impressive ability to apply pressure on both municipal and national level government in one meeting during which they jointly wrote up and compelled signature on a municipal state of emergency when an environmental project to clean up an important water source, the river flowing through the municipal center, went unfulfilled by authorities.

While the evolution of the local Community Development Councils looked different for every municipality as it negotiated the new laws introduced following the peace accords with traditional leadership systems, it was remarkable to find that the top-down imposed PDD mechanism had been applied in near uniformity throughout the country just over twenty years after the war ended. All the municipalities I interviewed were implementing a functional COCODE system, which scaled from the local to the national level. Likewise, in most municipalities, the municipal level COMUDE meetings were also the forum for budget hearings and participatory decision making. Other mechanisms, however, including community mayors and thematically-focused associations or committees, participatory planning, civic engagement trainings, open Town Hall meetings, open Municipal Council meetings, and land rights mediators were implemented in a diversity of ways from one municipality to the next.

**4c. Structure: Uniform, Monitored, and Incentivized**

Municipalities and PDD participants in Guatemala revealed that the top-down way PDD was implemented resulted in a highly uniform structure for citizen engagement in public policy decision making at the local level. While there was certainly room to be innovative in style and conduct within each PDD forum, one central mechanism was used across all municipalities in largely the same manner. The following sub-sections describe how this central mechanism functions as well as less frequently used PDD forums.

***Community Development Councils***

In every municipality interviewed, I found that community members were organized in COCODEs by neighborhood. During my time in the field, I observed two COCODE meetings, both of which involved an election of the COCODE leadership, and three COCODE project implementations. I also interviewed fifty-one COCODE leaders. Each COCODE was run by a Board of Directors consisting of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and a series of lower-level members up to twelve in total. To form a COCODE Board, assemblies were held at least once every two years by the neighborhood, overseen by a municipal official, in which the board members were elected to their posts for one- or two-year terms. All community leaders in COCODEs were unpaid volunteers. COCODEs therefore functioned as a type of community association or committee with direct oversight by local and national government as well as an elevated legal status. Given that they were formally recognized as representatives of their local communities, COCODEs were able to request, raise funds, and manage community development projects and events both in coordination with the municipality as well as with third parties such as NGOs or international governments.

In my observations and interviews, I noted that the quality of deliberation and contact in COCODE meetings varied widely. In one of my observations of a COCODE meeting and Board of Directors' election, the meeting was well attended and representatives of every street in the neighborhood were there. When I arrived, men and women had naturally divided by gender into groups, laughing and exchanging local gossip amongst one another even though, as I learned later, they did not necessarily even know each other's names prior to the meeting. The president of the COCODE, re-elected during the meeting to serve a second term, made it a point to ensure that the Board of Directors was comprised of a geographically dispersed team

from across the neighborhood. The nature of the community projects and proposed municipal budget investments discussed and deliberated in the space involved presentations with pictures of the neighborhood highlighting emergent needs and proposed developments, feedback from the community, and several question-and-answer rounds. Though project proposals were ultimately approved by vote, votes were nearly always unanimous because the deliberation leading up to the vote had resolved any outstanding questions or issues.

In the second observation of the same PDD mechanism, only three people from the rural community showed up to the meeting, and the COCODE president told me it was the third time they had tried to call a meeting with the same level of turnout. The COCODE president told me that the local deputy mayor would likely become the default COCODE president simply because they could not get anyone else to take the job. Updates on previously submitted project proposals were still discussed with the handful of us in attendance, and a few questions were asked by the one at-large community member present, but true deliberation or contact between community members was limited by lack of participation in general. Across my interviews and project execution observations, I noted the strength and quality of COCODEs as a PDD mechanism was largely predicated on the charisma and organizational skills of the local leaders on the Board of Directors.

Given this wide-ranging diversity of experiences with COCODEs, the average DQI score for this mechanism across my observations was only 6.5/13, and the average CQI score only 2.8/8. This is because the first observation was scored at 13/13 and 5.5/8 on each index respectively, whereas the second observation scored zero on both scorecards. In the first observation, it was the emphasis on equal participation and explicit mention of working for the 'common good' that resulted in such a high DQI score. At one point, one of the former leaders

of COCODE stated directly, “We all want what is best for the common good here. Let’s be an example for all. We need more people to come to our next meeting.” Indeed, as noted previously, the COCODE president made an overt request that all groups within the community be represented on the incoming Board of Directors to promote diversity of voice and inclusive project proposals. This PDD process lost points on the CQI because of the limited, ‘rubber stamp’ role of the local government in the process; they only came to observe and sign off on the results versus taking an active facilitation role during the COCODE Board elections. In the second observation, there really were not enough people present to have any discourse or contact between groups.

***Municipal Development Councils and Beyond***

In each community I interviewed or observed, COCODE leadership from across a municipality came together for monthly Municipal Development Council meetings over which the mayor presided. COMUDE meeting size was directly tied to the size of the community. In small towns, 40-50 COCODE leaders attend, while in larger cities participation could reach up to and over 200 individuals. The COMUDE was like a participatory version of the Municipal Council, in which policy decisions were debated for the entirety of the municipality. While the Municipal Council, a representatively elected governing body, held the ultimate decision-making power, the COMUDE had substantial influence over which local development projects would be approved and implemented. As explained in one municipal official interview:

> People come here to the meetings and give some follow-up on how the projects they have requested are going. For example, a village requested help with flood problems. So, you must do a project, investigate where the streams come from,

> resolve issues with the drains, etc. And that is put to a vote and everyone will say: 'Well, we agree that so much is invested, a certain quantity of Quetzals [Guatemalan currency] for a certain project' then they raise their hands and say: 'Yes.' And all proposals are received and are prioritized according to the resources available.

For this reason, the COMUDE structure was both a space for deliberation as well as budgetary decision making akin to a participatory budgeting mechanism.

In addition to a public forum for policy and budgetary debates, most municipalities I spoke with reported that they held trimesterly public budget hearings within the COMUDEs as well. I observed budget hearings in two COMUDE meetings during my fieldwork. As one official reported, this practice was technically required by law, "The rules state that we should present in these meetings a minimum of three times in a year our financial statements." However, not all municipalities complied with this law. In one community I observed over the course of a month, COCODE presidents complained in interviews and publicly about the lack of transparency from their municipality about how local funds were being spent. When I sat in on a COCODE leader training program in this municipality, a pro bono lawyer from an NGO working to improve compliance with the Public Access to Information Law indicated that there was a formal process for submitting compliance complaints for unrealized budget hearings, but few cases were successful nationally.

Many COMUDEs also developed a set of internal committees that worked on thematic and cross-cutting matters relevant to neighborhoods and villages within the municipality. The most commonly referenced committees formed around violence prevention, women's

participation and economic empowerment, and children and youth programming. The two most common structures for these local thematic committees were one-member-per-COCODE or one-COMUDE-member-per-committee. These entities were responsible for guiding decision making and even developing local ordinances and policies on issues within the thematic area of focus. In one community I observed, committees were asked to present reports at the monthly COMUDE meetings and policies they created were voted upon in these spaces. The explicit aim of policy making in these spaces, as explained to me by the COMUDE president for this municipality, was to ensure continuity of priorities and administration of certain types of programming, e.g. for youth or women groups, despite changes in municipal administrations. In a second observation of one of these committees focused on women's issues, I was invited to join in the festivities of an event coordinated for Mother's Day.

COMUDEs, like COCODEs, had an internal leadership structure, though it differed slightly depending on the size of the municipality and the number of COCODEs therein. Larger cities tended to have a 'second level' COMUDE in which a sub-set of COCODE leaders, limited to 20 or fewer individuals, were selected to speak on behalf of the COCODEs for their region. The selection process differed and was designed sometimes by the mayor and other times by the COCODE leaders themselves. In most cases, COCODEs within a larger geographic area formed micro-regions and elected their own representative COMUDE member from the COCODE presidents in the area. As one municipal official outlined, "We have divided into micro-regions because we have many communities. We have 474 COCODEs, it's a lot. […] This 'second level' has more, well it's more by region. For example, if we talk about the city, the COCODE at the 'second level' includes zones 1-7, to give you an example, and he who holds the role represents the seven." Smaller towns often did not have a

separate leadership structure within the COMUDE, so each leader simply represented his or her community concerns and interests to the full assembly. In the most organized municipalities, the 'second level' COMUDEs held Pre-COMUDE meetings in which they met, often without municipal officials present, to debate and decide upon the projects or issues they collectively wanted to lobby for in formal COMUDE meetings with the mayor. In some COMUDEs, the 'second level' COCODE leaders had developed even more sophisticated leadership systems. Some, for example, had formed a COMUDE Board of Directors or selected a COMUDE President and Vice President to parallel the leadership role of the mayor in COMUDE meetings from the community side.

I had the opportunity to observe eight different COMUDE meetings, one of which was a Pre-COMUDE meeting. I also interviewed twenty-eight COMUDE participants, whom by their nature were also COCODE leaders. In nearly all my observations of COMUDE meetings, I was in awe of both the high quality of deliberation and cross-community contact engendered by these PDD forums. I saw citizens hold their public officials to account for budget discrepancies, request and even demand project implementation status updates, and engage in vibrant debates about important policy issues such as whether or not to invest in education versus environmental or infrastructure projects as a priority in the coming year. Furthermore, COMUDE meetings were often followed by a community lunch or dinner, during which leaders from different neighborhoods and villages connected to share stories, talked about their community development projects, and shared strategies about how to push their priorities through the bureaucracy. As such, COMUDE meetings had an average DQI score of 11.6/13 and an average CQI score of 6.4/8.

Not all COMUDEs were created equally, however. Drawing from my observations and interviews, it was clear that COMUDEs with some form of internal leadership structure were more organized and more effective at holding local mayors and administrations accountable. There were three reasons that I drew this conclusion. First, these COMUDE leadership structures ensured that at least one individual was responsible for communicating with the mayor and other local officials. When communities did not have a leadership structure in place to manage communication, there tended to be unclear lines of conversation or small-circle communication between the mayor and his most natural, politically aligned supporters. In one COMUDE meeting, for example, only one community leader spoke up during the entire proceeding. While most other COMUDE meetings I observed lasted for 2-4 hours with considerable time dedicated to community member questions or project proposal discussion, this meeting lasted just under an hour and a half and a full nine minutes of the meeting was dedicated to singing the national anthem. I learned in follow-up interviews with participants that the mayor in this municipality frowned upon active COMUDE participation and penalized leaders that asked too many questions with public shaming and by withholding funding for their community project proposals. Second, these structures helped to organize, prioritize, and mediate disputes between communities. As each COMUDE member represented a COCODE as well, it was hard to separate out neighborhood aims from municipal-wide objectives. When COCODE leaders selected their own mediators for these disputes in the form of Boards of Directors, they were more likely to collaborate versus compete for benefits. Third, COCODE leadership structures often opened additional meeting spaces like the Pre-COMUDE, in which communities came together to deliberate and make choices about their collective needs and

priorities. This allowed local leaders to control, or at least hold substantial sway, over the topics that made the agenda when meeting with officials.

Just as the COCODE leadership fed into the COMUDE and its leadership structure, COMUDE leadership fed into departmental CODEDE, regional COREDE, and national CONADUR councils. Though these higher-level councils were often briefly mentioned in my interviews, few of the individuals I spoke with at the municipality or in each community were able to discuss the function or relative power of these higher-level venues for citizen participation and deliberation. Additionally, these spaces were less 'participatory' in that community representatives in these bodies were elected public officials, such as the mayor, versus citizens at large.

***Civic Engagement Trainings***

Also integrated into COMUDEs, or pulling from their membership, were civic engagement trainings. Though I had not initially considered civic education to be a PDD mechanism, I realized during my interviews with municipal officials that civic training spaces were also sites of policy debate between citizens, though less often decision making. This is because civic education trainings often engaged both COCODE leaders and deputy mayors (as relevant) and were frequently facilitated within COMUDE meetings themselves. The beauty of these spaces, versus the other PDD mechanisms, was that they encouraged question-answer-style discussion between citizens and municipal leadership, involved small groups discussions or practice exercises, and were not tainted by the pressure to make a policy or budgetary decisions. One official described a civic training delivered by a third party as such:

> [The trainer] was here often, almost five months helping us collaboratively, helping us to understand what to do, how to do it, right? She was the one who gave these monthly trainings to the COCODEs, including after our [COMUDE] meetings. She would give us the trainings after the COMUDE, she'd stay directly with the presidents or if they couldn't come with their representatives to do her job. She helped us immensely, for us the support was essential.

These trainings often came with a separate pool of funding from the regional and national level Development Councils, international governments, or a variety of international nongovernmental organizations. For those running the trainings themselves, the benefits were touted with equal enthusiasm, "We go out to the communities, and we explain their [COCODE] functions, the project cycle, how to create a project plan, prioritization of projects. When the community gets a project from municipal planning, we sit down and write-up the project, complete the profile, we look at what is an urgent need and what is not, and with them we construct the theme and profile of the project." Thus, municipalities that engaged in civic trainings either in tandem with or as an addition to other PDD mechanisms tended to have more frequent participation and a higher level of capacity amongst community leaders.

While several COMUDE meetings I observed included a training element, I had one opportunity to observe a civic engagement training organized by USAID and the municipal government apart from the COMUDEs but engaging COCODE leaders from across the municipality. In this city, the COMUDE meeting I observed prior to the training event was not very deliberative. However, in the training space, community leaders came alive with questions, suggestions, ideas, and challenging discussion about how to best improve their own

neighborhoods and hold their municipal officials accountable. Participants in the space were still considered representatives of their groups and communities, but the space equalized individual's status. Thus, even when the COMUDE did not score particularly high on the DQI or CQI scorecards, these training spaces allowed for meaningful exchange. This stand-alone training space scored 12/13 on the DQI and 6.5/8 on the CQI. One DQI score that stands out in this training was in the category of respect for counter arguments. In this case, municipal officials, community leaders, and a public information advocate debated what data should be available for request by the municipality per transparency laws. This hit a chord with the group, especially when they went to their own municipality's website to find that budget data that was supposed to be available was several years out of date. Rather than squash the discussion and frustration, counterarguments were accepted and embraced by the facilitator and municipal officials present. Within the training space, the participants drafted written requests for updated municipal budgets to be published online.

Beyond the hierarchical Development Council structure, municipal governments adapted alternative PDD processes to their local context. Table 9 below lists the full spectrum of PDD mechanisms that were shared during my interviews. It is important to note that the table below was developed from an inductive analysis of semi-structured interviews from each municipality, not deductively or via a survey tool. While I certainly pushed each municipal official to generate an exhaustive list of PDD mechanisms in our conversations, it is quite possible that additional municipalities use more or different mechanisms than those reported in my interviews. I outline the characteristics of the less commonly reported mechanisms in the sub-sections to follow.

***Table 9: PDD Mechanisms Employed by Municipalities in Guatemala***

| PDD Mechanism | Percent of Municipalities Reporting Use (#) | Field Observations by Author (#) |
|---|---|---|
| Hierarchical Development Councils (local, municipal, regional) | 100% (18) | 10<br>(2 local, 8 municipal) |
| Participatory Budgeting* | 78% (14) | 8 |
| Budget Hearings* | 61% (11) | 2 |
| Community/Deputy Mayors | 61% (11) | 1 |
| Thematic Local Committees (e.g. Women's Committees, Youth Groups, Conflict Prevention Committees, Business Committees)* | 44% (8) | 2 |
| Participatory Planning | 39% (7) | 0 |
| Civic Engagement Trainings with PDD Components* | 39% (7) | 1 |
| Open Municipal Council Meetings | 11% (2) | 3<br>(all in same community) |
| Open Town Hall Meetings | 11% (2) | 0 |

**These mechanisms are typically integrated into the municipal-level Development Councils*

***Community/Deputy Mayors***

The traditional community mayor structure morphed into three related, though different, leadership structures that ran parallel to the COCODE system. The terminology differed slightly from one municipality to another. Some municipalities had community mayors either appointed or elected by the citizens in their villages per local tradition. Other municipalities instituted a deputy mayor structure, which was either an elected role by citizens or appointed by the mayor. Though often unpaid, some municipalities established these roles as (low) paid positions. With two community leaders in place, the nine municipalities I interviewed with such parallel citizen participation and leadership structures distinguished the

role of the community or deputy mayor as responsible for efficient service provision whereas COCODEs oversaw community development projects. A slight spin on this distinction established the role of the community mayor as a land rights mediator, which was the case in two municipalities, one of which 'elected' individuals into the role for life-terms. In practice, however, the role distinction was not always clear and could lead to conflict between community leaders. This was especially a challenge when one citizen participation system had existed longer than the other. For example, this interview exchange took place in one municipality in which COCODEs entered the scene where deputy mayors had already existed prior to the war:

> **Municipal Official:** There are always conflicts between the deputy mayor's office and the COCODEs but ...
>
> **Researcher:** Why?
>
> **Municipal Official:** Because let's say, one would think that COCODEs can participate in many activities but let's not forget that the deputy mayor is the local authority.
>
> **Researcher:** Oh so, it's not the COCODE?
>
> **Municipal Official:** No, the COCODE can propose, make proposals for plans, programs for young people, but the local say 'leader' is the deputy mayor. Right? So, the COCODE is part of the population and trying to manage projects for the development of the community, but the deputy mayor has to ensure that they have water, that the drains are fine, that the environment is fine, problems say of public services, and they also manage the community for the mayor. If, for example, the COCODE comes here to request something from the

> community, we can follow up on it, but we must always take the proper communication channels, and the deputy mayor is like the community leader.

In another instance, COCODEs were established before the system of deputy mayors with a similar result:

> When we passed… divided into districts, we made a segmentation like the micro-region, only we called it district. The deputy mayor, as this is something new, was a novelty. This created a pressure; [COCODEs] felt territorially threatened and felt displaced. We must also recognize that some arrived with a lot of authority. Then they began to question the legitimacy of decisions.

Thus, even though COCODEs were more widespread and enjoyed a greater level of national authority and recognition, the traditional (and sometimes new) community or deputy mayor system continued to present a challenge to their effectiveness and influence over policy and budgetary decision making in many municipalities.

During my fieldwork in Guatemala, I was able to observe only one community mayor meeting and interviewed just four participants in this PDD mechanism, two of which were of the land conflict mediator type and two elected deputy mayors. This low sample size, compared to my observations and interviews of COCODEs and COMUDEs, stems from the fact that this mechanism was used far less frequently and therefore harder to catch in action. Though I do not feel confident speaking to all community mayor structures or systems, the observation and interviews I did complete suggested that these PDD forums were quite similar in quality to the parallel COCODE/COMUDE mechanisms.

The DQI score for the observation I completed was 12/13, and the CQI score was 7/8. Community mayors put forth just as many questions, if not more, than COCODE leaders in the meeting and made several suggestions to improve the outreach of existing public policies and proposed projects. In my interviews, both varieties of community mayors I spoke with were secure in their level of power and influence over local decision making. In fact, when I asked one community mayor who had more power within the community, he replied: "The community mayors, because of the duration of our [lifetime] term. Yes, we can change out the COCODEs, but they can't do that to us. […] If the COCODE isn't functioning, we change (vote) them out." They were also a clearly tight-knit group. Although they came from diverse geographies and backgrounds across the municipality, they all knew each other's names and hung around long after the meeting to exchange stories and enjoy one another's company. In speaking with the deputy mayors in an alternative community, their meetings were reportedly of a similar nature and the relationship between leaders of different communities was quite strong as demonstrated by their elevated level of knowledge about one another's projects, community concerns, and each other as individuals.

***Participatory Planning***

Participatory planning was a rather new mechanism for Guatemalan municipalities, largely implemented in municipalities close to the capital in Guatemala City. The National Association of Municipalities (ANAM), established in 2009, was the main driver behind the initiative to develop participatory strategic plans in each municipality. This effort was also frequently supported by external, international funders. As described by one official: "First, what we had to do was make a municipal plan, because there wasn't a municipal plan, so we

made the plan with the participation of the COCODEs, the institutions, and the support of USAID. […] It's the first year that we are executing the plan." However, some individual mayors started this process of their own volition. As another official, only in his post for three years, shared from his own context, "I developed a paper for the Municipal Council, with the municipal government and citizen participation, to generate a sustainable development plan, socialize the same, and construct our administration's platform from this for the future. We are in this now." While the degree to which citizen participation and leadership of the process varied, a common theme amongst municipalities creating such plans was that the process included several round table discussions and community meetings to both debate and present the plan amongst community leaders.

Through I tried to catch a planning process for observation, I had no success during my time in the field because the process was both new and rare. In the one community I observed launching this process in a COMUDE meeting, community leaders asked to get involved were quite resistant, arguing that the initiative was a "waste of time" when they had already prioritized projects in the local COMUDE meetings. In another community, a COCODE leader had been involved in participatory planning for his municipality, but his assessment of the mechanism was not positive. He shared, "Yes we were there, but we only went to get a better understanding of the process because we perceived it to be negative. […] The urban development of the municipality right now is in serious danger. Primarily, we have a severe problem with garbage, the water distribution networks are bad, not to mention our drains, the rivers are polluted, the roads are totally bad. And if we are going to make new developments in the city, it will make it even worse. So, we were against this development [plan]." When I mentioned these planning processes in most of my interviews, even in towns I knew to have

an extant participatory plan, I found that very few community members remembered the process or were invited to be involved. Thus, even without direct observation data, I estimate that participatory planning would not score very highly on my DQI or CQI assessments.

***Open Municipal Council Meetings***

Though only two municipalities mentioned open Municipal Council meetings as a PDD mechanism, the right of community members to participate in Municipal Council meetings was written into the Municipal Code under Title IV, Articles 63 and 64. This PDD forum is not particularly 'open,' as permission to observe must be requested by formal petition and approved by the Municipal Council. It was also rare to see participants exercise this right. As one official shared, "Here we do Municipal Council meetings, which are public, open to people who want to come, listen to what we debate, but we almost never have a request or someone say, 'I want to be there.' It's exceedingly rare." I observed this mechanism in use over a series of three meetings in one municipality, and I interviewed three different community members about their experience with this PDD forum. In my observations and interviews, most meetings had no public participation or at most a handful of citizens in attendance. These meeting spaces also tended not to be participatory as much as an effort to improve transparency, if that. The first open Municipal Council meeting I observed, for example, started at 9pm. I was not even sure the meeting was happening because the building was appeared dark and closed off from the outside at that hour. These environmental factors suggest that, although observation or participation is possible, it is not well advertised or openly invited.

Nonetheless, the second meeting of the series I observed, despite being rescheduled on short notice and again scheduled for late evening, was well attended. Citizen consultation on

the issue of the town's unruly market district and transportation terminal became practically the sole focus of the meeting. Citizens in this case had engaged a local lawyer and formed an informal neighborhood association to petition for a market clean-up. They were successful at negotiating a redistribution of municipal police forces to the market district and shuffling the position of local vendors to ensure neighbors could make use of the roads and sidewalks in the area. In my interviews with one individual that regularly attended these meetings, I came to learn that the community had only recently started using this mechanism to exert influence over decision making when a politically-motivated stalemate in the Municipal Council threatened the community losing a bid on expanding its local trade school with an increase in national funding. Through a series of sit-ins at the Municipal Council and protests in the main plaza outside the municipal offices, the community eventually prevailed. Thus, when utilized, open Municipal Council meetings could be a powerful space for citizens to exert influence, even if they were not controlled by the public. The average DQI score for this PDD mechanism was 8.8/13 and the average CQI score 4.5/8 possible points. Points were lost on both scales because the deliberation between municipal officials and participants was limited to certain times on the agenda and often did not involve a collaborative dialogue to resolve a problem as much as an exchange of viewpoints.

***Open Town Hall Meetings***

Open Town Hall meetings and open Municipal Council meetings overlapped in law, but not always in practice. Article 38 of the Municipal Code outlines, "When the importance of a matter calls for listening to the opinion of neighbors, the Municipal Council, with the vote of two thirds of the total of its members, may agree that the session be held openly… the

neighbors who attend will have a voice but no vote." Thus, in law, open Town Hall meetings and open Municipal Council meetings were one in the same. However, municipalities that specifically referenced their use of open Town Hall meetings made an important distinction between the two. Open Town Hall meetings, in practice, did allow citizens to vote on the issue at hand. As such, they were higher up on the PDD spectrum of citizen control over decision making. One municipal official shared that only twice in his twelve-year history at the municipality had such an event taken place, but on both occasions the mechanism was used specifically to resolve community-wide conflicts. In one case, the debate and eventual vote taken in the open Town Hall meeting settled a high-profile land rights dispute, and in the second case it facilitated the closing of several establishments in the city's former red-light district. As the mechanism was very rarely employed, I did not observe it in practice, nor did I encounter any participants with memory of such an event. Given the limited data on this mechanism, I cannot speculate on the DQI or CQI scores for this PDD forum. Yet, it did sound as through the forum could be a powerful tool for citizens to influence policy making if utilized.

In summary, I encountered nine different PDD processes in use in post-conflict Guatemala, some of which existed before the war and some of which were introduced following the peace agreement. The Development Council system was by far the most robust and prominent of the PDD mechanisms in use, and it was structured in nearly the same way from one municipality to the next. This was a direct result of the fact that this process was written into the peace agreement and subsequent national law, and because monitoring and incentivization systems were installed to ensure compliance. While other PDD processes were used from one municipality to the next, design and implementation of these processes differed

widely. In the subsequent section, I discuss the impacts of this top-down approach to institutionalizing PDD in Guatemala's post-war context.

## 4d. Impacts: Improving Neighbor Trust, Increasing Satisfaction with Democratic System

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Before diving into a quantitative analysis linking PDD and its impacts in Guatemala, I begin by outlining some key demographic and community characteristics of the country in both 2008 and 2018. The statistics presented below were developed from the AmericasBarometer data utilizing the full nationally representative sample in both years. I provide a quick-glance view of these descriptive statistics in Table 10, which are elaborated upon in prose below. Additional summary statistics for my key model variables are included in Table 11 further below.

*Table 10: AmericasBarometer Control Variable Descriptive Statistics for Guatemala*

| 2008/09 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **Sample Size (n)** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Expected Sign** |
| **Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Geography- urban or rural hometown | 1538 | | | | | |
| Urban (ur=0)* | | 822 | 53.45% | | | - |
| Rural (ur=1) | | 716 | 46.55% | | | + |
| Community Development Demographics- internet usage | 1407 | | | | | |
| Daily usage (www1 range: 1 everyday - 5 never) | | | | 4.5 | 1.1 | + |
| Community Development Demographics- clean water access | 1538 | | | | | |
| No (r12=0) | | 384 | 24.97% | | | - |
| Yes (r12=1) | | 1154 | 75.03% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- age | 1538 | | | | | |
| Years (q2 range: 18 - 87) | | | | 39.5 | 15.6 | + |
| Individual Demographics- education | 1534 | | | | | |
| Years (ed range: 0 - 18) | | | | 6 | 4.8 | + |
| Individual Demographics- gender | 1538 | | | | | |
| Male (sexo=0)* | | 772 | 50.20% | | | - |
| Female (sexo=1) | | 766 | 49.80% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- race | 1499 | | | | | |
| Ladino (etid=1) | | 838 | 55.90% | | | + |
| Indigenous (etid=2) | | 640 | 42.70% | | | - |
| Other (etid=3) | | 21 | 1.40% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- religion | 1532 | | | | | |
| Catholic (q3=1) | | 865 | 56.46% | | | + |
| Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal (q3=2,5) | | 479 | 31.27% | | | + |
| Other (q3=3,6,7) | | 27 | 1.76% | | | - |
| None (q3=4)* | | 161 | 10.51% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- media usage | 1459 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for four media types (asum ramge: 0-12) | | | | 5.5 | 2.6 | - |
| **Theoretical Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Individual Demographics- political party | 1538 | | | | | |
| Right (l1=0)* | | 660 | 42.91% | | | - |
| Left (l1=1) | | 488 | 31.73% | | | + |
| None/NA (l1=.) | | 390 | 25.36% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- income, centered at mean | 1268 | | | | | |
| Monthly Wage Brackets (q10_mean range: 0 - 9500Q +) † | | | | $134 - $202 | N/A | + |
| Individual Demographics- particpation in other community groups | 1484 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for three group types (other_part ramge: 0-9) | | | | 2.9 | 1.9 | + |

† Average exchange rate from Guatemalan Quetzal to USD was 7.46 in 2008

| 2018/19 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Sample Size (n) | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | SD | Expected Sign |
| **Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Geography- urban or rural hometown | 1596 | | | | | |
| Urban (ur=0)* | | 804 | 50.38% | | | - |
| Rural (ur=1) | | 792 | 49.62% | | | + |
| Community Development Demographics- internet usage | 1593 | | | | | |
| Internet access in home (r18=1) | | 380 | 23.85% | | | + |
| Community Development Demographics- clean water access | 1593 | | | | | |
| No (r12=0) | | 271 | 17.01% | | | - |
| Yes (r12=1) | | 1322 | 82.99% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- age | 1596 | | | | | |
| Years (q2 range: 18 - 87) | | | | 38.03 | 15.2 | + |
| Individual Demographics- education | 1549 | | | | | |
| Years (ed range: 0 - 18) | | | | 8.07 | 4.52 | + |
| Individual Demographics- gender | 1596 | | | | | |
| Male (sexo=0)* | | 777 | 48.68% | | | - |
| Female (sexo=1) | | 819 | 51.32% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- race | 1596 | | | | | |
| Mestiza/Ladino (etid=2)* | | 794 | 49.75% | | | + |
| Indigenous (etid=3) | | 580 | 36.34% | | | - |
| Other (etid=5) | | 127 | 7.96% | | | - |
| Don't know / Don't respond (etid=.) | | 95 | 5.95% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- religion | 1528 | | | | | |
| Catholic (q3=1) | | 772 | 50.52% | | | + |
| Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal (q3=2,5) | | 633 | 41.43% | | | + |
| Other (q3=3,6,7) | | 40 | 2.62% | | | - |
| None (q3=4)* | | 83 | 5.43% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- media usage | 1580 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for four media types (asum ramge: 0-12) | | | | 2.97 | 1.34 | - |
| **Theoretical Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Individual Demographics- political party | 1596 | | | | | |
| Right (l1=0)* | | 580 | 36.34% | | | + |
| Left (l1=1) | | 852 | 53.38% | | | - |
| None/NA (l1=.a, .b, .c) | | 164 | 10.28% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- income, centered at mean | 1440 | | | | | |
| Monthly Wage Brackets (q10_mean range: 0 - 5500Q +) † | | | | $141 - $162 | N/A | + |
| Individual Demographics- particpation in other community groups | 1596 | | | | | |
| Parent associations (cp7_si=1) | | 772 | 48.37% | | | + |
| Women's groups (cp20_si=1) | | 175 | 10.96% | | | + |
| Religious groups (cp6_si=1) | | 1073 | 67.23% | | | + |

† Average exchange rate from Guatemalan Quetzal to USD was 7.62 in 2018

AmericasBarometer survey respondents in 2008 reported an average household income of Q3301-4300 Guatemalan Quetzals per month or the USD equivalent at the time of $134-202 per month. Just over 1/10 of families receive remittances from abroad as part of their monthly income. In 2018, the average household income stayed within the same general range, now $141-162 per month. Note, the income brackets used by the AmericasBarometer shifted from 2008 to 2018 to include more brackets. The country gender distribution is split near evenly with 49.8% women and 50.2% men, but in 2018 there are slightly more women than men at 51.3% and 48.7% respectively. As a country with significant ethnic diversity, 55.9% percent of survey respondents identify as *ladino/mestizo* or indigenous-white mix, 42.7% percent report as indigenous, and 1.4% percent report as other in order of cumulative percentage in 2008. As of 2018, there are more individuals reporting as l*adino/mestizo* at 49.8% and a substantial decrease in those reporting as indigenous at 36.4%. This is likely due to the social trend away from individual association with these ethnic categories and their accompanying stereotypes. In 2008, only 2.5% of respondents responded with "I don't know" or opted out of the ethnicity question, but this group increases to nearly 6% by 2018.

In both years the community demographic split is nearly 50/50 urban versus rural within the sample, but the percentage of rural residents increases from 2008 to 2018. On community development, the majority of respondents report access to clean drinking water, but less so in rural areas. In 2008, 75.3% of respondents overall report having access to a safe water source, and that number increases substantially to 82.9% in 2018. Internet access increases as well over time from 20.5% reporting occasional usage in 2008 to 23.8% stating they have regular internet access in their home by 2018.

Politically, the country leans rather heavily to the right (42.9%) as of 2008, which is a particularly interesting revelation given that 2007 was the first time a left-leaning president was elected since the war-time era. However, there is a substantial portion of sample respondents in 2008 that opt not to respond to this question, a full quarter of those questioned. Voter turnout was only at 60% in the first-round election in 2007, and leftist president Alvaro Colon with the National Unity of Hope (UNE) party won in the runoff election by a narrow margin of just over 5 percentage points. This large ideologically undecided group likely explains this distribution. The political sway trend reverses by 2018, with 53.4% leaning to the left. Only 10% opt out of responding to this question in that year. Again, this is an interesting and somewhat unexpected outcome as right-wing candidate Alejandro Giammattei won the presidency in a run-off election in 2019. Again, turnout was quite low at the polls, coming in at 42% of registered voters. It's worth noting that Guatemalan disenfranchisement with the national political scene has been getting worse year upon year (Cuffe, 2019).

Crime is considered the top concern in both 2008 and 2018 for AmericasBarometer respondents. Seventeen percent of respondents in 2008 report having personally experienced an incident of violent crime in the past year, with the trend worsening to 20% by 2018. Twenty-four percent of the population reports that their perception of violence in their neighborhood is "high," and an additional 26% of the population report their perception of violence as "medium" in 2008. In 2018, the AmericasBarometer included many more questions on violence levels than in prior survey cycles to further expand upon this narrative. Respondents report that they know of a murder in their neighborhood or village within the last year in 44.7% of urban areas and 27.2% of rural areas in 2018. Also, 52.5% of respondents share that they feel somewhat or very insecure in their own neighborhoods when they consider their chances

of assault or robbery. Overall, violence is reported more commonly, and perceived as a greater threat in larger cities versus smaller towns across both years.

Distrust of those outside one's circle of acquaintance is high; 75% of respondents say that one should have no confidence or little confidence in others when meeting for the first time in 2008. Despite these negative perceptions, 62.3% and 46.3% of respondents indicate that they find people from their neighborhood to be very or somewhat trustworthy in 2008 and 2018 respectively. Eighty-six percent of the sample says they are satisfied with their life, and 79% are satisfied with the place they live in 2008. Unfortunately, these questions about satisfaction were phased out of the survey questionnaire in 2018, so no comparative data is available over time.

Importantly for this investigation, I find that many Guatemalans are engaged in one or more types of PDD processes in both 2008 and 2018, with a two-percentage-point uptick in participation over time. In 2008, the AmericasBarometer in Guatemala asked only about participation in open Town Hall meetings and community improvement committees, with participation rates of 13.7% and 39% of respondents respectively. When in the field, I confirmed that these AmericasBarometer questions do indeed trigger affirmative responses from PDD participants involved in open Town Hall or Municipal Council meetings, in the first case, and historical Pro-Improvement Committees or modern-day COCODE committees in the second case. Enumerators did not ask about participation in developing the municipal budget in 2008, and my interviews in the field suggest that participatory budgeting and planning today facilitated through the COMUDEs was still in its infancy or nonexistent at that time. In 2018, I coordinated the addition of the participatory budgeting and planning question to the survey questionnaire with the LAPOP research team, and I confirmed in the field that this question

triggered affirmative responses from COMUDE participants. In this later cycle, I found that 14.8% of respondents reported participation in open Town Hall meetings, 40% in community improvement committees, and 8.4% in participatory budgeting and planning. In the following paragraphs, I outline my key findings related to the impacts of PDD participation in these processes on my selected indicators linked to the multiple dimensions of peace.

***Regression Analysis***

I developed six models to determine the association between PDD participation and the peace-related outcome variables from my conceptual framework. The econometric specification for each model by dependent variable is listed below. Models are either OLS regression or logit, selected depending upon the format of the dependent variable (*=logit). Additional details regarding the model construction and each of the variables operationalized therein can be found in Chapter 3, Section 3f. Table 11 below provides a set of descriptive statistics by independent and dependent variable in the models.

$$Muni\_Confidence_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Econ\_Wellbeing_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Community\_Trust_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Sat\_Democracy_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$* \ Exp\_Violence_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Violence\_Perception_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Peace\_Perception\_Index_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

*Table 11: AmericasBarometer Model Variable Descriptive Statistics for Guatemala*

| 2008/09 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **Sample Size (n)** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Expected Sign** |
| **Independent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Participation in PDD (binary version) | 1536 | | | | | |
| Yes (demopart=1) | | 667 | 43.42% | | | + |
| No (demopart=0)* | | 869 | 56.58% | | | - |
| Participation in PDD (additive version) | 1536 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for three PDD types (pdd_sum ramge: 0-2) | | | | 0.43 | 0.5 | + |
| Participation by PDD mechanism | 1536 | | | | | |
| Town hall meeetings (np1_si=1) | | 211 | 13.74% | | | + |
| community improvement committees (cp8_si=1) | | 599 | 39.00% | | | + |
| participatory budgeting/planning (muni5_si=1) | | NA | NA | | | + |
| **Dependent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | 1469 | | | | | |
| No Trust (b32=0) | | 163 | 11.10% | | | - |
| Little Trust (b32=1) | | 275 | 18.72% | | | - |
| Some Trust (b32=2) | | 584 | 69.57% | | | + |
| High Trust (b32=3) | | 447 | 30.43% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | 1479 | | | | | |
| Worse (soct2=1) | | 763 | 51.59% | | | - |
| Neutral (soct2=2) | | 671 | 45.37% | | | - |
| Better (soct2=3) | | 45 | 3.04% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | 1508 | | | | | |
| No trust (it1=0) | | 86 | 5.70% | | | - |
| Little Trust (it1=1) | | 482 | 31.96% | | | - |
| Some Trust (it1=2) | | 561 | 37.20% | | | + |
| High trust (it1=3) | | 379 | 25.13% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | 1403 | | | | | |
| Very unsatisfied (pn4=0) | | 50 | 3.56% | | | - |
| Somewhat unsatisfied (pn4=1) | | 563 | 51.32% | | | - |
| Somewhat satisfied (pn4=2) | | 720 | 40.13% | | | + |
| Very satisfied (pn4=3) | | 70 | 4.99% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of violence in neighborhood | 1505 | | | | | |
| High (vic50=1) | | 357 | 23.72% | | | - |
| Medium (vic50=2) | | 398 | 26.45% | | | - |
| Low (vic50=3) | | 750 | 49.83% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | 1529 | | | | | |
| Yes (vic1=1) | | 261 | 17.07% | | | - |
| No (vic1=0)* | | 1268 | 82.93% | | | + |
| Peace Perception (Overall)- peace perception index | 1272 | | | | | |
| Count (pp_count range: 0-15) | | | | 9.05 | 2.12 | + |
| Percent (pp_percent range: 0-100) | | | | 0.6 | 0.14 | + |

| 2018/19 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **Sample Size (n)** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Expected Sign** |
| **Independent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Participation in PDD (binary version) | 1596 | | | | | |
| Yes (demopart=1) | | 730 | 45.74% | | | + |
| No (demopart=0)* | | 866 | 54.26% | | | - |
| Participation in PDD (additive version) | 1563 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for three PDD types (pdd_sum ramge: 0-3) | | | | 0.64 | 0.8 | + |
| Participation by PDD mechanism | 1596 | | | | | |
| Town hall meeetings (np1_si=1) | | 236 | 14.79% | | | + |
| community improvement committees (cp8_si=1) | | 638 | 39.97% | | | + |
| participatory budgeting/planning (muni5_si=1) | | 134 | 8.40% | | | + |
| **Dependent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | 1570 | | | | | |
| No Trust (b32=0) | | 252 | 16.05% | | | - |
| Little Trust (b32=1) | | 432 | 27.52% | | | - |
| Some Trust (b32=2) | | 525 | 33.44% | | | + |
| High Trust (b32=3) | | 361 | 22.99% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | 1558 | | | | | |
| Worse (soct2=1) | | 1012 | 64.96% | | | - |
| Neutral (soct2=2) | | 482 | 30.94% | | | - |
| Better (soct2=3) | | 64 | 4.11% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | 1554 | | | | | |
| No trust (it1=0) | | 233 | 14.99% | | | - |
| Little Trust (it1=1) | | 601 | 38.67% | | | - |
| Some Trust (it1=2) | | 391 | 25.16% | | | + |
| High trust (it1=3) | | 329 | 21.17% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | 1457 | | | | | |
| Very unsatisfied (pn4=0) | | 216 | 14.82% | | | - |
| Somewhat unsatisfied (pn4=1) | | 643 | 33.22% | | | - |
| Somewhat satisfied (pn4=2) | | 484 | 44.13% | | | + |
| Very satisfied (pn4=3) | | 114 | 7.82% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of violence in neighborhood | 1550 | | | | | |
| Higher (pese1=1) | | 163 | 10.52% | | | - |
| Equal (pese1=2) | | 403 | 26.00% | | | - |
| Lower (pese1=3) | | 984 | 63.48% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | 1591 | | | | | |
| Yes (vic1=1) | | 324 | 20.36% | | | - |
| No (vic1=0)* | | 1267 | 79.64% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- positive peace index | 1379 | | | | | |
| Count (pp_count range: 0-15) | | | | 8.43 | 2.09 | + |
| Percent (pp_percent range: 0-100) | | | | 0.56 | 0.14 | + |

Upon running the models for each dependent variable, the effect of PDD on peace-related outcomes in 2008 reveals that participation in any form of PDD, using the binary 0/1 measure to compare those that participate with those that do not, has a small positive effect at the $p<.10$ level on trust of others in the neighborhood. There is no discernable effect of PDD participation on trust in government or economic well-being.

There is no association between PDD participation and 'positive' peace either, operationalized as satisfaction with democracy in the country. The same is true of the additive 'peace perception index.' Interestingly, community improvement committee involvement appears to be more impactful than open Town Hall meetings when running my models for each mechanism on its own, showing positive and statistically significant ($p<.10$) associations with both increased trust in neighbors and higher levels of satisfaction with the democratic system.

With regards to 'negative' peace, there is a statistically significant ($p<.10$) and positive association between PDD participation of experience with direct personal acts of violence. The odds of falling victim to violent crime for PDD participants is 1.38 times that of non-participants controlling for all other demographic and community characteristics in the model. Using the post-estimation command *mfx* in Stata, which calculates the marginal probabilities for each variable at the means of the independent variables in the model, the marginal effect of participation in PDD on personal experience with crime is a .043 (4.3 percentage points) estimated change in the probability associated with those that participate versus those that do not. Participants in open Town Hall meetings seem to be driving this association with a statistical significance of $p<.01$ for this group. However, the more types of PDD processes one is involved in, the stronger the association ($p<.01$) between PDD participation and diminished levels of 'negative' peace.

As of 2018, much has changed. PDD participation is associated with several promising effects across several variables and dimensions of peace and is no longer associated with 'negative' peace. PDD participants show a statistically significant higher level of trust toward the municipal government ($p<.01$) and their neighbors ($p<.01$) than non-participants, and they are more satisfied with the democratic system as well ($p<.05$). When these individual effects

are combined in the 'peace perception index,' there is a strong association between PDD participation and peace overall. While all types of PDD appear to have positive effects on the political dimension, trust in neighbors is driven by community improvement committees while satisfaction with the democratic system is driven by both community improvement committees and participatory budgeting or planning processes. Interestingly, there is a weak, but still statistically significant relationship between open Town Hall meetings and more positive perceptions of the national economy. Importantly, PDD participants no longer report a higher incidence of experience with violent crime.

Table 12 below shows the coefficients and standard deviations across all OLS models, or odds ratios and standard errors for the one logit model, by independent variable (PDD) and dependent variable (dimensions of peace). The following two tables show the same models run with each type of PDD process as an isolated binary variable. The sample size for the final models included just over 1,000 observations in 2008 and 1,300 in 2018 due to missing data points in one or more variables included in the models.

## *Table 12: Model Results by Independent and Dependent Variable for Guatemala*

| Dependent \ Independent | 2008/09 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | 2018/19 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PDD Participation (binary) | PDD Participation (additive) | PDD Participation (binary) | PDD Participation (additive) |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | .160<br>(.128) | .080<br>(.097) | .467*<br>(.116) | .395*<br>(.072) |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | -.004<br>(.039) | -.005<br>(.030) | .027<br>(.035) | .020<br>(.022) |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | .114**<br>(.059) | .061<br>(.045) | .158*<br>(.059) | .045<br>(.037) |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | -.062<br>(.046) | -.027<br>(.035) | .105**<br>(.051) | .066**<br>(.032) |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | **1.38*****<br>**(.258)** | **1.33****<br>**(.184)** | **1.22**<br>**(.191)** | **1.05**<br>**(.101)** |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of neighborhood violence | .133**<br>(053) | .106*<br>(.040) | .031<br>(.042) | .035<br>(.026) |
| Peace Perception (Overall)- additive peace perception index | .016<br>(.010) | .009<br>(.008) | .040*<br>(.009) | .025*<br>(.005) |

*p<.01, **p<.05, ***p<.10

Bolded results indicate a logit versus OLS model, in which odds ratios and standard errors are reported in place of coefficients and standard deviations

| Dependent \ Independent | 2008/09 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PDD Participation (binary) | Town Hall Meetings | Community Improvement Committees | Participatory Budgeting/Planning |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | .160<br>(.128) | .019<br>(.170) | .161<br>(.131) | NA |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | -.004<br>(.039) | -.013<br>(.052) | -.006<br>(.040) | NA |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | .114**<br>(.059) | .003<br>(.078) | .118**<br>(.061) | NA |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | -.062<br>(.046) | .072<br>(.059) | -.093**<br>(.047) | NA |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | **1.38*****<br>**(.258)** | **1.85***<br>**(.421)** | **1.13**<br>**(.216)** | NA |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of neighborhood violence | .133**<br>(.053) | .140**<br>(.070) | .103***<br>(.055) | NA |
| Peace Perception (Overall)- additive peace perception index | .016<br>(.010) | .008<br>(.013) | .013<br>(.010) | NA |

*p<.01, **p<.05, ***p<.10

Bolded results indicate a logit versus OLS model, in which odds ratios and standard errors are reported in place of coefficients and standard deviations

| Dependent \ Independent | 2018/19 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PDD Participation (Any) | Town Hall Meetings | Community Improvement Committees | Participatory Budgeting/Planning |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | .467*<br>(.116) | .707*<br>(.148) | .275**<br>(.116) | .873*<br>(.196) |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | .027<br>(.035) | .080***<br>(.045) | -.003<br>(.035) | .013<br>(.060) |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | .158*<br>(.059) | -.037<br>(-.075) | .138**<br>(.059) | -.005<br>(.099) |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | .105**<br>(.051) | .013<br>(.065) | .094**<br>(.051) | .228*<br>(.086) |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | **1.22**<br>**(.191)** | **.952**<br>**(.193)** | **1.13**<br>**(.177)** | **1.07**<br>**(.283)** |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of neighborhood violence | .031<br>(.042) | -.007<br>(.054) | .087**<br>(.042) | .012<br>(.070) |
| Peace Perception (Overall)- additive peace perception index | .040*<br>(.009) | .020***<br>(.011) | .035*<br>(.009) | .047*<br>(.015) |

*p<.01, **p<.05, ***p<.10

Bolded results indicate a logit versus OLS model, in which odds ratios and standard errors are reported in place of coefficients and standard deviations

### *Qualitative Findings*

The quantitative results of the statistical models linking PDD participation with the multiple dimensions of peace that I outlined in my conceptual framework went from largely null or negative to extraordinarily positive over time, in the case of Guatemala. The benefit of a mixed methods approach is the ability to better understand the outcomes of my quantitative findings by cross-referencing them with qualitative data from the field. Having processed the 2008 data before commencing with my fieldwork in Guatemala and reflecting on the work of other researchers exploring the implementation of the Development Council system in the post-conflict era, I went into the field with admittedly low expectations. However, I sought to gain a better understanding of how PDD was working and why results from the 2008 quantitative analysis were so underwhelming. Speaking with thirty-one municipal officials and fifty-eight PDD participants provided important background, context, and examples to illuminate the 'why' underlying my quantitative findings. Furthermore, the opportunity to

observe seventeen PDD processes across seven of my sample municipalities gave me first-hand insights to the promise and shortcomings of Guatemala's participatory deliberative democracy mechanisms at the time of my fieldwork.

Broadly speaking, I found that participants in Guatemala's PDD processes reported a higher level of trust in local officials because they felt they had more involvement and control over decision making and a way of holding officials accountable. Only three of the fifty-eight PDD participants that I interviewed in Guatemala reported that their level of trust and confidence had not changed or had worsened because of their participation. Economically, participants saw the connection between PDD and outcomes as indirect, if present at all. Nineteen PDD participants and six of the thirty-one municipal officials I interviewed said there was no economic impact on their own lives or their communities via PDD. A lack of sufficient funding for development projects and long, bureaucratic processes undertaken to implement projects were frequently cited as barriers to economic development via PDD by participants and municipalities alike. Socially, participants reported a mentality change within their communities as well as improved community organization as a result of PDD participation. PDD spaces, particularly the monthly COMUDE meetings, encouraged new relationships and alliances across traditional, even war-time, divides. In the case of ten of the participants and one municipal official interviewed, PDD was not reportedly impactful on community or social relationships.

Direct physical violence experienced by participants was only noted in two participant interviews and three municipal interviews. The examples provided spoke to the increased risk run by PDD participants given their leadership role in the community. Interestingly, a far more frequently reported case having to do with neighborhood violence was that COCODEs could

engage in projects to prevent violence. This perspective was shared by nine municipal officials and sixteen PDD participants. Despite the increased risk, ten participants and six municipal officials made explicit links between PDD and improved quality of life. Across all my interviews, I did not encounter a single informant that suggested that PDD should be discontinued in Guatemala. While many suggested ways to improve the system, all agreed that it made a valuable contribution to Guatemalan society. Below I expand upon this overview of my qualitative results and how they enlighten the quantitative findings presented above.

***Political Dimension***

The quantitatively derived influences of PDD were strongest in 2018 with regards to government legitimacy within the political domain and satisfaction with the system of democracy linked to 'positive' peace. Likewise, within the qualitative data I collected, positive political influences were widely reported by municipal officials and participants across all but two of the municipalities I interviewed. In one case, a regular participant in open Municipal Council meetings had become frustrated with the political infighting he observed in the meetings, often gridlocking key decisions for the community. In the second case, the local government maintained COMUDE meetings to be in compliance with national laws but did not actually devolve any decision making to the forum participants or comply with transparency laws requiring trimesterly budget hearings. Thus, individuals in this community felt disillusioned with the process.

While I coded over twenty different ways that PDD influenced government legitimacy, the three most prominent direct linkages between PDD and trust in municipal governance related to improved communication with citizens in PDD forums mentioned across twenty-

nine of eighty-four interviews, participation as an accountability measure on municipal administration brought up in nineteen interviews, and satisfaction with project completion and service improvements achieved through PDD petitions as shared by fourteen and thirteen informants respectively. Twelve individuals noted a boost in participation over time. Two mutually reinforcing phenomena spun out of these direct links: first, participants reported increased trust because they could see the impact of their influence on municipal works; second, municipalities noted a shift amongst community leaders from clientelism to cooperation.

Improved communication between the municipality and citizens was regularly reported as an outcome of PDD. For participants, this theme often manifested as "feeling heard" or engaging in "open communication" with officials. After sharing that she felt confident in the municipality, one participant explained, "because we work with them, we have gotten closer and become confident that we will fix the issue… we fix it, with communication and the trust we have built with the administration." For municipal officials, communication with community leaders was their primary approach to improve transparency. One official shared, "It's all about public information, it's transparency. If I buy two bags of cement, it appears in the [national procurement] system. Whoever comes and looks can say, 'And where did that cement go?' Well, talk to the president of the COCODE; for me to authorize something I have to have the petition from the COCODE in hand."

As the last quote demonstrated, for both participants and municipal officials, this increased communication and transparency acted as a check on the administration. One regular attendee of open Municipal Council meetings sat down with me after an observation during which he and I had exchanged a critical glance as a subset of Council members chatted loudly

over the meeting proceedings. He noted, "At one point a municipal staffer told me, 'Since you came to these meetings, we've seen better behavior in these meetings'." Every meeting, this participant would visually set out his phone in recording mode on the meeting table. During my last of three observations of this PDD space, a political debate about the upcoming elections broke out, and the Municipal Council became quite nervous about his recording to the point of asking him to stop. Clearly, his presence influenced the intensity and content of debate. In another instance, a COMUDE participant remarked after a meeting, "I criticize the good with the bad… I told the mayor 'this [project] is failing because your technical personnel are not there, they don't do any work' and yesterday when he told the engineer to do his job, I thought there may yet be a chance." Yet another COCODE president shared that the relationship between the community and the municipality was improving "because the municipality has oversight to ensure they come out to the community, that they come view our water well, that it is clean. So, people say, 'Yes, the municipality has reached out to us, they haven't forgotten us'."

Municipalities noted this effect as well. As one official outlined, "Here they come and ask: 'I need to know about a project, how is it?' And we can share the answer and if it's not in order, they can say, 'I submit a complaint.' Today there's no problem [with this]." While the pressure of public participation certainly does not fix all ails, it does make a difference in how municipal administrations communicate and deliver services, which in turn influences public perception.

This increased oversight of municipal operations afforded through PDD forums was tied to a feeling of greater empowerment for the individual participants. One participant

provided this example of how the COCODE system empowered her to make a difference in her community comparing pre- versus post-COCODE introduction:

> Before we had to get everyone together to put pressure on the municipality, and we'd go with over 100 people… now we have the experience of getting beneficial projects for the community sometimes without even any paperwork. […] Before they [COCODEs] existed, or when we had the regional councils, the COCODEs did not know how to get funds from the government, they just didn't know. The money was always there, but it was always lost because the councils did not demand it. Now, COCODEs make demands, we've learned how to demand. If not with documents, with words; if not words, then law. So, it's helped to bring beneficial projects.

In several communities, COCODE leadership was given an official identification card, which allowed them to solicit funds or services from institutions and support systems they would not otherwise have access to. As such, PDD – specifically the COCODE system – had increased the ability of community members to place pressure on the municipality and opened new doors to collaboration. It also meant that participants could see progress more readily, in the form of project completion and service improvements.

Over time, this led to increased participation in PDD forums. As shared by one COMUDE participant, "When we started in 2012, we had a situation, this fear that we would begin COMUDE meetings without much of a crowd, not much participation. And people didn't participate much in COCODEs because they were poorly managed… but little by little we gained the confidence of every leader, of every community mayor, and now thank God there

is a high level of trust." One of my participant interviewees shared that there was a marked increase in participation from the first to the second 'second level' COMUDE election amongst COCODE leadership in his municipality because people saw they had influential power. He reflected that the municipal leadership itself started to see the value in participation, and therefore increased its support for the forum over time: "It has been said that the eyes of the municipal mayor are those of the members [of the COCODE]… because the municipality cannot explore or see every problem in each community. That's why they came to value the help of the community." Many municipalities reported that COCODEs and community mayors had become the best source of information to improve their services.

Communication, oversight, and citizen empowerment ultimately translates to policy decisions better rooted in community needs and monitored by community members, increasing legitimacy. When I asked one participant if she trusted in the municipality, she said simply, "Yes, we have received help, and we have been heard by the municipality." Another shared, "For our community celebration, we created a petition on the part of the COCODE and went to hand it in, and we were blessed with the response 'yes, of course' when we submitted. So, it was in process. But if we were outside, a criminal let's say, they wouldn't say anything. To me they give help … that's why it's good to have this group … whether it's a COCODE or community mayor, it works because we translate information from below to the top." With better information about community needs, municipalities are better poised to respond appropriately. As a municipal official shared, "It's about having better communication with them because now they report a water pump that is burnt out. We could go years without changing it, but now they report it, and we pass the report to our coworker to schedule a time to change it. So, it's about addressing these situations, as small as they may seem." One

COCODE president proudly reported, “Things are getting better because we can see the change. Over time, you see the change happen. For example, we used to have big potholes all over the place, and now it’s better.”

PDD participation had another, more indirect, effect on how municipalities and citizens collaborated. Several municipalities discussed the challenges associated with the historical client-patron model that still lingers in Guatemalan political and policy arenas today. However, they also regularly shared that PDD processes contributed to a shift in this mentality to one of greater collaboration. Increased spaces for participation through PDD mechanisms and follow-through on project implementation were the central links between PDD and this shift. “Initially it cost us a lot,” one official reported, “Like I said, there wasn’t participation before, the few COCODEs that came only came to confront, and fight, and insist, and say that it was ‘our obligation,’ and whatever else. With the passing of time, it changed, we achieved the goal of integrating more entities, more participation in the development actions of the municipality.”

Participants likewise supported this account, “When one is not organized, the municipal authorities do not receive [a petition] as easily. It is through organization that one manages to be received in the municipality, only through organization. If one goes on their own or with two or three neighbors without any representation of the community, the petition is not received, there is no communication, there is no relationship.” COCODE leaders not only have a hand in selecting development projects and approving budgets for their communities, they also help to execute those projects, which further enhances collaboration. During one of my interviews, the COCODE president took me on a tour of all the community projects they had completed as a group including an active drainage project being completed by a combination of municipal workers and local community members during our visit. PDD had certainly not

overcome clientelism in Guatemala, but it had opened new avenues for citizens to engage with municipal officials to this end.

***Economic Dimension***

PDD's influence on economic well-being was a point of disagreement across interviews, though a slight majority (just over 60%) of municipal officials and participants interviewed associated the project development work of COCODEs—at least indirectly—with improved quality of life for the citizens impacted by the projects. Overall, however, the economic influences of PDD were much harder to tease out of interviews, largely because the economic conditions of Guatemala continued to be so poor even twenty years post-civil war. One official summed up this argument succinctly, "Before giving them the benefits and after, the economic problems are the same." This sentiment was echoed by PDD participants. One shared, "Well, it's poverty. We continue to have an extreme level of poverty, malnutrition too for all that we say about caring for one's children and giving them adequate food. There's no change, we continue with the same."

Additionally, even though COCODEs specifically focus their efforts on community development, the process for getting a project through the bureaucracy was reportedly slow and complex. In my interviews, most participants recounted projects taking approximately two years just to get approved. In some cases, the project approval process took more than ten years. Given these contextual factors, I was not surprised to find that there were no statistically significant quantitative impacts of PDD participation on economic perceptions of well-being in 2008 or 2018. However, my interviews did highlight three connections between PDD processes and economic well-being that should be noted: directing resources toward reported

community needs as shared by fifteen individuals, directing resources toward individual needs as outlined by sixteen interviewees, and improving the infrastructure of the community overall indicated by eleven informants.

First, both municipal officials and participants referenced improvements in directing municipal resources toward real needs within communities. Public participation in budgetary decision making helped to ensure funds were not wasted on useless or ego-driven projects or lost to corruption. One mayor talked about how a community near his own had built two separate sports complexes in the past, each attributed to a different politician for purposes of bolstering their reputations. This type of spending was now more tightly controlled. An official reflected: "Before the mayor would say, 'I am going to make a highway' but the highway wasn't a priority, the priority was drinking water. However, I ask them [the public], 'what needs do you have, what is your priority? So, the decision is made from their opinion and it's what they want. I can't impose, or say, 'this is what I am going to do'." Thus, the PDD structure in Guatemala helped to ensure that resources were being distributed toward reported needs. This very much echoed the point made above with regards to the legitimacy of policy decisions. As citizens participated in PDD forums, citizens legitimized decision making and the funding for development was better directed.

Second, individual's economic well-being was sometimes directly improved by the projects requested and implemented by COCODEs. This unfolded in two ways. First, several municipalities worked within the COCODE system to provide and direct job training to the individuals within their communities. Two participants I spoke with provided strong and detailed examples of their involvement in job training projects. In one case, the COMUDE leader talked about how the COCODE-member-comprised violence prevention committee put

on a job fair for youth to decrease crime. Citizens were engaged in finding a time and place for the event and getting community members to attend. Another COCODE president talked about how he organized a local artisan fair to promote small business with the support of the municipality. Across all communities, COCODE leaders and community mayors were the primary means of getting messages to the community about municipal events. In several cases, the municipality had all COCODE leaders in a shared WhatsApp group to disseminate information more quickly. Second, COCODE members applied pressure to the municipality to buy local. One COMUDE president remarked, "We have been fighting now, and we are still in the process of having all businesses that work in the municipality from the municipality. So that the money stays here." By using tax dollars to pay for projects led by local contractors, municipalities could improve livelihoods. As explained in one municipal interview, "the municipality generates income [for local contractors], and there's income for them to maintain their families. There's an economic impact."

However, this impact came with a counterpoint brought to the forefront by PDD participants. For those that participate, there was relatively high personal cost in terms of time and resources. This challenge to participation was reported by nine participants and four municipal officials. Individuals that were in leadership roles in COCODEs or the COMUDE, specifically, were tasked with attending monthly meetings without renumeration, paying for transit to and from those meetings, and taking on key responsibilities in their communities such as reporting streetlamps that had gone out or even deaths within their village or neighborhood to local authorities. "One of the sacrifices is the family, right?" remarked one participant. He attributed his recent divorce to participation in the COCODE. In just two communities,

residents had started to pool a small amount of resources to pay for travel and per diem for their community representatives at the COMUDE.

Third, PDD processes in Guatemala were largely focused on community development projects, and when completed, everyone's quality of life improved. Development funding for both health and education was specifically facilitated through the COCODE system and frequently referenced as making an impact on overall community development and well-being. As one community participant shared, "We as COCODEs bring medical assistance, that we find and we manage, and we bring it to communities with fewer resources or those a little poorer than in other places." In all my observations, health center and school construction projects were always presented as part of the CODEDE funding portfolio for the year. In several sites, the municipalities had started to use their own administrative funds to pay for additional local teachers above and beyond those paid for through the national Ministry of Education. While some of these types of projects could have been delivered without the influence of PDD participants, their selection and execution were made easier with organized citizen participation. One official reflected on how PDD had made development "more fluid" and that those neighborhoods that participate had far fewer needs today.

***Social Dimension***

As my quantitative findings from 2018 suggest, social influences were regularly reported in my interviews. For ten participants and one municipal official, PDD was not very impactful on community or social relationships. In these instances, the common refrain was "we always got along" or "we've always been organized." Forty percent of participants

interviewed, however, cited improved organization and relationships amongst community members through COCODE-initiated meetings and projects.

While COCODEs tended to encourage better neighborhood relations, increased cross-community understanding and social capital gains amongst leaders were primarily linked to COMUDE meetings. In one community, the municipality had chosen to rotate COMUDE meeting locations between rural and urban sites. The official from this municipality explained how this altered the way the communities perceived one another:

> We have had COCODE leaders here from the urban area, when people from the countryside, say to them, 'Take off your shoes before you come in the kitchen,' and that's a form of discrimination. But why? That person never walked in his shoes. However, when the people from the city arrive out there, they realize that the people in the countryside live together, they share. […] When one arrives out there, the people from the countryside have this special way of inviting in everyone, they bring you coffee and soup, the give you a chicken, they make a stew and treat you well. So, what happens with those people that work in [urban] institutions? When they see this, all the sudden it sticks in their mind, the names and the faces. They come back to visit and say, 'How are you? Please go ahead." They remember that they were treated well there. This has helped us to change the mentality, the way that people think, and more than that, the way that they prioritize the needs ahead.

In this community, I was moved by this initiative because the rural community was largely indigenous, but the *ladino/mestizo* population was concentrated in the municipal urban center.

This case offered an insight into how traditional ethnic divisions in Guatemala can indeed be improved through PDD forums.

In another case, I interviewed a current COMUDE president and former member of the national military who had fought on the side of the government during the civil war. Recognizing this unique opportunity to talk to an individual that could truly reflect on the role of the COCODEs in facilitating reconciliation, I inquired directly about his perspective. His eyes lit up and he smiled, "It makes me laugh to talk about this because I remember one day in a training, someone said, 'I remember when I used to go around with my rifle as a guerrilla.' He didn't stop looking at me. Well, you know what I said? 'I was in the army, I took up arms, I was a marine. It's painful to remember, but here we work for the common good.' And, yes, today we are friends." He went on to explain that the keys to reconciliation are tolerance and a focus on the common good. After having met in the COMUDE, they now work side-by-side and even maintain a regular text chat to share community information. Indeed, Guatemala's PDD system, particularly the COMUDE forum that brings together leaders from across the municipality can develop greater cross-community cohesion and can even promote friendships between former war-era enemies.

COMUDEs also offer a space to expand community leader social capital. Thirteen individuals that I interviewed shared that meetings offered them a space to make connections and learn from one another's experiences. Nearly all meetings include a time for participants to sit down and eat a meal together after the proceedings. As one official described:

> Everyone usually knows each other, right? Everyone knows each other, they greet each other. Some, maybe because of the little things that only they know, they don't talk to each other, but that's just a few people. When they meet in an

> assembly or municipal activities where all the COCODEs meet, one looks around at all the leaders greeting each other with everyone there. They help each other too because information is passed on. If someone is doing a project on the side or something, right? How they received some benefit. They themselves pass on the information there.

A community mayor from a separate community corroborates this account. She gave two concrete examples in our interview of times when community mayors came together to resolve problems. In one case, she talked about how the community mayors shared information on how to raise funds for local festivals. The norm in the community had been to sell fireworks to fund celebrations, but with new laws on firework sales due to forest fires sparked throughout the country's long summer months, this was no longer an option. As leaders, the community mayors brainstormed innovative fundraising ideas together such as food, parking, or concert ticket sales. In a second case, a rural community was cut off from their local water service, and a coalition of community mayors went out to help. In two days, a relatively short period of time for such an outage in Guatemala, the issue was fixed through their efforts.

Participants too talked about the social connections they gained through participation. A COCODE president from a large town expressed this sentiment saying, "I feel happy because I have learned, and every time I come to a training it helps me to engage with others. I am showered with new information. I know how to manage now, I know how to help youth, I know how to help the elderly. I feel as president I don't work just to manage projects, I work for children, youth, and the elderly. I work with everyone. I do not leave anyone out because I want development for my community." A municipal official I interviewed highlighted the

unique quality of COMUDE meetings as a space to meet people with influence in the community. "At that meeting we gather all the COCODEs to attend, and there is discussion. At that table there are representatives of government institutions, there's health, education, the hospital, the army, the police, and the municipality … And any COCODE can ask a question to get clarity, and we have the obligation to tell them about our budget, our projects." During a COMUDE meeting break in one mid-sized town, I sat between a government official in charge of women's participation and a COCODE president as they exchanged ideas about bringing a women's job training program to the community. This participatory deliberative democracy mechanism offered considerable opportunity for building one's social capital.

***Positive Peace***

Though I rarely asked participants directly about their satisfaction with their own quality of life or the system of democracy in Guatemala, I spent considerable time talking with PDD participants in interviews about their satisfaction with their communities and how PDD made them feel. Ten participants and six municipal officials made explicit links between PDD and improved quality of life. For municipal officials, the satisfaction of their constituents was often linked to the outcomes of community development projects. Participants, on the other hand, emphasized how service to their communities made them feel, and in most cases, they expressed a sense of satisfaction knowing that they were making a positive impact on the lives and circumstances of their neighbors. One elderly participant that had been the president of his COCODE since the PDD mechanism was launched in his small rural town sat with me for nearly two hours talking about his work with the community. His biggest accomplishment yet

was bringing electricity to his remote village on the outskirts of the municipality. As we neared the end of the interview, he summed up his experience as such:

> We bring benefits for all so that all are happy, we all can take advantage of the help, wherever it comes from, so that we all have a benefit. As I emphasize again, I do not think of a personal benefit or just for my family because that wouldn't do any good. I feel that the greatest satisfaction one can have is to have a joyful heart. The conscience of one feels most happy when something is done for everyone, one feels happy for the opportunity that our lord gives us to achieve a project, through the authorities, but one that is for all. […] Personally, I am compelled to continue fighting so that we all benefit, not to be selfish with my neighbors from other communities. So, we all have what we need, even if it's just a little, so we have it, so that the sun rises for everyone.

Another participant, though not as enthusiastic about the impacts of citizen participation on the community, expressed a sense of hope about the future. He stated, "I believe that the day will come when people will wake up and all of this will be for the benefit of the population, and they will be grateful. They won't know how it all started or who was fighting for it, but there will be a better quality of life for our children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, for all. And that brings me satisfaction."

***Negative Peace***

Armed with the 2008 quantitative analysis results indicating that PDD participation was associated with increased experiences with physical violence, and therefore less 'negative'

peace, I went into my interviews determined to uncover the possible factors contributing to this finding. In my conversations, only two participants referenced firsthand experiences with direct violence because of their participation in PDD spaces, though may did share that they butted heads with other community members from time to time. In most instances, participants talked about heated discussions or "throwing around words" in the course of disagreements. In just two cases did disagreements escalate to threats of personal violence.

It wasn't always that way, however. One participant shared how, in the early days of COCODE formation (such as when the 2008 quantitative data was collected), a municipal official threatened him "even to death." The military at the time stepped in to support the participants. He recounted, "They told him: 'Look, measure your words, don't mistreat them [the COCODE leaders]. This is about dialogue. You are not going to impose things on them that they don't want.' So, it's opened up, and many people come together now. Every day the COCODE is stronger in this regard. You could see it yesterday [in the meeting], young people participating, women participating together." Another rare youth COCODE president talked about having to navigate present-day gang violence as he worked for his neighborhood; but having grown up with the kids in the gangs, his strategy to avoid escalation was to involve them in the process. Only in one case did a participant indicate that the potential for physical violence or crime increased for participants, but the information he had was second-hand. He shared, "In other places, some leaders have even been killed, there are threats, even deaths because of being involved in these organizations. Because there is a lot of jealousy, there are people who are very envious. It's like what we say here: they 'neither do, nor let do'."

Municipal officials told a different and more inspiring story. They made a compelling case for how PDD participants were actively improving security and preventing violence. This

argument was fashioned in two ways. First, many of the infrastructural projects solicited by citizens in PDD forums directly addressed the need for better security in this still volatile post-conflict county. Municipal officials noted that streetlamps, gate construction, and security camera installation were commonly requested projects, which all helped to decrease violence levels in their towns and cities. Second, social projects including health and sports activities, job training, and police interventions were all requested by and filtered through community mayors and COCODEs. In many municipalities, COCODE members had formed Committees for Violence Prevention specifically for this purpose. In one of my observations, citizens mobilized within an open Municipal Council meeting specifically to increase police presence in the local outdoor market where crime was on the rise. This case was not unique. One official told me about the experience in his community with this type of request:

> **Municipal Official:** [In our city] there was an increase in the incidence of assault and theft, and then we had to launch a proposal that the municipal police take to the streets to provide citizen security in support of the National Civil Police. Right?
>
> **Researcher:** And people from the community asked for that, did they want that?
>
> **Municipal Official:** Yes, yes. There was demand in social networks, posts to the mayor's fan page, requests to the community mayors. They approached the COCODEs demanding: "Look we want a police presence."

In this community, one of their largest costs was labor and maintenance of the large municipal police force. "But we do it for the neighbors," he went on to explain, "with them we have

succeeded in saving lives." I did encounter one municipality, one of the most notoriously violent satellite cities to the capital, that reported one of their COCODE leaders had been murdered just a few blocks away from where we sat the year prior to our interview. Thus, while there certainly were challenges and physical risks to participation in some cases, my interview data suggested that the potential risk did not outweigh the value and impact of citizen participation on 'negative' peace.

**4e. Conclusion: Moving the Needle toward Peace**

Whether based on quantitative or qualitive data, PDD is associated with positive influences on peace, both 'positive' and 'negative,' in Guatemala. Furthermore, if one considers the evidence provided above linking PDD participation with impacts on political trust, economic well-being and development, and neighbor trust and community cohesion, there is a common theme. The top-down nature of PDD implementation emerges as a key driver behind the long-term success of these policy initiatives. The Councils for Urban and Rural Development Act and the Municipal Code were referenced forty-three times in my thirty-one municipal interviews as the impetus and basis of these developments. As one official noted, "Through all of the peace accords, the new laws, principally the law of the Community Development Councils, I have seen truly that communities are organizing, and we will not easily return to the 80s, the most conflictive time of the internal war." Another mayor commented, "[In the accords] perhaps there was a little freedom that [the rebels] did not have, they needed pure democracy, citizen participation, to get involved in development, to not be just a few developing and with everyone else only a little affected. But a development that wins all… that's why COCODEs fulfill this function, of being able to share that authority and as a whole achieve national development and citizen participation."

In one of my participant interviews, a COMUDE president brought a copy of both laws to the interview. He emphasized their importance in carving out this system of deliberative forums:

> Our existence is based in the Councils for Urban and Rural Development Act … it gives us the opportunity as citizens to participate in the development and well-being of our neighbors, it is in this we are based. And we also have the Municipal Code, in an article that gives us the freedom to organize as neighbors. So, it allows us to have better citizen participation. We also have the Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala, where it says we have the freedom to organize for the benefit of our neighbors and our communities. […] Before we weren't considered, it wasn't permitted, we were not educated. Today, the people fight for their rights and participate more continuously, and they help with the development of their communities.

Overall, Guatemala's PDD mechanisms and their implementation during the post-conflict peace process had a positive influence on peace and reconciliation looking across political, economic, social, 'negative,' and 'positive' dimensions of peace. I would be remiss to continue my discussion here about the links between PDD and peace without noting that Guatemalan's are generally not pleased with the overarching results of the peace process or the national political system. This assessment has been documented in far greater detail in the news and by other academics before me. To summarize this point from my own interviews: the peace accords ambitiously overpromised and woefully underdelivered. As the implementation of the peace accords themselves was not the focus of my study, I did not

directly ask about this in my interview protocol. However, because Guatemalans have rather strong feelings about the accords, I had to bide my time and strategically introduce questions about reconciliation via PDD during my interviews. Even then, I often needed to refocus respondents as conversation veered in this direction. By no means has the road to relative peace been easy, and there are still many challenges. However, even if some people did not feel the accords had achieved their purported aims, participants and municipalities reported a variety of positive effects stemming from the PDD mechanisms launched after the war.

As with any PDD mechanism, whether it is integral to a peace process or not, there are challenges. In Guatemala, the greatest challenge with PDD was a lack of funding to fulfill the requests and petitions coming out of participatory deliberative processes. Additionally, though the new laws and structures supporting citizen participation had many positive impacts, an increase in bureaucracy and a slower pace of policy and budgetary decision making also resulted. Finally, even where PDD made some strides, it failed to influence others. PDD had not fully addressed some of the long-standing root causes of the conflict such as land rights, the poor national economy and widespread poverty, or the (complete) inclusivity of political processes. Even though more people were involved in policy decision making than during the war, women were less engaged in PDD processes than men and political corruption and clientelism continued to be challenges. For this reason, my informants recommended additional investments in civic education, clearer rules and structures to manage and monitor participation, and increased participation of a more diverse demographic.

Although I began my research anticipating that Guatemala's suite of PDD mechanisms would not produce promising results for peace, I concluded my fieldwork feeling quite the opposite. Guatemala's beautifully conceived, if not always artfully implemented, Development

Council system was built upon a long-standing, locally rooted mechanism for citizen participation in policy making. It took nearly twenty years to start paying dividends for peace, but the trajectory has been upward. Having observed and met with the people engaged in these processes, I have no doubt that this trajectory will continue.

# CHAPTER 5

# EL SALVADOR: PARTICIPATORY DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY FROM THE BOTTOM-UP

*Honestamente, acá el poder casi siempre es político. Los espacios políticos y los espacios empresariales, por decirlo así, son los que llevan el control de todo. Entonces, si uno quiere incidir directamente o buscar un espacio para cambiar una cierta situación, o que se le escuche y se tome alguna precaución, algo pues, debe de ser alguno de esos dos: político o empresarial.*

Honestly, here power is almost always political. Politics and business, as you say, are in control of everything. So, if one wants to directly influence or find a space to make a change, or to be heard and under consideration, anything really, he should be one of the two: a politician or businessperson.

*Hay una dificultad también que a veces los partidos políticos se meten al arco con las estructuras. […] Voy para 6 meses de estar acá alcalde, pero el jefe de policía de toda esta zona nunca se reunió conmigo. Porque es de otro partido.*

It's difficult too, sometimes the political parties get in the middle. […] I've been a mayor for six months, but the police chief of the zone has never even met with me. Because he is with the other party.

In the years leading up to the end of El Salvador's twelve-year civil war, participatory deliberative democracy opened new avenues of political participation for individuals otherwise excluded from the elite-led and largely authoritarian political system prior to and during the war. Implementation of early PDD mechanisms evolved over time as each municipality, often through development programs funded by international aid, experimented with new ways to engage the public in decision making. PDD mechanisms in El Salvador were numerous as of 2019, and every municipal administration had its own preferred approach. Thus, the impacts of PDD from one town or city to the next were inconsistent. My findings suggest that as of 2008, early forms of PDD showed a mix of both positive and negative impacts across the peace-related dimensions from my conceptual framework. The positive associations become stronger and the negative associations become weaker by 2018.

The strongest and most consistent effect of PDD over time, often paired with various initiatives to improve transparency and communication with the public, was an increase in trust of local government. PDD participants demonstrate higher levels of trust in the municipality than those that do not participate. Although municipal leaders and community members saw improvements in economic development through projects proposed via PDD spaces, progress was both slow and often tied to political party affiliation between the mayor and citizen leadership within a neighborhood or village more than through mixed affiliation PDD forums. Socially, participants expressed that they come to know their neighbors within their, often already tight-knit, communities better in PDD forums. However, there were few opportunities within the structure of extant PDD mechanisms to build cross-community relationships or trust. My findings indicate that participants in PDD processes as of 2008 experienced an increased incidence of direct personal violence than those that did not participate. 'Negative' peace was

diminished rather than improved by PDD participation. A decade later in 2018, though violent crime continued to be a challenge for El Salvador nationally, the risk to PDD participants had normalized to the same level as non-participants. The case of El Salvador demonstrates the promise and challenges of implementing a bottom-up approach to PDD, which encourages innovation but is easily overshadowed by the deep divides stemming from war-era ideological conflicts.

In the sections to follow, I describe the macro-, meso-, and micro-level implementation of PDD and its impacts across multiple dimensions contributing to peace in El Salvador. In section 5a, I discuss how PDD was initially introduced alongside decentralization in El Salvador in the years leading up to the peace accords. Following, in section 5b, I outline how PDD implementation was experienced by municipalities and participants on the ground as a phased evolution. I then describe the various forms of PDD that were used in El Salvador during the time of my fieldwork from 2017-2019 in section 5c. Building upon the initial discussion of PDD's effects described in the introduction to this chapter, section 5d explores the impacts of PDD participation using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis at the individual level. I close this chapter with a summary of my findings in section 5e.

### 5a. Context: PDD via Gradual Innovation and Institutionalization

The height of the conflict in El Salvador lasted from 1980 to 1991 resulting in the death of over 75,000 Salvadorians (Wood, 2003, p. 8). The two primary parties to the conflict were the Government of El Salvador, led by heads of the military with the backing of the armed forces, and the FMLN, a left-leaning guerrilla group made up of several smaller rebel factions. International actors supported the parties from abroad, notably the US in favor of the government and the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua in favor of the FMLN. Some scholars

have pointed to the failed US-backed counter-insurgency coup in 1979 as the trigger event of the ensuing civil war, while others site the institution of controversial agrarian reform, the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero, and subsequent mass shooting at his funeral in 1980 (Call, 2003; Celis Falcon, 2015; Quan, 2005). Root causes of the conflict stem from El Salvador's early history as a Spanish colony; socio-economic inequality, particularly land distribution; and political exclusion. (Lopez-Reyes, 1997; Thompson, 1997; Wade, 2008).

While several attempts were made at negotiating peace throughout the 1980s, politically-based and social-psychological approaches to mediation were unsuccessful. Only when the UN became involved in 1990 was progress made toward a ceasefire, constitutional revision, and judicial system restructuring (LeoGrande, 2012, pp. 4-9). The Chapultepec Peace Accords were signed on January 16, 1992, officially ending the civil war. The accords focused on reforming and reducing the armed forces including an end to impunity, the establishment of a national civilian police and independent judiciary, and land reform. The key political provision in the accords was the transition of FMLN from insurgent to political party. However, as Ramos, López, & Quinteros (2015) point out, "the peace negotiations were primarily carried out by the ruling and incoming elites" and "the constitutional reform resulting from the peace accords made clear that the political parties were the only legal means of political representation available to citizens" (p. 9-10). As such, no guarantees were made with regards to the general public's participation in policy making or future development.

The United Nations Mission in El Salvador or the *Misión de Observadores de las Naciones Unidas en El Salvador* (ONUSAL) was charged with overseeing the cease-fire and peace accord provisions in coordination with the National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (COPAZ). A United Nations Truth Commission reported a year after the accords were

signed that 85% of human rights violations during the war were attributed to the government (Wood, 2003, p. vii). With the help and oversight of the international community, the FMLN successfully transitioned to a political party, participating in general elections for the first time in 1994 and eventually winning the presidency in 2009. El Salvador's peace negotiation and the expanded role of ONUSAL in facilitating state-building alongside peacekeeping was hailed as a success for the liberal post-conflict peacebuilding agenda (Holiday & Stanley, 1993).

The gradual decentralization of power to local government and PDD implementation in El Salvador had a detailed and documented track record by international, national, and nongovernmental organizations (Bland, 2011, 2017; International City/County Management Association, 2004a; Torres & Humberto López, 2008; USAID, 2005). Indeed, El Salvador received substantial support for local democratic development from international actors. These records indicated that PDD was introduced with clear-cut deliberative elements by municipal governments from the late 1980s through present day.

In the early 1980s, then President Duarte allocated one percent of national tax revenues to local government for the first time in the nation's long-term centrist and authoritarian history. Over time, various national-level associations and codes institutionalizing decentralization were established to devolve more power to municipalities. In 1985, citizens began to elect mayors directly. The Municipal Code was reformed by the national legislature in 1986 to give municipalities increased autonomy, independent decision-making power, and budgetary control. In 1998, six percent of the national budget was designated for municipal development projects via the Fund for the Economic and Social Development of Municipalities or the *Fondo para el Desarrollo Económico y Social de los Municipios* (FODES), which increased to eight percent in 2010 and ten percent in 2019. However, municipal elections

employed a 'winner take all' electoral formula until 2015, which meant that the party to win the mayoral seat completely controlled the Municipal Council as well. Only two reformed election cycles had passed at the time of my fieldwork, during which Municipal Councils were more representative of the electorate.

The Municipal Code reform of 1986 also introduced the first PDD mechanism in the form of local Community Development Associations or *Asociaciones de Desarrollo Comunal* (ADESCOs), which gave community members the legal framework to form "community associations to participate in an organized fashion in the study, including analysis, of social realities, problems, and needs of the community, development, and execution of projects to benefit the same" (Decreto 542; Diario Oficial 241; Código Municipal, 1986). As of 1987, the leading ARENA administration launched a new Foundation for Economic and Social Development or *Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social* (FUSADES) to direct research and funding toward liberal market ideologies and economic development initiatives with the assistance of ADESCO leadership (Peceny & Stanley, 2001, p. 165).

These reforms built upon a movement already in motion to open new spaces for political and civil society participation in a context in which democracy had not existed previously. Two forces compelled El Salvador's shift toward democracy. First, "international actors pursued a liberal strategy of conflict resolution by promoting democracy;" and second, "Salvadoran elites had begun to adopt liberal norms […] in order to legitimate themselves to the international community" (Peceny & Stanley, 2001, p. 163). Ucles (1992) outlines how workers unions began to form just before the war, and although abated temporarily by the onset of violence, resurged with greater power and appeal across ideological divides as of the mid-1980s. He goes on to indicate that these types of inlets to political inclusion ultimately

contributed to bringing FMLN to the negotiation table and carving out their long-term space within the political system beginning with their participation in COPAZ in 1991.

A variety of international actors were involved in funding municipal systems and capacity building as well as directly filling city coffers for economic development and participatory civic engagement projects, most notably the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and USAID (International City/County Management Association, 2004a). Prior to the end of the civil war in 1987, the US promoted participatory governance through a program called Municipalities in Action. This program promoted *cabildos abiertos*, open Town Hall meetings, with both information-sharing and deliberative decision-making elements (ISDEM, 2017). The program continued after the war until 1994 with various USAID supports offered thereafter (Checchi and Company Consulting & Daniel Carr & Associates, 1994; International City/County Management Association, 2004a).

From 2000-2002, an international NGO was contracted by USAID to continue the participatory effort under the Municipal Development and Citizen Participation Project (RTI, 2002). From 2003-2005, the same partnership instituted the Democratic Local Governance Activity which launched participatory budgeting, known as the *plan de inversión participativo* (PIP), in twenty-eight municipalities dispersed widely across the country (RTI, 2005). The newest iteration of PDD in El Salvador took the form of participatory strategic planning or *planes estratégicas participativas* (PEP) often in coordination with ADESCO and other community leaders. This effort was spearheaded by the Sub-Secretary of Territorial Development and Decentralization (SSDT, 2011). In addition to these mechanisms supported by international development assistance, individual mayors and Municipal Councils also developed their own forms of engaging the public in decision making from coordinating

regular community visits to holding consultation meetings with key sectors of the society, such as local business owners, to guide and influence policy development and implementation.

Though these various forms of citizen participation were slowly developed through international development programs in small sets of municipalities with set timelines or individual mayoral innovations, the country gradually institutionalized these mechanisms nation-wide. A major milestone in this regard came through a substantial set of reforms to the Municipal Code in 2005. These reforms indicated that "it is the obligation of municipal governments to promote citizen participation, in order to inform the public about municipal management and deal with matters that neighbors have requested as well as those that the [Municipal] Council considers convenient" (Art. 115). The same set of reforms outlined eight different PDD mechanisms to achieve this goal including open Municipal Council meetings, open Town Hall meetings, mandatory budget hearings, referendums, neighborhood consultations, the PIP, the PEP, and an expanded role for ADESCOs. The revised Municipal Code also left open the possibility of the local Municipal Council and mayor to develop new mechanisms as they saw fit. As Bland (2017) suggested, "this case of sustainability and institutionalization […] may allow us to be more optimistic about the potential effects of participation" in El Salvador.

Though PDD had become institutionalized in law, there was reason to believe that implementation was uneven and still under development. For example, records of municipal PEPs were still not available in many towns and cities during my administrative document review even though the PEP was mandated in the Municipal Code for over a decade at that time. In the next section, I share how current municipal officials and PDD participants experienced the evolution of these mechanisms in post-conflict El Salvador.

**5b. Implementation: Scaling PDD Prototypes from the Field**

From 2017-2019, over twenty-five years after the conflict ended in El Salvador, I spoke with thirty-seven local officials in twenty-six of the nation's municipalities and thirty-six PDD participants across seven municipalities to understand how PDD was implemented, how it was functioning across the country, and the impacts of these mechanisms created to engage citizens in policy decision making. Tables 13 and 14 below show the number of municipalities I interviewed and observed in each quadrant of my case selection matrix at the meso-level.

***Table 13: El Salvador Municipal Interview Sample Matrix***

| **Case Selection Matrix** | Majority Urban Municipalities | Mixed Urban/Rural Municipalities | Majority Rural Municipalities |
|---|---|---|---|
| Left-leaning Municipal Leadership | x3 sites | x3 sites | x5 sites |
| Right-leaning Municipal Leadership | x6 sites | x4 sites | x5 sites |

***Table 14: El Salvador Municipal Observation Sample Matrix***

| **Case Selection Matrix** | Majority Urban Municipalities | Mixed Urban/Rural Municipalities | Majority Rural Municipalities |
|---|---|---|---|
| Left-leaning Municipal Leadership | x1 site | x1 site | x1* site |
| Right-leaning Municipal Leadership | x1 site | x1 site | x2* sites |

*One site's municipal administration changed from FMLN to ARENA during my fieldwork. My observation took place under the ARENA administration.

Of the PDD participants I interviewed, 54% identified as female, 41% identified as male, and 5% identified with other or no gender. The majority were adults (64%) with more youth (33%) than elderly (3%) individuals. As stated in the research methods chapter, my participant interview sample is similar to the nationally representative AmericasBarometer sample of PDD participants with regards to demographics; however, this was not the case with political party. In my sample, 28% of PDD participants declined to report a political party, 18% specifically noted no affiliation or a-political, 31% affiliated with FMLN, 13% with ARENA, and 10% with *Nuevas Ideas* or GANA the parties of the newly elected president. This distribution over-represents FMLN-affiliated PDD participants, as only 7% of PDD participants reported that they were FMLN in the AmericasBarometer sample. The explanation for this oversampling is two-fold: 1) I rarely encountered ARENA participants in FMLN-controlled municipalities, and 2) ARENA administrations I worked with tended to be rather new to their roles. As a result, I pull heavily from a small number of ARENA participant interviews (x5) in my discussion below. Given the history of PDD implementation in El Salvador, FMLN participant perspectives may well skew trends identified in my qualitative data toward greater enthusiasm for PDD processes, as these forums for citizen participation were occasioned directly by FMLN pressure during the final years of the civil war and the FMLN controlled the national executive branch throughout the period of. my fieldwork.

My interviews confirmed that PDD developed through small-scale innovations by municipal officials and non-governmental organizations both local and international. Each municipality employed a mixture of mechanisms with a high level of variation. While decentralization of state power and government transparency was propelled forward through the peace process, PDD was not instituted explicitly as a mechanism or tool for peacebuilding.

Thus, as municipal officials I interviewed explained, each municipality and administration in succession developed its own approach to engaging citizens in public decision making. Only three of thirty-seven municipal officials and one of thirty-six participants reported that there were no significant changes when local administrations changed leadership. In total, I encountered ten distinct types of PDD. While several mechanisms were unique to a particular context or a single mayor's vision, the most common mechanisms included public assemblies, ADESCOs, and participatory planning. Most other PDD processes were loosely tied to the ADESCOs in that the same community leaders participated in multiple forums, but there were also other mechanisms in use open to the broader public. During my interviews, I encountered examples of all mechanisms outlined in the Municipal Code as well as some initiatives yet without any basis in law.

Eleven of the municipal officials I interviewed had been working with the municipality for over ten years, and just a few of those individuals could speak to how PDD developed in El Salvador after the war. Those with memory of the evolution described the implementation of PDD in the country as a learning process. ADESCOs and open Town Hall meetings were introduced in the 'first phase' of PDD implementation prior to the end of the war. They offered now-elected public officials an opportunity to "share their ideas with the city and, by doing so, give them legitimacy," according to one official, but rarely gave citizens the opportunity to vote on projects or ideas put forth. The shift to a more empowering form of participatory democracy began in the late 1990s. Largely promoted by political leaders in municipalities under left-leaning FMLN control. According to a FMLN mayor, this 'second phase' of PDD introduced participatory budgeting inspired by the Brazilian Worker's Party out of Sao Paulo. As this long-term public official explained:

> We introduced the participatory budgeting process in assemblies. In these assemblies some coming from the left idealized too much; they led local leaders to understand that they were going to form a local Development Council and whatever they decided was going to dictate how the Municipal Council and the mayor should invest. It was set-up in an almost-military structure! That caused the first conflict, the first clash that occurred between the legal authority and the participatory structure that had been formed to help the mayor meet with the people and turn the tide of local economic development. So, that first stage was quite complicated. […] The [former] mayor realized that he had made a mistake. That first phase ended with community leaders enraged and dispersed.

In response to this negative and conflict-inducing experience in the second phase, the 'third phase' redistributed authority over decision making back to municipalities giving officials greater control over the process. Municipalities began to register the ADESCOs to give them legal authority under the Municipal Code to speak on behalf of their neighborhoods for the improvement and development of the community. While the basis of the ADESCO system was rooted in El Salvador's 1983 constitution promoting citizen cooperation with municipal governments, I learned from two officials that they only started to register ADESCOs and formalize this PDD forum in the 2000s. The legally recognized nature of ADESCOs gave them the privilege to propose development ideas and accept and administer funds to implement projects. As one official explained, "As they have to have a statute, they have to be a legal and recognized organization, because if an ADESCO does not have legal authority, they cannot manage funds."

Building on this system of ADESCOs, municipalities began to introduce participatory strategic planning processes in which each neighborhood would come together in a facilitated 'diagnostic' session to prioritize needs. However, this too involved an evolution, as the below except from one interview demonstrates:

> **Municipal Official:** That [strategic planning] stage was also limited because people could participate in creating the budget, but only in one project or social investment in each neighborhood assigned year-by-year. And it's like you might imagine. In a poor city, when the budget is as tight as it was twelve years ago, you say: "For your neighborhood you have 15 thousand dollars." Well, what are you going to do with that? And the people, all with their little piece, want to have their ...
>
> **Researcher:** "My project, my project!"
>
> **Municipal Official:** Exactly. Then it turned to madness! So, then we introduced a prioritization matrix based on population, based on social benefit, based on priority, based on poverty, based on marginality, vulnerability, urgency, etc. When those assemblies ended, everyone loved the group process. Why? Because they won specific projects and the rest said, "Better luck next time."

However, not all communities had progressed to this third phase of PDD. Though participatory planning was mandatory for municipal governments as of the last reforms to the Municipal Code, in six of the twenty-six municipalities I interviewed, they had yet to develop a strategic

plan. In over half of those with strategic plans, they had only developed one plan thus far, which in at least two cases had long since expired.

As of the time of my fieldwork, PDD continued to be implemented in various formats, often in tandem. In this 'fourth phase,' there was wide acceptance amongst municipal officials that they should engage citizens in public policy decision making. However, each municipal administration had its own unique approach and mixture of PDD mechanisms. Indeed, no two municipalities that I interviewed were employing the same set of PDD mechanisms, although community size and political party did produce some overarching patterns in approach. In the following section, I outline how each mechanism is structured and its variants across communities.

**5c. Structure: Locally Situated, Innovative, and Easily Derailed**

Interviews with municipalities in El Salvador revealed new and innovative ways that local mayors and Municipal Councils engaged citizens in public policy decision making at the local level. Every municipality offered its own banquet of PDD options based on the tastes of their leadership and local traditions, with a handful of common strategies used more broadly. Some innovations were unique, pushing the roles and expectations of the citizen's role in the policy process to new levels and engaging members of both political parties in the process. Others were clearly entrenched in the post-war two-party system, such that political favoritism and corruption were simply the name of the game.

The three most common PDD mechanisms used in El Salvador, according to municipal officials, were open Town Hall meetings or public assemblies typically in the form of budget hearings, ADESCOs, and PEPs. It is important to note that these three mechanisms were also

those required by law within the Municipal Code. Of the officials I spoke with, 96% discussed open Town Hall meetings or public assemblies, 96% mentioned ADESCOs, and 77% said they had developed a PEP in coordination with citizens. As these were the most common mechanisms, I outline how each of these PDD mechanisms was structured in turn below.

***Open Town Hall Meetings***

Open Town Hall meetings, or assemblies as they were most often called, were reportedly the oldest PDD process in El Salvador. Fourteen municipalities described holding these meetings once per year, while others reported holding them after each project or quarterly. Often the meetings included both a budget hearing, in which the town or city shared its spending allocations over the last year, and a time for community leaders to present projects they would like to see funded in the upcoming year. However, the way public assemblies were executed ranged widely. The 'traditional' *cabildo abierto*, or open Town Hall meeting during which ideas were received by formal letter, was infrequently used even though this was one of the first mechanisms re-introduced in the post-war era. Indeed, when asked directly about the *cabildo abierto,* several municipalities called the mechanism "outdated" or "almost extinct." As one mayor explained, "Even the name tells you that it comes from the colonial era where the rulers dictated their ideas to the city and there have them legitimized, with the hands of the masses raised to protest but rarely put to vote."

However, many elements of the 'traditional' *cabildos abiertos* made appearances in the more detailed descriptions of the popular public assemblies or budget hearings. For example, most budget hearings consisted of a presentation by the mayor on projects completed and planned, followed by a question-and-answer session that tended to involve community

members informally requesting new projects or inquiring about the status of previously submitted project solicitations. In both types of the public assemblies I observed, the presentations always ended with community members approaching the podium or raising their hands from their seats to discuss their own neighborhood's project proposals or challenges. The two most prominent formats of open Town Hall meetings were municipality-wide public assemblies or budget hearings, reported in twenty-five of the twenty-six municipalities I interviewed, and then a traveling version with a virtually identical agenda by neighborhood, reported in sixteen municipalities. Municipal-wide public assemblies tended to be the approach for mayors of larger cities, whereas traveling variations were more frequent in smaller towns.

Attendance at municipal-wide public assemblies ranged from 300 in a smaller town to over 1000 citizens in a larger city, according to my municipal interviews. Unfortunately, I was unable to observe first-hand a municipal-wide public assembly during the window of my fieldwork in El Salvador as these types of events only take place once per year. However, two of my municipalities published videos of every large assembly or budget hearing, as well as every Municipal Council meeting, on their Facebook pages. Thus, I was able to observe the flow of these events and their size via video stream in December of 2018 and May of 2019. Attendees visible in the videos were of all sexes and ages, including small children. As one might anticipate, large events such as these were highly prescriptive and more informative than interactive. In the first observation, there was no community member participation at all. The meeting proceeded directly from a welcome address by the mayor to a PowerPoint presentation by the director of one of the city's most popular programs involving student scholarships. In the second observation, one ADESCO leader had been selected to speak on behalf of the

community for three minutes of the forty-five-minute presentation, and her remarks expressed gratitude for a handful of projects completed in the community in the last year.

Based on my interviews, deliberation appeared to increase in municipal-wide assemblies as the community size decreased. In one mid-sized town with a large urban center, the municipal-wide open Town Hall meeting was described as such:

> Each year the mayor discusses, alongside the City Council, the different activities completed and projects in development in the various communities of the city, which include eighteen city neighborhoods and 146 suburbs outside the urban area. Here it's largely informative, and at the same time, communities can submit petitions to the Council and mayor where they are then prioritized according to funding, which projects have a greater need, and which ones are short-term, medium-term, or long-term. This is something the Council uses to make decisions, based on the priority, need, or urgency for the community.

Another official from a mid-sized town of the opposite political party explained, "Honestly, there is not much dialogue. The way it works is that citizens present their requests and they are given a limited amount of time only. So about ten people are going to speak, or maybe fifteen, and the rest will just turn in their petitions at the end. […] Each project is given an estimated budget for completion, and all of those requests then go into sequence."

On a spectrum of deliberation, information exchange, and opportunities for intergroup contact, open Town Hall meetings offered little chance for citizens to engage with one another or determine outcomes to maximize community benefit. Thus, these mechanisms received a score of zero points in the categories of respect for counter arguments and constructive politics.

Given the lack of actual deliberation in these municipal-wide assemblies, these mechanisms scored quite low on the DQI and CQI overall with resultant scores of 7/13 and 6/8 respectively. As such, one may not classify these events as PDD mechanisms at all. In my participant interviews, those that had attended a budget hearing or public assembly did not have much to say about them. "I went one time. Yeah, one time," shared one interviewee, "It's only when the mayor holds them, at the end of every year they do it. He invites all the leaders for a budget hearing." When I asked community leaders to rank PDD processes by how effective they were at getting things done for their communities, not one PDD participant listed open Town Hall meetings at the top of the list.

In two of the five mid-to-small sized towns I observed during my fieldwork, mayors had opted to conduct their annual budget hearings or public assemblies within each village or neighborhood separately. Attendance at these events ranged from 80 to 100 people, again with a wide diversity of participants from small children to youth, adults, and elderly populations. A small-town mayor described his travelling assembly mechanism in this way: "The majority of mayors hold an assembly and send out invites to some community ADESCOs and then do just one assembly, and most importantly usually in the town or city center. I go out by neighborhood, each neighborhood, and I do my meetings by neighborhood. So, because we have two large town center neighborhoods, I do around sixteen assemblies every six months." In my three observations of this type of assembly, which were much easier to catch because of their frequency, there were more opportunities for participation and dialogue between the mayor(s) and community members. Approximately 30% of the meeting time was designated for questions and comments after the mayor and his team presented during my observations.

In one of my observations in a rural village of a small municipality, the mayor and some national-level legislators gave a presentation about an upcoming household survey they planned to run to help policy makers determine the need for a series of social benefit programs targeting infants, young mothers, and the elderly. This sparked a series of remarks from community members with feedback on the proposal. One individual approached the microphone and requested that the proposed monthly stipends under this program be raised. Another, who did not wish to speak into the microphone, simply yelled out from the crowd: "Will you be sending people to our homes [for the survey]?" The legislator at the microphone replied, "Yes, but don't be scared. It's okay." However, the elderly female participant was not persuaded, and yelled back, "Well, you better send someone from our same party, so we *aren't* worried!" As these exchanges demonstrate, the traveling-type of public assemblies do allow more room for debate. On the DQI and CQI, this PDD mechanism scored an average of 10.5/13 and 5/8 respectively. The categories that scored low in these meetings were constructive politics on the DQI and equal status on the CQI because there was little effort to build consensus or make decisions in these spaces, and speakers directly brought in positional politics which resulted in inequitable treatment of those from alternative political parties.

This last quoted exchange highlights an interesting dynamic I saw in all traveling budget hearings and assemblies, related to El Salvador's deeply engrained, war-era partisanship. Regardless of the town or political party of the mayor I was observing, these events tended to be highly politicized. The mayor and municipal officials in attendance often wore t-shirts or hats for their political party, and remarks tended to progress from general announcements about community projects or spending to direct requests that participants vote for the mayor's party in the upcoming national elections or band together on a policy issue

pursued by one party or another. Even if the mayor did not make such remarks him or herself, the participants would. In the same observation I referenced above, the very first public remark during the assembly was one of congratulations to the FMLN legislators in attendance, "Thank you for the [water rights] march on Wednesday. We need to put some fear into those on the right!" One might attribute this trend to the fact that most of my observations took place either just before or after the national-level elections in El Salvador, but my participant interviews suggest that this tendency is the rule versus the exception.

Despite the limits of deliberation with a large number of attendees, whether in municipal-wide or neighborhood assemblies, many local officials felt that this forum was the best way to understand the full range of views within the community. As one mayor reflected, "What I want to do, to change, is to have more assemblies, more participation. When I meet with only one ADESCO, just 10 people, sometimes they just tell me the message they want me to hear when it would be better to meet with 100 or 200 people." Others saw assemblies as the best way to hold elected officials accountable, "On certain occasions, not always but in certain cases, we do assemblies. We invite the community here to the municipality, in a couple of cases only four people attend and other times 700 or 300 people, where we tell people the projects we want to complete and who on the [Municipal] Council voted yes or no. […] There are various Council members that reject projects, so we call together the community so that they know who voted for a project to save lives or not."

As hinted at by this last quote, assemblies could be used as a tool for large-scale, participatory conflict resolution. In one case I was told about, for example, an assembly was called so that the Municipal Council could hear feedback about the impact of raising local taxes. Similarly, an assembly was used to decide whether to take out a large municipal loan

and raise the city debt ceiling in another town. In a larger city, an assembly was used to shut down a strip of bars that was attracting crime and disreputable behavior near a city schoolyard. In these cases, dialogue and voting was reportedly used within the assembly to build the case for policy decisions. As such, though not always reaching a high level of deliberation, the public assembly could be a powerful tool within the set of PDD mechanisms in El Salvador. Note again, though, the political implications of PDD usage in this way. When I asked municipal officials to reflect on whether PDD mechanisms such as assemblies were impactful, they would often reference re-election to office as their measure of success.

***Local Development Associations***

ADESCOs, another commonly employed mechanism, were the bedrock of all PDD forums in El Salvador. One public official described the role of ADESCOs in his community as such:

> These organizations at the municipal level help us to understand the needs of their communities; because the leaders are there living in the neighborhood, each one of them brings to the mayor's office the projects or local improvements that are required, like paving roads or upgrading the local school. […] This is our primary interaction with citizens, represented by those involved in the ADESCOs. They prioritize needs and requests and, generally, they look out for the development of their community and the welfare of their population.

Participants, too, backed up this assertion. As one participant shared, "The ADESCO has a lot of impact because the community participates there. We present projects to the community,

and the community participates and say they like it or don't like it. We communicate to them about what is happening. We are the vehicle of communication between the mayor's office and the community." When asked to rank the impact of various forms PDD used in El Salvador, participants would nearly always list ADESCOs at the top, rivaled only by committees within the political party structure.

ADESCOs members met within their neighborhoods either monthly or as needed and often had a rotational audience with the mayor at least once per year. ADESCOs required a minimum of twenty-five community members to officially register as an association, with 8-10 leaders listed as part of the Board of Directors with the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and members. Every year, according to the Municipal Code—or every two years, according to all but one of my interviewees—communities would hold an assembly to vote for who will serve on the ADESCO board. These meetings were sometimes overseen by a municipal official, whose only function on paper was to verify the result and maintain a record of the proceedings. The meeting minutes were then submitted to the municipality and a national registry, alongside their articles of incorporation, to formally register the association nationally. Once registered, the ADESCO had an elevated legal status, which allowed them to request projects and manage budgets from the municipality as well as third parties. There were two predominate ADESCO formats, the more common geographically-based ADESCO and the less common and newer thematic ADESCO organized around a common issue such as 'women' or 'education.' The next paragraphs discuss each type in turn.

Geographically-based ADESCOs were comprised solely of neighbors from one neighborhood, suburb, or rural community. Depending on the community, there was just one

ADESCO per neighborhood or village or multiple ADESCOs by geographic area. Their primary focus was to secure funding for community development projects. As such, these ADESCOs were often better organized in rural communities that tended to lack basic amenities and felt greater urgency around development than their urban counterparts. One municipal official described the difference in this way, "In the rural area they ask for schools, health centers, or more general things, street pavement going into the community. Whereas in the city, people ask for more personal things, that help them get a job, like paving the road right in front of their house." Another official explained:

> ADESCOs are formed in places where there is a prominent level of poverty. […] There they don't even have anything to eat because they just don't, and there the situation is really bad. They lack water, they don't have electricity, the roads are bad. So, there, the municipality needs to go out and install at least basic services, so they don't fall into a deplorable situation. Thus, they value this, they value that they can participate to get something that will solve one of these problems.

While the most common ADESCO format, reported in twenty-five of the twenty-six municipalities I interviewed, the limitations of this geographically-based formation were two-fold. First, the distribution of benefits was uneven between communities. ADESCOs situated in neighborhoods with a higher overall socio-economic class tended to be better educated and organized, therefore securing more projects. Neighborhoods that voted for the local mayor would also receive more benefits. This concentrated resources for development in only certain communities.

Regarding the socio-economic class of a neighborhood, urban versus rural community dynamics came into play. “In a community that’s organized,” one municipal official shared, “it’s easier to develop projects and provide resources.” Organization was not necessarily linked to education level, but leadership with the ability to read and write was essential in a system dependent on written proposals and legal documentation. In communities with high rates of illiteracy, often in rural areas, it could be a challenge to overcome the bureaucratic hurdles associated with making municipal requests or undertaking the research needed to direct the request elsewhere. This challenge was reported in six of my seventy interviews with officials and participants.

A far more frequently reported challenge facing geographically-based ADESCOs, shared by nineteen of thirty-six PDD participants in my interviews, was political favoritism toward neighborhoods known to have voted for the current mayor’s political party. While mayors would never directly say that they prioritized projects for their political allies, participants made dynamic this clear. “It’s a matter of party favoritism. That weighs heavily in this country. So, obviously, if here in our village there are people who are not in favor of the FMLN, which today is in charge of the mayor's office, there are problems.” In this case, the individual I interviewed was reflecting on the difficulty of getting a project approved when geographically-based ADESCO leadership was known to be of the opposing party to the mayor. But the knife cut both ways. As outlined in greater detail by another participant in the same municipality, political alliances helped one ADESCO pull strings to get things done.

> In my own personal case, I am the president of the ADESCO. In the political arena, outside of my community, I work with the party, the FMLN party and the mayor as the top official of this community. I am personally responsible,

> because I am the head of the center, and it is up to me as the head of the center to organize all the political events in which the mayor participates. All political events where there will be a meeting, an open Town Hall, community visits. […] That is one of our principal functions, to be that link with the community. As a community leader, in line with the mayor's office and the party, there's a greater possibility of having direct contact. So, I think that when communities are organized in this way, it becomes easier to solve community problems.

While this example shows a more extreme case of the influence of politics on ADESCOs, given that this individual was both in party leadership and community leadership, this storyline came up in seven other participant interviews. The phenomenon was reported more often in urban or suburban areas, where tribalism by party manifested more directly than in tight-knit rural communities in which neighbors relied on one another for support regardless of party affiliation.

The second limitation of geographically-based ADESCOs was that communities rarely had an opportunity to share experiences across neighborhoods. Without any cross-cutting themes to bring together sports-lovers, women, or environmentalists, most project requests that filtered up to the municipalities through geographically-based ADESCOs were focused on infrastructure versus social programming. Capital versus social projects were coded at a ratio of 2:1 in my interviews. This was because, as one might imagine, infrastructure was more obviously beneficial across stakeholder groups within a geographic area. Uniting public opinion could still be quite challenging, though, as one municipal official explained:

> It is exceedingly difficult when it comes to wanting to unite a community or wanting to unite a neighborhood around a common good, and you cannot. Like I said, there are good things and there are bad things. We want everything to be good, but sometimes we cannot raise people's awareness, and they're going to reprimand us for the very same thing, right? "But you did not bring us food," "You didn't do this, you didn't do that," and it makes us sad. A man once said to us, after we had just paved a new street, "Why did you do the street when I don't have anything to eat? The street? Really? I want food. […] I do not even have a car. How does this help me? That's only good for people who have a car." I said, "But you do not dream of the day you have a car, or maybe your child who may one day have a vehicle, or that it becomes easier to sow your vegetables in the field when the road is good?' […] So, it's quite sad when we cannot make people aware that everything, everything helps.

Infrastructural investments are vital in a country that still struggles with high poverty rates and low levels of development; however, most municipal officials agreed that social programs were central to overcoming key issues such as crime rates, the gender gap, or climate change.

During my time in the field, I had the opportunity to observe two geographically-based ADESCO meetings, one in an urban area and one in a rural area. I was also invited to see one neighborhood ADESCO project in execution. In both cases, the formal ADESCO meetings took place without municipal representatives. The deliberative quality of these spaces was quite high. In the rural ADESCO meeting, one community had been raising funds to build a community cemetery for several years. They had purchased the land for the project but were

now faced with the decision to attempt to raise the funds for all of the building permits and environmental risk assessments for the construction themselves or to donate the land to the municipality which would then take the lead on those processes. The meeting was attended by just under 30 community members, about 50/50 men versus women and skewed toward individuals over age 60. After the ADESCO president shared the details of the two alternative paths forward, a lively debate sparked with community members shouting out their questions, ideas, and hesitations and the ADESCO board and other community members responding to each comment in turn. In the end, the community took a vote by hand, with around 60% of those in attendance opting to donate the land to the municipality. One individual on the board apparently against the outcome told the crowd, "You know full well that people will soon start saying we 'stole' their money for the cemetery. So, you better remember this vote, and tell your friends." The president indicated his agreement with this sentiment. Interactions like this during ADESCO meetings pushed the DQI scores up for these PDD mechanisms in the categories of counterarguments and constructive politics where other PDD processes tend to lose points, resulting in an average score of 11/13. However, given that municipal representatives were not present in these meetings and because there was rarely equality of status and cross-community or political party contact in these spaces, the average CQI score was only 5/8.

Thematic ADESCOs and their less formal counterpart in the form of thematic local committees, while certainly rarer, were mentioned in seventeen (65%) of my municipal interviews. These theme-based ADESCOs took two main forms. The first type involved creating an entity akin to an ADESCO with a focused agenda. The second type involved assigning committee leaders within each ADESCO to work on thematic issues. In this case,

the committees did not have their own formal registration with the municipality, but they could make requests and participate in municipal deliberations and events as representatives of a thematic issue within a neighborhood-based ADESCO. The most frequently noted forms of thematic ADESCOs or committees focused on crime prevention as reported in thirteen municipalities, sports clubs as reported in twelve municipalities, water boards as reported in four municipalities, women as reported in three communities, and disaster prevention and response as reported in three communities. Other examples of thematically-based ADESCOs included youth groups, religious groups, environmental groups, and farmers or other business associations.

The main types of thematically-based ADESCOs or committees were developed in response to national-level laws or initiatives boasting established funding sources. Violence Prevention Committees formed largely in response to the national *Plan El Salvador Seguro*, which was launched in 2015 to reduce crime rates via preventative programming, improvements to the criminal justice system, rehabilitation programming, victim response, and improved institutional efficiency. Sports clubs were often set up as part of the preventative programming suite because they provided a productive pastime for youth. "In the violence prevention pipeline, there is a technician that visits schools to work with the children and adolescents. The aim is to keep them busy—exercising, painting, or playing sports," explained one municipal official. These Violence Prevention Committees brought together community stakeholders across sectors to develop a unified response to crime. This initiative was funded by USAID in communities with the highest crime rates. One small, largely rural municipality I interviewed had jumped on board with a similar mechanism, supported by local NGOs.

Women's participation was a focal point for policy in El Salvador for the past decade. In 2011, El Salvador passed the Law of Equality, Equity, and Eradication of Discrimination against Women (Decreto No. 645), which called upon local governments to create policies to promote women's equality. In three municipalities, my interviewees mentioned the creation of committees to encourage women's participation in policy making specifically. Similarly, Civil Protection Commissions were launched as of 2013 as part of the National Civil Protection, Prevention, and Disaster Mitigation Plan. They were slowly becoming a mandatory thematically-based commission, housed under the umbrella of the neighborhood ADESCO. However, the formalization and registration of these commissions was still substantially underdeveloped, or fully unrealized, in many municipalities. Such commissions were mentioned in only three of my municipal interviews.

These thematic ADESCOs appeared to have two benefits. First, they tended to draw in individuals passionate about the issue at hand. This motivated progress. "We have an association of farmers and ranchers, we have an association of women, we have a youth association, we have an association of evangelical churches; that's how we achieved the goal (to organize all of the municipality). It is not easy to bring alive the various forces in a municipality," one mayor shared. During my fieldwork, several community members reported participation in sports committees, farmer's associations, water boards, or women's groups. One ADESCO president, for example, shared how he started a youth motorcycle club with other community leaders and had solicited support for an upcoming tournament and track modification through the municipality. His excitement and motivation for this project came out immediately upon starting our interview, and his leadership in this club was presented with the same level of importance as his geographically-based ADESCO role.

Water board members, in particular, had to be passionate about the job. These entities were often formed in rural areas to manage water distribution, quality, and billing. Despite the incredible amount of responsibility involved in this role, such that two water board members in one small municipality said they spent 60% of their time focused on tasks of the board, the members were unpaid. When I inquired about what motivated them to serve voluntarily in such a work-intensive, unremunerated role, one participant explained, "It is something that is born, I believe, from the heart. It is of my own will, to bring well-being to the community. I like to participate."

Second, there was a greater level of diversity in terms of education level, life circumstances, and political party affiliation in thematic ADESCOs or committees. The most effective ADESCOs I observed or spoke with, under any administration, were comprised of a diversity of members: the retired businessperson, a stay-at-home mom, a lawyer, a teacher, a farmer, and a construction worker. Amongst them, they could assign the most time-consuming tasks to those with the most 'free time,' while technical work such as writing up petitions or organizing neighbors to help install new drainage systems could be taken on by resident experts. Similarly, ADESCOs with more diverse political party representation were better placed to receive benefits no matter which party controlled the municipal administration. As one ADESCO participant shared, "It's important for us to have relationships with different parties, because if my guy wins instead of theirs, then help comes to the community. If it goes instead to the other guy, they still come out to the community."

However, this was not often how things unfolded in geographically-focused ADESCOs. Often, the workload ended up on one or two capable, wealthy, or well-connected individuals that pulled the weight of the community. Apathy or disinterest in continued

participation was reported in thirteen of my seventy interviews. The shift toward thematic ADESCOs was a response to this as well: “That is why we want to go in the direction of themes, because right now, if we want to address a sports issue, we will look for the president. If we want to address an infrastructure issue, ‘let's find the president.’ If we want to address a woman's issue, ‘let's find the president.’ If we want to address any issue, ‘let's find the president’.” In this community, the local community development official elaborated his plan for a more effective ADESCO system in our interview, one that combined the regular leadership roles alongside thematic committee heads. “That is why we want to shift, so the work is distributed across the collective, not just one leader, but several leaders.”

While in the field I observed two local project-focused committee meetings, one urban and one rural. I also visited two different projects in execution, one by a project-focused committee and the other by a women’s group. Unlike geographic ADESCOs, thematic committees were usually facilitated by municipal representatives and community leadership in tandem. During one project-focused committee observation with plans to install a neighborhood park, the municipal representative in charge welcomed participants to the space saying, “We hope to empower the community through this process, to ensure you all are the decision makers.” The three main parties he called out as stakeholders were the municipality, the community, and the Social Investment Fund for Local Development or the *Fondo de Inversión Social para el Desarrollo Local* (FISDL) which funnels international development funding to projects. ADESCO leaders were identified as important actors, although only two of four ADESCOs in the suburb were represented. Despite the warm welcome, the community itself was not pleased with project progress to date and held the municipality to account. “It has been a year since we last met, and the community has lost hope. Why did the project just

stop?" In response, the municipal officials and FISDL representatives explained why the project had been stalled and proceeded to outline how far they had come with the project plans developed by a third party.

Once the plans had been presented, a debate sparked about elements the community wanted to change. Two different ADESCO leaders, of two separate parties as I eventually learned, then presented counterarguments. One asked that changing rooms be added to the plan, and the other suggested that the entire plan be scrapped. The second participant's justification was sophisticated in that he provided two reasons for his demand: "Speaking for the ADESCO, well just my community, I don't presume to speak for the whole community, we have an issue with black water. This is a serious issue. Every time you come to town; we show up. It's been over a year on this project, and we have other priorities too." Initially, the municipality downgraded both suggestions as they had already invested considerable time to get the plan through the permitting and risk assessment processes. The community pushed back, however, ultimately concluding that it was worth still investing in the project but with the addition of bathrooms to the existing plans at the cost of some gazebos. This decision was made via vote. The diversity of participants and opinions did push all stakeholders to weigh in on mediating proposals, but uninterrupted participation and respect for counterarguments scored lower on the DQI scorecard due to interrupted speech acts and pushback from the municipality on community ideas. The CQI would have been scored higher, but youth group representatives in the space were not treated with equal status. When the youth group president suggested that novel ideas should be open to debate, the ADESCOs shut him down. As such, the average DQI and CQI score for this PDD mechanism was 9/13 and 5/8 respectively.

Ultimately, ADESCOs were the most important of the PDD mechanisms in El Salvador. They were established in 96% of the municipalities I interviewed, and participants reported feeling the most empowered by these spaces versus the others. ADESCOs allowed for a higher level of deliberation than open Town Hall meetings and had the legal legitimacy to petition for projects from the municipality. However, their influence was mediated by the municipal government. While municipal officials indicated that they deferred to communities or made decisions based on urgency or need, participants said these decisions often came down to politics. As one participant described, "If you [INGO] bring a project or social good for an undefined community, it will pass through the government to say where it should be designated. They will send it where there are people who backed their political campaign." This type of narrative was reported by just over 50% of participants I interviewed. Given that the Municipal Councils in El Salvador had the final say over any project's implementation, ADESCOs helped direct resources to community needs by identifying them and submitting petitions. However, they did not give citizens much, if any, control over decision making, and they could be a source of discontent and disillusionment when politics influenced resource distribution.

***Participatory Budgeting and Planning***

Participatory budgeting programs still existed in some communities despite the challenges experienced in the 'second phase' of PDD development in El Salvador, but they had fallen out of favor. In place of annual budgets co-developed with the community, most municipalities had a participatory strategic plan, more commonly referred to as the PEP, that was renewed every few years. This PEP dictated a portion of the city or town's annual

operating budget, and it was the third most frequently cited PDD mechanism in use. As one official described, "With the participatory budget, it's really just that the participatory strategic plan outlines around 70% of the budget. Thus, 70% of our budget is set aside for projects and that part of the budget has been generated from what the community says they need." The PEP was developed in consultation with community members through workshop-style focus groups in which participants, often facilitated by an external consultant, were asked to list areas of need and projects that would address those needs for inclusion in subsequent annual budgets. As described by one official:

> We hire a company that goes out when it is time to do the three-year plan. The plan lasts for whatever period that the mayor has chosen. […] The methodology that the facilitator employed was simple. Each neighborhood would prioritize three projects of however many they requested, the first was the most important and the third the least important. The consultant then put together a report for the city, and that's our strategic plan.

Another municipal official outlined the process in almost the same way for his community:

> This PEP was developed from participation in each of our five neighborhoods, its people, and all the groups. […] We hired a company to go out there, to take the time for us to make a three-year plan, which lasts for the period that the mayor has chosen. The methodology the company followed was simple. They simply prioritize three items of the heap (each neighborhood) requested. So, from the range of projects they requested, they prioritized three: the first most important, the second least important, the third that is. What is in the plan right now is what they prioritized.

The size of strategic planning meetings ranged from forty to over 100 people depending on community size and neighborhood boundaries according to municipal officials. PEP development tended to follow a multi-phase process, involving multiple meetings of constituents from each neighborhood over a period several months, sometimes 3 months other times as many as 6 months. Given the intensive nature of the PEP development process, and its culminating written report, this mechanism was highlighted as one of the most "eye-opening" or "valuable" PDD processes in use. As one mayor stated, "This [PEP] helped us a lot because we could see what people needed, and it was repeated in the polls. […] The biggest problems that people are dealing with at the moment, and about which they write to us, well they criticize us about, are the trash, the streets, and public lighting because they equate streetlamps with safety." Another mayor shared a similar sentiment:

> When I started my campaign, I made my municipal political plan, where I projected an economic plan, a social plan, an education plan, and an environmental plan laying out what I wanted to do. Of course, this was taken from my experience working in the countryside. But while I may see one need for a community, the people of that community may see it another way, right? There are things that coincide, but the PEP provided us support for what we were doing, that our plan was addressing the needs expressed by the population at that time.

The duration of a PEP ranged from three years, within the term of one mayor, up to eight years, in the case of one municipality I visited. This distinction fell to the discretion of the current administration. While it may seem useful to have a long-term strategic plan for

community development, the four PEPs I read were more reductive versus strategic. Rather than projecting a vision or aim for the future that was comprehensive, these plans boasted long lists of project requests, sometimes over twenty-five per neighborhood or village, without attempting to identify cross-cutting themes or broader development goals municipality-wide. This was especially true of consultant-led processes. The one municipal-led process I heard about seemed to have been undertaken with the goal of justifying the mayor's political agenda and the requests being made by residents. The content of the PEP read more as a set of policy proposals rather than a community-generated needs assessment. According to both municipal officials and participants, one project can take multiple years to complete. Thus, in practice, only 1-3 top-priority projects had a possibly of completion given time and funding restraints within the plan's duration.

Based on these accounts, the participatory strategic plan provided citizens with the most control over the decision-making process as compared to other PDD mechanisms in El Salvador. Projects decided upon in these forums were indeed allocated municipal funds for implementation. The PEP also boasted the most structured deliberation process, as it was often led by external trained facilitators. However, the frequency of the plan's renewal, the extent to which each municipality adhered to community interests when budgeting, and community participation ranged widely. Thus, institutional support and execution of this process was felt unevenly from one municipality to the next. Indeed, some municipalities had not bought into the process at all. Two municipalities told me they planned to develop a participatory strategic plan to "comply with law," but neither one followed through on this aim when I reached out a year later. One explicitly stated, "why change a process that already works just fine"? The

other simply stopped taking my calls once I asked to see the PEP elaboration in progress. In the end, I was unable to observe a PEP process in action.

Apparently, I was not the only one that had a tough time getting into a PEP meeting. Even after interviewing thirty-six individuals nation-wide about their participation in PDD mechanisms, only three people knew about the PEP. Furthermore, two of the individuals, though community leaders for nineteen and seventeen years respectively, opted not to participate given the cost and time commitment required. One community member described the situation as such: "Well, they invited us to the strategic plan, right? But […] sometimes your pockets are empty and there is no way to get there. There have been moments when I have not been able to participate because, as I say, 'one moves at one's own cost'." The second individual shared, "I want to say that when they held these meetings I was able to come to a couple, but I explained to the coordinator: 'I cannot be at all of them because when you sent me the meeting invitation, I already had a full agenda'." I question, therefore, the true value of the PEP for the municipality and participants alike even though municipalities reported that this process could influence budgetary decision making.

In addition to these three commonly reported PDD mechanisms and their variants, municipalities reported several other mechanisms they used to engage citizens in decision making. Table 15 below lists the full spectrum of PDD mechanisms that were shared during my interviews with municipal officials. It is important to bear in mind that the table below was developed from an inductive analysis of semi-structured interviews, not deductively or via a survey tool. While I certainly pushed each municipal official to generate an exhaustive list of PDD mechanisms in our conversations, it is quite possible that other municipalities use more

or even different mechanisms than those reported during my fieldwork. As the table shows, some municipal governments employed rather unique PDD processes adapted to their local context. In the following sub-sections, I explain how some Salvadoran municipalities within my sample set were innovating with PDD.

***Table 15: PDD Mechanisms Employed by Municipalities in El Salvador***

| PDD Mechanism | Percent of Municipalities Reporting Use (#) | Field Observations by Author (#) |
|---|---|---|
| Municipal-wide Open Town Hall Meetings or Assemblies | 96% (25) | 2 |
| Neighborhood Local Development Association Meetings | 96% (25) | 2 |
| Participatory Planning | 77% (20)* | 0 |
| Thematic Local Committees (e.g. Women's Committees, Youth Groups, Conflict Prevention Committees, Business Committees) | 65% (17) | 2 |
| Neighborhood-based Open Town Hall Meetings or Assemblies | 62% (16) | 3 |
| Participatory Budgeting | 41% (9) | 0 |
| Civic Engagement Trainings with PDD Components | 36% (8)* | 1 |
| Municipal-wide or Regionally-based Local Development Association Meetings | 15% (4)* | 1 |
| Legislation Consultations | 4% (1) | 1 |
| Referendums | 4% (1) | 0 |

**Additional municipalities spoke of these mechanisms as aspirational next steps*

***Trainings in Citizen Participation***

Eight municipalities shared that they offered training in civic participation or community leadership. Often these trainings were provided to ADESCO Boards of Directors. As one official noted, "We gave courses on how an ADESCO should work, there were seminars. Some leaders came here, and we explained: 'Look, this is what we want. These are the statutes. This is what this means, how they are interpreted'." In other cases, trainings were delivered in the context of preparing to implement a new project. One municipal official I spoke with, who coordinated external funders, indicated:

> [In trainings] the issue of community organization is discussed, how a community must be organized. First there must be an ADESCO, definitely. We talk about it, what roles there are for each person or each institution within the community. Within the community, organizing involves not only an ADESCO. There are churches, there are committees, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Environment, all these institutions make up the entire network of actors who must work in a community.

In just one case, a municipality reported the coordination of broad-based training for community leaders, not necessarily just ADESCO leaders. I was hesitant at first to classify trainings such as these as PDD mechanisms, thinking that they did not really offer spaces for deliberation on policy, but my perspective shifted upon observing the mechanism in action.

In this municipality, the administration had coordinated a community diagnostic and planning process over a series of trainings with the purpose of having a small village population develop and lead a development project to address areas of need. The project was funded by Japan's development agency JICA as a targeted effort to improve the economic conditions of

rural communities in Morazán, a region of the country particularly hard hit by the civil war. Municipal officials facilitated each training workshop. I had the opportunity to ride along with the municipality to the countryside for an observation of two workshops in the six-month series, and the experience was compelling. Men and women from across the village, representing different political parties, came together for four hours during each workshop to listen to a short lecture and then apply new learnings in small discussion groups to determine which projects they wanted to implement in their community. I observed them rank projects across categories such as economy, health, or civic participation by level of urgency, and then use that information to prioritize their project ideas.

For example, on the topic of education, the deliberation involved several justifications and counterarguments, but proceeded in a way that prioritized mutual respect. A young female participant began by making her case that education should be ranked as a high priority. "Do you remember the little girl that graduated at the top of our school's class a few years back? Well, when she went off to university, she couldn't keep up with the other students. Our kids don't learn how to read or write. Even our third graders cannot sign their own names. We send our kids to school, and all they do is sing and dance all day. They aren't really learning." A male participant noted that the teachers were not the only ones to blame. He admitted, "Yeah, I mean our kids sleep all day, and they never listen… but we do have teachers here, we have a school. I don't think we can rank education as the highest priority because we don't want to throw all the fault on the teachers." After a few more minutes of exchange, the group mutually agreed that education should be ranked toward the middle of the priority list, with the justification: "Teachers are not helping our students learn to read. But parents are also not helping the kids with their homework." As this exchange demonstrates, the discussion was

deep and detailed as community members gave specific examples to justify a need and dug into how that need could possibly be addressed. The quality of dialogue and intergroup contact in these training sessions was unparalleled in any of the other processes I observed in the field, with a resultant DQI score of 13/13 and CQI score of 8/8.

***Municipal-wide Development Associations***

My very first successful interview in El Salvador uncovered one of the most promising models for PDD that I encountered in my fieldwork in this case country. In this small community, the municipality had been involved in several early initiatives funded by USAID to establish participatory decision making. Indeed, I sought out this community specifically because it had a detailed track record of PDD implementation in USAID administrative records from the 1990s to the 2000s. On my first of many visits to the municipality, I spoke with an FMLN municipal official largely about her experience with participatory budgeting, but she also touched upon a monthly meeting the administration held with ADESCO leaders from across the municipality. Having not realized at the time how unique this was, I made the rookie-interviewer error of not digging in deeper with my questioning. However, a little over a year later, I returned to speak with the subsequent administration, now led by an ARENA mayor. In most cases an administration change in El Salvador results in a full participatory system change too. However, to my surprise, the topic of these monthly meetings came up again. In this community, the system somehow endured despite making a shift from FMLN to ARENA leadership. Why? I knew enough by that interview to explore the topic in more depth. Apparently, over a decade ago, this community had passed a local ordinance complimentary to the Municipal Code specifically calling for monthly meetings with the mayor in which all

ADESCO presidents had an established seat. Only on my fourth interview in the municipality did I learn the full story:

> [We have] an ordinance, which expresses the political will of the municipality itself. That ordinance, unlike the Municipal Code and the Constitution of the Republic, was not made by politicians. That ordinance was born of the people; it is the people who made it. Now people demand: "Look, that ordinance, they [the municipality] are not in compliance. It says that meetings with leaders should be held periodically to inform us about what the municipality is doing and coordinate decisions of the local government." If we stop doing it, it would upset citizens first, and second it would not be appropriate for the administration because it violates current regulations in the municipality. That's why we keep doing it.

I was invited to attend one of these monthly meetings, and I found it to be more of a hybrid between an open Town Hall meeting and a public audience that involved quite a bit of question-and-answer style deliberation. The most notable dynamic of this meeting, as opposed to other PDD mechanisms in El Salvador, was the prominent level of respectful and critical debate. Other PDD processes facilitated by the mayor rarely involved public exchanges about points of disagreement. Indeed, participants were either silent or deferential in other municipal-wide PDD forums. However, this mayor navigated tough public critiques of her administration and staff and outlined how she would respond on each occasion for fifty minutes of the 1.5-hour meeting.

In one exchange the municipality had sent out a team to fix and install streetlights in various neighborhoods. However, in a few cases, lamps were installed in locations that the ADESCO did not agree to. “As ADESCO leaders, we should really be consulted” complained one participant. The mayor asked, “Did you talk to the person in charge when they came out?” “No,” replied the speaker, “I just wanted to know if you knew what was going on.” “Well, this is the first I am hearing about this, so no. But thank you for reporting it to me, we will look into it,” said the mayor. The ADESCO leaders began to murmur. “We had this issue too,” another leader shouted out. The mayor turned to a team member and whispered an exchange, they then established a new rule, “We will tell the team that they have to have the seal of the ADESCO leader on their paperwork before starting work in each community. I’ll also have them come to the next meeting to explain.” In this case, a problem with municipal services was both raised and resolved.

Even though the meeting took place just after the national elections, not one of the criticisms levied was overtly political. Debate on each topic focused on finding solutions and the ‘common good’ for the community. At the end of the meeting when I asked for volunteers interested in participating in an interview, there was widespread interest and interview sign-up sheets revealed that participants spanned the full political spectrum rather evenly, though most participants declined to declare a party. Ultimately, this unique process scored 10/13 on the DQI and 7/8 on the CQI due to the sophisticated justifications made during the deliberations, how counterarguments were valued and included, and demonstrated equality and respect shown between and across groups. However, three of six participants that I interviewed in this town after the meeting revealed that, despite their efforts to hold the mayor accountable, there was rarely any follow-through. Although participants felt empowered to speak up and make

requests, this PDD mechanism was not seen as contributing positively to community development. One FMLN participant attributed this to political favoritism by the ARENA administration, but two others identifying with either no party or *Nuevas Ideas* explicitly stated that members of all political parties were treated equally.

***Referendum with Dialogue Tables***

In another municipality I interviewed, municipal officials shared about the only recorded use of the local referendum tool across the country. In this case, the mayor decided to tackle a long-term problem with the city's unruly local market, which had gradually expanded over many years to spill out into the main street entering town from the highway. He coordinated a referendum, which would not typically be a deliberative mechanism, but used the vote in favor of action to kick start a dialogue process. to resolve the congested town market problem. Given that this mechanism was rarely employed, although it was listed as a possible PDD option in the Municipal Code, the mayor was criticized heavily at first. However, once the vote showed that there was support for addressing the congestion challenges of the city, he was able to open lines of communication with the key stakeholders necessary to resolve the issue. One of the municipal employees shared, "There was a dialogue process that lasted almost a year and a half. Just talking, talking, and talking constantly. In the end, an agreement was reached among the market leaders that they would transfer their stalls out of the streets. On the day of transfer, people moved on their own. Almost 3500 people, they took down their stalls, and moved to their place in the municipal market. It was a participatory process, a dialogue process. There were no conflicts."

When I later met with the mayor to hear why he opted to use such a unique PDD mechanism, he reflected: “Let's just say that it was the mechanism that best fit the given situation. As in surgery, when you want to treat a problem there are at least four or five surgical techniques. We must choose the one that best suits a patient for that situation. When you have a project that involves that amount of city resources, we have to consult the entire municipality.” Though this participatory process took place several years before I entered the field, I classified this sole instance of a local referendum as a PDD mechanism given its implementation alongside a multiyear dialogue process. What this case represented, more broadly, was how individual mayors and their administrations had substantial scope and flexibility in how they chose to engage with the public to inform policy.

***Legislation Consultations***

In another unique case, a city mayor opted into piloting a new online platform, alongside dialogue groups with relevant local stakeholder groups, to allow citizens to give feedback on new local legislation before it became law. While there were several challenges with its implementation over the 9-month period in which I maintained contact with the municipality, the pilot was successfully launched and completed in spring of 2019. This mechanism made no appearance in the Municipal Code at the time, but the municipal official leading the effort assured me that the process was legitimized under the Public Information Access Law and would eventually be a requirement for all municipalities. In the planning meetings leading up to the first legislative consultation process, the quality of deliberation between community member volunteers that signed up to facilitate dialogue tables and school presentations and the municipal official heading up the effort was quite high. Every detail of

the project was open to discussion, and I observed the community member volunteers shift plans for both the structure and format of the dialogues in real-time.

One element of the deliberation demonstrated best the level of respect and constructive politics in this forum. After spending around thirty minutes of a three-hour session learning about how the new online portal for legislation feedback worked, participants that had signed-up to roll out the initiative at local schools mentioned some key concerns. First from a university professor, "You need to make this part of the registration much clearer. You want them to send it out on Facebook, it won't work like this." The municipal representative replied, "We have that planned already. It will be ready. I'll send you more information by email." From a local NGO representative, "The design of this page is for adults, can we do something in these sessions to make it easier? For a teen, they'll just look at this long document and scroll." The municipal official agreed, "So this is not recommended for anyone under 15." At this point, they realize that they had been scheduled to talk to classes with kids as young as age 12, and they launched into a dialogue about how to meaningfully engage children in a discussion about legislation. The municipal official facilitated an exchange of ideas and took notes on next steps. Ultimately, they selected a video appropriate for the age group to orient the students to the topic and selected a few simple clauses from the proposed ordinance that the younger children could reasonably debate. On the DQI and CQI scorecards, this mechanism scored 13/13 and 6/8 respectively.

***Public Audiences***

In addition to the commonly cited PDD mechanisms and highlighted variations above, municipal officials often referenced one other way in which citizens could influence public

policy: the public audience. Just as with other mechanisms, the structure of the public audience varied from one municipality to the next. Most often, municipalities had one or two days a week in which they were committed to being in-office to receive individuals, groups, or community leaders and address their requests. On a few occasions, mayors employed "open door" policies in which they would offer an audience to any citizen or visitor if they were on site at the municipality that day. Finally, several municipal officials talked about visits they themselves, or their staff of "promoters," would make out in the communities themselves. Sometimes these events were televised or live-streamed on Facebook, and in two cases individuals could call in as well as appear in person. I had the opportunity to observe all three of these forms of public audiences in action across various communities, and I benefited on more than one occasion from public audience days or open-door policies to secure my interviews.

After having observed this practice in action, and much reflection and re-bucketing throughout my analysis, I determined that public audiences cannot really be classified as a PDD mechanism because they lack the critical *deliberative* component *between stakeholders*. While there was certainly discussion and debate between citizens and their elected representatives in these spaces, public audience forums fell back on the age-old *patrón* model of clientelism versus spaces in which citizens were empowered to make decisions for themselves and their communities. In one of my formal observations of a public audience day, I noted that only two of the thirteen visitors whose conversations I overheard in my observation had to do with community-wide requests. Even in these cases, typically only the ADESCO president stopped in. Everyone else came to resolve an individual issue from asking for a job or new roof on their house to getting a permit to take down a tree in the front yard. My

municipal contact for this observation estimated that only 15% of public audience requests concerned more than one party. When asked why it was beneficial to attend a public audience day, one ADESCO president said, "I like to talk to the mayor more than the municipal staff because I can talk to him directly, he's the boss of everything, and he is the one to say, 'get this done please'." In many ways, these spaces seemed to side-step or undermine PDD mechanisms more than support them.

***Open Municipal Council Meetings and Social Media***

Another set of mechanisms often discussed by municipalities were those established solely with the aim of improving municipal transparency, thus neither particularly deliberative nor sometimes even participatory. The types of mechanisms mentioned within this bucket included open or recorded Municipal Council meetings, transparency and accountability offices, and social media pages. In all these spaces, citizens were able to observe and discover more about the work of their local governments. One mayor indicated that citizen participation, community organizing, and transparency are "three themes that are closely related," all of which are found in Article 9 of the Municipal Code. However, transparency mechanisms often did not offer the public an opportunity to participate. Only in the case of social media was there a space to 'comment' or express opinion, but with no guarantee of a response, much less a dialogue. In only one case that I encountered had a transparency and accountability office—in this case a corruption hotline—offered the community member a chance to influence broader municipal policy. In this instance, a gentleman called to complain because he had to visit three different offices to pay one municipal fee, a process which took him several days because he had to work around variable hours of operation across offices. In the end, his complaint resulted

in an administrative policy change because the municipality decided to eliminate a step in the process.

Despite the lack of deliberation, PDD participants suggested that these steps toward greater transparency were valued. When asked how participants knew if the municipality had the funds for a project, community ADESCO leaders mentioned being able to see these types of details online. As one ADESCO secretary noted when I asked her about how she knew if the municipality was telling the truth about budget shortfalls for community projects, she explained: "There is a website where they upload which bonds the [national] government sends to [our city], and where they are being spent and how much money is left. So, there you can see if they are really managing [the budget] well or telling us lies." Municipalities also placed emphasis on the value of transparency, but for a different reason than its inherent value to the public. In one municipality, I had the chance to observe an internal municipal staff meeting about the importance of municipal-wide support for citizen participation. The speaker showed the Municipal Code, pointed to the section outlining various PDD mechanisms a municipality could use, and then went on to read the possible fines associated with lack of transparency and the aim of the municipality to improve its national transparency rating. Transparency mechanisms, which sometimes did overlap with PDD mechanisms, were monitored and evaluated. This meant they were also more highly valued by mayors motivated by getting good marks. As such, while these tools for boosting transparency were not the primary focus of this study, they did underpin the success or failure of PDD in El Salvador.

An overarching take-away from both my interviews and observations in El Salvador is that this gradual, bottom-up implementation of PDD results in a wide variety of approaches to

engaging the public in policy decisions. Each municipal administration is empowered to choose the mechanisms they use, which allows for adaptation to the context of each community. However, this also means that PDD processes can be easily derailed or completely undermined by changes in municipal leadership. "We realized that the prior administration manipulated the assemblies to put in political players […] so we told everyone that we were going to do a new assembly," recounted one official. Another shared: "Here the other big problem we have is that, imagine if I lost the last election, for example. If the mayor of the other party had won, for example, the PEP would be thrown out, they'd put it on a shelf or toss it." While eliminating PDD completely would be politically unwise and likely result in a mayor's unseating in the next election cycle, this shifting landscape upon each administration change could be unsettling and destabilizing for participants. Major shifts in PDD approach between administrations were a more common occurrence under the pre-2015 'winner take all' electoral formula, but even with the introduction of representative Municipal Councils this dynamic continued to be a challenge. Thus, as the next section turns to the impacts of PDD on peace-related political, economic, and social dimensions this important structural factor takes center stage.

### 5d. Impacts: Improving Municipal Trust, Detracting from Negative Peace

#### *Descriptive Statistics*

To set the stage for a deeper analysis on the relationship between participation in PDD and its impact on peacebuilding, it is important to note some key demographic and community characteristics of El Salvador in both 2008 and 2018. These statistics have been developed using AmericasBarometer data from the full nationally representative sample in each year.

Table 16 below provides a quick-glance view of several descriptive statistics described in more detail below. Additional summary statistics of the variables included in my models are presented in Table 17 further below.

***Table 16: AmericasBarometer Control Variable Descriptive Statistics for El Salvador***

| 2008 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **Sample Size (n)** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Expected Sign** |
| **Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Geography- urban or rural hometown | 1549 | | | | | |
| Urban (ur=0)* | | 965 | 62.30% | | | - |
| Rural (ur=1) | | 584 | 37.70% | | | + |
| Community Development Demographics- internet usage | 1543 | | | | | |
| Daily usage (www1 range: 1 everyday - 5 never) | | | | 4.2 | 1.4 | + |
| Community Development Demographics- clean water access | 1549 | | | | | |
| No (r12=0) | | 450 | 29.05% | | | - |
| Yes (r12=1) | | 1099 | 70.95% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- age | 1549 | | | | | |
| Years (q2 range: 18 - 87) | | | | 38.5 | 16.5 | + |
| Individual Demographics- education | 1525 | | | | | |
| Years (ed range: 0 - 18) | | | | 8.4 | 5.3 | + |
| Individual Demographics- gender | 1549 | | | | | |
| Male (sexo=0)* | | 742 | 47.90% | | | - |
| Female (sexo=1) | | 807 | 52.10% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- race | 1549 | | | | | |
| White (etid=1) | | 289 | 18.66% | | | + |
| Mestiza (etid=2)* | | 975 | 62.94% | | | + |
| Indigenous (etid=3) | | 101 | 6.52% | | | - |
| Black/Afro Salvadorian (etid=4) | | 51 | 3.29% | | | - |
| Other (etid=5) | | 49 | 3.16% | | | - |
| "Don't Know" (etid=6) | | 84 | 5.42% | | | |
| Individual Demographics- religion | 1548 | | | | | |
| Catholic (q3=1) | | 833 | 53.81% | | | + |
| Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal (q3=2,5) | | 493 | 31.85% | | | + |
| Other (q3=3,6,7) | | 30 | 1.94% | | | - |
| None (q3=4)* | | 192 | 12.40% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- media usage | 1546 | | | | | |
| Average across four media types (noticias_avg range: 0-3) | | | | 1.39 | 0.595 | - |
| **Theoretical Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Individual Demographics- political party | 1549 | | | | | |
| Right (l1=0)* | | 831 | 53.65% | | | - |
| Left (l1=1) | | 587 | 37.90% | | | + |
| None/NA (vb11=.) | | 131 | 8.46% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- political party | 1549 | | | | | |
| FMLN (vb11=302) | | 367 | 23.69% | | | + |
| ARENA (vb11=301) | | 195 | 12.59% | | | - |
| Other (vb11=303, 304, 305, 306, 311, 377) | | 27 | 1.74% | | | - |
| None/NA (vb11=.)* | | 960 | 61.98% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- income, centered at mean | 1490 | | | | | |
| Monthly Wage Brackets (q10_mean range: 0 - $1441+) † | | | | $145-288 | N/A | + |
| Individual Demographics- particpation in other community groups | 1549 | | | | | |
| Parent associations (cp7_si=1) | | 573 | 36.99% | | | + |
| Women's groups (cp20_si=1) | | 61 | 3.94% | | | + |
| Religious groups (cp6_si=1) | | 795 | 51.32% | | | + |

| 2018 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Sample Size (n) | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | SD | Expected Sign |
| **Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Geography- urban or rural hometown | 1511 | | | | | |
| Urban (ur=0)* | | 946 | 62.61% | | | - |
| Rural (ur=1) | | 565 | 37.39% | | | + |
| Community Development Demographics- internet in home | 1501 | | | | | |
| No (www=0) | | 968 | 64.49% | | | - |
| Yes (www=1) | | 533 | 35.51% | | | + |
| Community Development Demographics- clean water access | 1510 | | | | | |
| No (agua=0) | | 286 | 18.94% | | | - |
| Yes (agua=1) | | 1224 | 81.06% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- age | 1511 | | | | | |
| Years (q2 range: 18 - 87) | | | | 39.9 | 16.6 | + |
| Individual Demographics- education | 1392 | | | | | |
| Years (ed range: 0 - 18) | | | | 9 | 4.6 | + |
| Individual Demographics- gender | 1511 | | | | | |
| Male (sexo=0)* | | 755 | 49.97% | | | - |
| Female (sexo=1) | | 756 | 50.03% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- race | 1511 | | | | | |
| White (etid=1) | | 345 | 22.83% | | | + |
| Mestiza (etid=2)* | | 625 | 41.36% | | | + |
| Indigenous (etid=3) | | 70 | 4.63% | | | - |
| Black/Afro Salvadorian (etid=4) | | 66 | 4.37% | | | - |
| Other (etid=5) | | 179 | 11.85% | | | - |
| "Don't Know" (etid=6) | | 188 | 12.44% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- religion | 1496 | | | | | |
| Catholic (q3=1) | | 697 | 46.59% | | | + |
| Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal (q3=2,5) | | 293 | 19.59% | | | + |
| Other (q3=3,6,7) | | 26 | 1.74% | | | - |
| None (q3=4)* | | 190 | 12.70% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- news engagement frequency | 1497 | | | | | |
| Average across four media types (noticias_avg range: 0-4) | | | | 3.2 | 1.1 | - |
| **Theoretical Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Individual Demographics- political sway | 1511 | | | | | |
| Right (l1=0)* | | 635 | 42.03% | | | - |
| Left (l1=1) | | 714 | 47.25% | | | + |
| None/NA (vb11=.a, .b, .c) | | 162 | 10.72% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- political party | 1511 | | | | | |
| FMLN (vb11=301)* | | 88 | 5.82% | | | + |
| ARENA (vb11=302) | | 147 | 9.73% | | | - |
| Other (vb11=303, 304, 305, 306, 311, 377)* | | 249 | 16.48% | | | - |
| None/NA (vb11=.a, .b, .c) | | 1027 | 67.97% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- income, centered at mean | 1397 | | | | | |
| Monthly Wage Brackets (q10_mean range: 0 - $900+) † | | | | $ 121 - $ 215 | N/A | + |
| Individual Demographics- particpation in other community groups | 1511 | | | | | |
| Parent associations (cp7_si=1) | | 632 | 41.83% | | | + |
| Women's groups (cp20_si=1) | | 75 | 4.96% | | | + |
| Religious groups (cp6_si=1) | | 983 | 65.06% | | | + |

AmericasBarometer survey respondents in 2008 reported an average household income of $145-288 per month, and about a quarter of families received remittances from abroad as part of their monthly income. In 2018, the average income decreased slightly to $121-215 per month. Note, the income bands on the survey changed from 2008 to 2018 to include more bands and decrease the upper threshold. Slightly more women (52%) were included in the 2008

sample than men (48%), but by 2018 the percentage of men versus women was split evenly. This was not a flaw in sample design in 2008; this gender distribution was also present in El Salvador's national census data in 2007, attributed by national statisticians to the considerable number of men that left the country due to war and gang-related violence. Sixty-two percent of survey respondents reported their ethnicity as *mestizo* or Hispanic-white mix, 19% identified as white, and the remaining 18% percent identified as indigenous, other/unknown, afro-Salvadorian, and *mulata* or black-white mix, in order of cumulative percentage in 2008. As of 2018 there was a clear trend away from these ethnic labels, with over 20% reporting as other or "I don't know." The *mestizo* population continued to be the largest at 41%, followed by white at 23%, and indigenous, black, and *mulata* just breaking 10% combined. Regarding community economic development, those living in rural areas were more likely to be without access to clean water for drinking, though 71% and 81% of respondents overall reported having access to a safe water source in 2008 and 2018 respectively. Internet access in one's home was around 30% in 2008, climbing to 36% as of 2018. Overarchingly, there was a clear social shift in the country over this ten-year period, but few if any shifts with regards to economic indicators.

Politically, the country leaned further left- than right- in terms of ideology as of 2008. Those that leaned left outweighed those that leaned right by nine percentage points. This was to be expected just prior to the first election in which the FMLN party won the presidency in 2009. Twenty-four percent reported an affiliation with FMLN, and 13% identified with ARENA. However, may people sat in the middle of the spectrum (32%), and 62% of the sample did not identify with a political party. However, as of 2018, the political scene had shifted significantly. Ideologically, only two percentage points separated those that leaned

toward the left- versus right- with the left-leaning cohort leading popular opinion only slightly, but 37% sitting in the middle of the spectrum. In 2018, 68% of the sample opted not to report a political party. Twelve percent of the population identified with the *Nuevas Ideas* party, which was not an officially registered party but represented those that supported the young, charismatic Nayib Bukele elected to the presidency in 2019. Bukele ended up running under the banner of GANA, which made up just 3% of the electorate. Affiliation with the war-era parties had decreased to 6% and 10% for FMLN and ARENA respectively.

Though most people had not personally experienced a violent attack in the past year in both survey cycles, nearly everyone agreed that crime was a threat to the future of the country in 2008 and 17% of respondents felt insecure in their community as of 2018. Larger cities were seen as more violent than smaller cities, a trend that carried over time. Sixty-two percent of the sample lived in urban areas in both years the data was collected. Notably, the culture of distrust of those outside one's circle of acquaintance was extremely high; 95% of respondents said that "one should be careful when deciding whether to trust others" in 2008. Questions on the topic of crime and violence changed between survey rounds, but the situation did not appear to improve by 2018. Just under 40% of the sample reported that there had been a murder in their community within the last year. Despite these negative perceptions, 82.5% of the population said they are satisfied with their life, and 80% were satisfied with their neighborhood in 2008. Unfortunately, this question was phased out as of 2018 preventing me from providing a comparative statistic over time.

Importantly for this study, PDD participation decreased from 2008 to 2018. In 2008, 33% of individuals in the sample were participating in some form of PDD, but in 2018 only 30% of individuals reported participation. In both years, the largest number of participants

were involved in community improvement committees (25% in 2008 and 26% in 2018) followed by open Town Hall meetings (12% in 2008 and 8% in 2018) and then municipal budgetary decision making (3% in 2008 and 4% in 2018). When in the field, I confirmed that these AmericasBarometer questions trigger affirmative responses from PDD participants involved in ADESCOs in the first case, open Town Hall meetings in the second case, and participatory planning or budgeting in the third case. In 2008, FMLN respondents participated in PDD at a slightly higher rate than ARENA followers, but the difference was not substantial enough to be statistically significant. In 2018, participants spanned all political affiliations, and 38% of both ARENA and FMLN affiliated respondents reported participation. Those reporting GANA, *Nuevas Ideas*, or no party affiliation participated at lower levels than did those that affiliated with the two war-era parties. More men (53%) participated than women (47%) in both years. Those that participated were slightly less educated than those that did not, a statistically significant relationship ($p<.001$). Although over 60% of the population lived in urban areas, only 46% of PDD participants were urban based, which aligns with municipal reports that rural communities participated more actively than their urban counterparts.

***Regression Analysis***

I developed six statistical models to determine the association between PDD participation and peace-related outcome variables. The econometric specification for each model by dependent variable is listed below. Models were either OLS regression or logit, selected depending upon the format of the dependent variable (*=logit). Additional details regarding the model construction and each of the variables operationalized therein can be found

in Chapter 3, Section 3f. Additional summary statistics for my key model variables are included in Table 17 below.

$$Muni\_Confidence_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Econ\_Wellbeing_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Community\_Trust_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Sat\_Democracy_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$* \ Exp\_Violence_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Violence\_Perception_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$Peace\ Index_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDDPart_1 + \beta_2 Community\ Characteristics_2 + \beta_3 Demographics_3 + \beta_4 Polt\_Party_4 + \beta_5 Avg\_Income_5 + \beta_6 Comm\_Groups_6 + \varepsilon$$

*Table 17: AmericasBarometer Model Variable Descriptive Statistics for El Salvador*

| 2008 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **Sample Size (n)** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Expected Sign** |
| **Independent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Participation in PDD (binary version) | 1549 | | | | | |
| Yes (demopart=1) | | 510 | 32.92% | | | + |
| No (demopart=0)* | | 1039 | 67.08% | | | - |
| Participation in PDD (additive version) | 1546 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for three PDD types (demopart_sum ramge: 0-3) | | | | 0.42 | 0.67 | + |
| Participation by PDD mechanism | 1549 | | | | | |
| Town hall meeetings (np1_si=1) | | 185 | 11.94% | | | + |
| community improvement committees (cp8_si=1) | | 415 | 26.79% | | | + |
| participatory budgeting/planning (muni5_si=1) | | 51 | 3.29% | | | + |
| **Dependent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | 1544 | | | | | |
| No Trust (b32=0) | | 180 | 11.66% | | | - |
| Little Trust (b32=1) | | 282 | 18.26% | | | - |
| Some Trust (b32=2) | | 576 | 37.31% | | | + |
| High Trust (b32=3) | | 506 | 32.77% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | 1538 | | | | | |
| Worse (soct2=1) | | 1109 | 72.11% | | | - |
| Neutral (soct2=2) | | 337 | 21.91% | | | - |
| Better (soct2=3) | | 92 | 5.98% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | 1537 | | | | | |
| No trust (it1=0) | | 133 | 8.65% | | | - |
| Little Trust (it1=1) | | 347 | 22.58% | | | - |
| Some Trust (it1=2) | | 511 | 33.25% | | | + |
| High trust (it1=3) | | 546 | 35.52% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | 1518 | | | | | |
| Very unsatisfied (pn4=0) | | 182 | 11.99% | | | - |
| Somewhat unsatisfied (pn4=1) | | 686 | 39.00% | | | - |
| Somewhat satisfied (pn4=2) | | 592 | 45.19% | | | + |
| Very satisfied (pn4=3) | | 58 | 3.82% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of violence in neighborhood | 1542 | | | | | |
| High (vic50=1) | | 391 | 25.36% | | | - |
| Medium (vic50=2) | | 514 | 33.33% | | | - |
| Low (vic50=3) | | 637 | 41.31% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | 1547 | | | | | |
| Yes (vic1=1) | | 294 | 19.00% | | | - |
| No (vic1=0)* | | 1253 | 81.00% | | | + |
| Peace Perception (Overall)- peace perception index | 1517 | | | | | |
| Count (pp_count range: 0-15) | | | | 8.69 | 2.19 | + |
| Percent (pp_percent range: 0-100) | | | | 0.58 | 0.15 | + |

| 2018 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Sample Size (n) | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | SD | Expected Sign |
| **Independent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Participation in PDD (binary version) | 1511 | | | | | |
| Yes (demopart=1) | | 467 | 30.91% | | | + |
| No (demopart=0)* | | 1044 | 69.09% | | | - |
| Participation in PDD (additive version) | 1481 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for three PDD types (demopart_sum ramge: 0-3) | | | | 0.38 | 0.64 | + |
| Participation by PDD mechanism | 1511 | | | | | |
| Town hall meeetings (np1_si=1) | | 123 | 8.14% | | | + |
| community improvement committees (cp8_si=1) | | 392 | 25.94% | | | + |
| participatory budgeting/planning (muni5_si=1) | | 71 | 4.70% | | | + |
| **Dependent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | 1502 | | | | | |
| No Trust (b32=0) | | 145 | 9.65% | | | - |
| Little Trust (b32=1) | | 274 | 18.24% | | | - |
| Some Trust (b32=2) | | 531 | 35.35% | | | + |
| High Trust (b32=3) | | 552 | 36.75% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | 1489 | | | | | |
| Worse (soct2=1) | | 817 | 54.87% | | | - |
| Neutral (soct2=2) | | 576 | 38.68% | | | - |
| Better (soct2=3) | | 96 | 6.45% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | 1456 | | | | | |
| No trust (it1=0) | | 130 | 8.93% | | | - |
| Little Trust (it1=1) | | 488 | 33.52% | | | - |
| Some Trust (it1=2) | | 397 | 27.27% | | | + |
| High trust (it1=3) | | 411 | 28.23% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | 1470 | | | | | |
| Very unsatisfied (pn4=0) | | 194 | 13.20% | | | - |
| Somewhat unsatisfied (pn4=1) | | 738 | 31.16% | | | - |
| Somewhat satisfied (pn4=2) | | 458 | 50.20% | | | + |
| Very satisfied (pn4=3) | | 80 | 5.44% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of violence in neighborhood | 1487 | | | | | |
| Higher (pese1=1) | | 85 | 5.72% | | | - |
| Equal (pese1=2) | | 324 | 21.79% | | | - |
| Lower (pese1=3) | | 1078 | 72.49% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | 1507 | | | | | |
| Yes (vic1=1) | | 311 | 20.64% | | | - |
| No (vic1=0)* | | 1196 | 79.36% | | | + |
| Peace Perception (Overall)- peace perception index | 1416 | | | | | |
| Count (pp_count range: 0-15) | | | | 9.22 | 2.11 | + |
| Percent (pp_percent range: 0-100) | | | | 0.61 | 0.14 | + |

The model results for each dependent variable in 2008 reveal that participation in these processes has a statistically significant ($p<.01$) and positive relationship with trust in municipal government, the political dimension indicator. There is no statistically significant association between PDD participation and economic or social indicators of PDD, however. There is also no association between PDD participation and satisfaction with the democratic system, the 'positive peace' indicator, or the additive 'peace perception index' which aggregates the

indicators across all five dimensions. In a troubling revelation, PDD has a positive statistically significant ($p<.10$) relationship with one's experience with violence, the 'negative' peace indicator, in 2008. Indeed, PDD participation appears to be associated with exacerbated violence levels for the individuals involved. The odds of falling victim to violent crime for PDD participants is 1.34 times that of non-participants controlling for all other demographic and community characteristics in the model. The marginal effect of participation in PDD on personal experience of violence is a .0412 (4.12 percentage points) estimated change in the probability associated with those that participate in PDD calculated at the sample mean of all independent variables in the model using Stata's *mfx* command.

As of 2018, there are some interesting changes. PDD continues to have a positive political effect on trust in municipal government, statistically significant at the $p<.001$ level. I ran a multinomial logit model to double check the finding of the OLS model, and I find that on average, the probability of having a higher level of trust in municipal government increases by over 12 percentage points for those that participate in PDD processes versus those that do not when all other factors are held constant. Political sway is also statistically significant in this model, but the effects are different depending on the party. FMLN affiliates trust municipal government less, whereas ARENA supporters trust municipal government more. In 2018, ARENA controlled over three quarters of municipal administrations, so this is not surprising. What continues to be interesting is that, even controlling for party, PDD participants still trust government more than non-participants. The question asked in the survey relating to economic perceptions changed from 2008 to 2018, but regardless of the wording there is still not a statistically significant association between PDD participation and this dimension of peace. There is also no association with the social dimension indicator. In a promising shift, PDD is

no longer associated at a statistically significant level with direct personal violence. Furthermore, PDD continues to be associated with the 'peace perception index,' now at a lower p-level than in 2008. Evidently, the additive effect of minor differences in perception between those who participate and those that do not in outcomes across all dimensions results in an observable and statistically significant increase in one's overall perception of peace.

Table 18 below shows the coefficients and standard deviations across all OLS models, or odds ratios and standard errors for the one logit model, by independent variable (PDD) and dependent variable (dimensions of peace). The following two tables show the same models run with each type of PDD process as an isolated binary variable. The sample size for the final models included around 1,050 observations in 2008 and 1,300 in 2018 due to missing data points in one or more variables included in the models.

***Table 18: Model Results by Independent and Dependent Variable for El Salvador***

| | **2008 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle** | | **2018 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Independent / Dependent** | PDD Participation (binary) | PDD Participation (additive) | PDD Participation (binary) | PDD Participation (additive) |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | .406*<br>(.116) | .310*<br>(.082) | .440*<br>(.123) | .298*<br>(.089) |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | -.050<br>(.036) | -.024<br>(.026) | .065<br>(.043) | .043<br>(.031) |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | .007<br>(.059) | -.010<br>(-.042) | .082<br>(.067) | .053<br>(.048) |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | -.014<br>(.044) | -.004<br>(.031) | -.027<br>(.050) | -.013<br>(.036) |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | **1.34*****<br>**(.221)** | **1.24*****<br>**(.142)** | **1.10**<br>**(.189)** | **1.03**<br>**(.126)** |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of neighborhood violence | -.015<br>(.048) | -.012<br>(.034) | .068***<br>(.040) | .021<br>(.029) |
| Peace Perception (Overall)- additive peace perception index | .009<br>(.009) | .007<br>(.006) | .029*<br>(.009) | .017**<br>(.007) |

*p<.01, **p<.05, ***p<.10

Bolded results indicate a logit versus OLS model, in which odds ratios and standard errors are reported in place of coefficients and standard deviations

| Dependent \ Independent | 2008 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PDD Participation (binary) | Town Hall Meetings | Community Improvement Committees | Participatory Budgeting/Planning |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | .406*<br>(.116) | .650*<br>(.160) | .243**<br>(.124) | .423<br>(.307) |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | -.050<br>(.036) | -.086***<br>(.050) | .000<br>(.991) | -.023<br>(.095) |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | .007<br>(.059) | -.004<br>(.082) | .022<br>(.063) | -.265***<br>(.156) |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | -.014<br>(.044) | -.141**<br>(.061) | .034<br>(.047) | .251**<br>(.115) |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | **1.34*****<br>**(.221)** | **1.62****<br>**(.347)** | **1.21**<br>**(.212)** | **1.07**<br>**(.456)** |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of neighborhood violence | -.015<br>(.048) | -.103<br>(.068) | -.009<br>(.058) | .260**<br>(.126) |
| Peace Perception (Overall)- additive peace perception index | .009<br>(.009) | -.002<br>(.012) | .011<br>(.010) | .028<br>(.023) |

*p<.01, **p<.05, ***p<.10

Bolded results indicate a logit versus OLS model, in which odds ratios and standard errors are reported in place of coefficients and standard deviations

| Dependent \ Independent | 2018 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PDD Participation (Any) | Town Hall Meetings | Community Improvement Committees | Participatory Budgeting/Planning |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | .440*<br>(.123) | .452**<br>(.196) | .265**<br>(.130) | .565**<br>(.265) |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | .065<br>(.043) | .032<br>(.068) | .060<br>(.045) | .075<br>(.092) |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | .082<br>(.067) | .075<br>(.106) | .060<br>(.071) | .090<br>(.144) |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | -.027<br>(.050) | .005<br>(.079) | .060<br>(.071) | .090<br>(.144) |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | **1.10**<br>**(.189)** | **.700**<br>**(.205)** | **1.26**<br>**(.226)** | **.955**<br>**(.366)** |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of neighborhood violence | .068***<br>(.040) | -.022<br>(.066) | .073<br>(.049) | -.033<br>(.087) |
| Peace Perception (Overall)- additive peace perception index | .029*<br>(.009) | .025***<br>(.015) | .019<br>(.112) | .040**<br>(.021) |

*p<.01, **p<.05, ***p<.10

Bolded results indicate a logit versus OLS model, in which odds ratios and standard errors are reported in place of coefficients and standard deviations

***Qualitative Findings***

The primary quantitative results of the above models indicate that PDD is associated with a higher level of trust in the municipal government, a result that appears to strengthen over time. Individual's experience with incidents of violent crime shift from a negative association to a null association over the same period. The value-add of mixed methods, versus solely quantitative or qualitative methods, is the ability to use one set of data to inform the other. The opportunity to interview thirty-three municipal officials and thirty-six PDD participants provided me with important context and perspectives to gain a deeper understanding of these results through qualitative data. Furthermore, I was able to gain first-hand insights to the promise and shortcomings of El Salvador's participatory deliberative democracy mechanisms through observation of seventeen PDD processes across seven of my sample municipalities. With the 2008 quantitative results in hand as I entered the field, I was surprised to find contradicting evidence for the political and 'negative' peace associations indicated in my early models.

Politically, the quantitative analysis shows that PDD participant trust of local government is higher than non-participants; however, in my interviews political favoritism was reported as a challenge by just over half of those interviewed. Furthermore, six of the thirty-three individuals I interviewed indicated that PDD participation had no effect on their confidence in local government, and six additional individuals reported that PDD participation had degraded their trust in the municipality. Thus, the qualitative data does not fully support the statistical finding for the political dimension. However, upon further quantitative investigation guided by the nuances expressed in my interviews, I discovered that the political dimension association in my models is robust and tied to El Salvador's emphasis on

transparency through PDD forums. Economically, three municipal officials and ten participants shared that they felt PDD was not making an impact on their own lives or communities. Those that did report a connection between PDD and improved community or economic development described the relationship between the two as indirect in that PDD processes improved the overall community's development, a perspective shared by thirty-three informants. Socially, only six PDD participants reported working with other communities to achieve mutually-beneficial goals, even though all but one municipality held city-wide open Town Hall meetings at least annually. Within a neighborhood or village, around a third of participants reported that they made connections with other community members in PDD forums, coordinated community events via their ADESCOs, and maintained friendships with other participants.

With regards to satisfaction with the system of democracy, municipal officials in eleven towns or cities shared how the projects coordinated through PDD processes "changed lives" and "improved the quality of life" for participants and their communities, a perspective relayed in five participant interviews as well. In only one of my interviews did a participant or official suggest that the PDD structure was not of value. Violence against one's person as a PDD participant, though not commonly reported in my interviews, was indeed noted in areas of high crime with depressingly vivid recall. In two cases, mayors reported being unable to enter certain neighborhoods due to gang rivalries. Participants provided three examples of violent threats resulting from their involvement in PDD processes. However, most of the officials I interviewed indicated that they had formed violence prevention committees to improve delinquency. I expand upon this brief overview of my qualitative results and how they serve to further inform and explain my quantitative findings below.

***Political Dimension***

In my observations, I noted that several PDD forums such as open Town Hall meetings and urban ADESCOs appeared to exclude, whether purposefully or simply by chance, individuals that were not of the mayor's political party. Most municipal officials agreed that PDD mechanisms provided more opportunities for communication and collaboration with citizens; however, the majority of participants shared that their relationships with the municipality were tightly entwined in partisan politics. As one official touched upon diplomatically, "The ADESCOs have a political tint. We look out for what they need, solve it, and if so, logically we continue [to be elected] here in the municipality." Seven of the twenty-six officials who had been in office for three or more terms reported that citizens were "happy with the results" enough to "re-elect" the incumbent mayor.

New mayors and their staff indicated that citizen trust generated by PDD was mediated by their ability to complete projects, maintain transparency in decision making and implementation, and heated partisanship during election season. Indeed, in at least three cases, municipal mayors reported frankly that they were unable to push through community projects, even those with clear public support proposed in PDD forums, because they could not get approval in the politically gridlocked Municipal Council. Thus, although political trust appears to be influenced by PDD in El Salvador in my quantitative models, the political structure that is still sharply divided along conflict party lines reportedly had greater impact on government legitimacy with participants in my interviews than PDD. As one of my participant interviewees shared: "Honestly, here power is almost always political; political spaces and business spaces, so to speak, are the ones that take control of everything."

Political partisanship was most frequently reported as a factor in determining which ADESCO projects would be approved and funded, even though ADESCOs are—by law—supposed to be apolitical. In one town it took me several weeks to find an ADESCO leader that was not of the same political party as the mayor. Her description of the challenges she faced in lobbying for beneficial public expenditures or policies for her neighborhood was quite revealing of the extent to which political party affiliation influenced PDD. She explained how she was a staunch supporter of ARENA, and when an FMLN administration won the seat of the mayor, things changed:

> The municipal representative that used to work with me said, "I invited you to a participatory event with the new mayor and you didn't come. So now he [the mayor] is going to restructure the ADESCOs and he told me to ask that you submit a note to renounce your position." "Yes," I told him, '"I can do that, if he doesn't want to work with us, then yes I can." "Yes, because they won the election," he said. The leader of his party! Those are the words he used with me! I went and took the paper and signed it.

In another mid-sized town on the opposite side of the country, a youth participant in a local Town Hall meeting told me that his parents used to run the neighborhood ADESCO "until the leadership changed." Apparently, ARENA supporters had been elected to the Board of the ADESCO, so this FMLN family decided to get things done another way. "They are so arrogant, they never give priority to our needs, they go to all measures to ignore them. So, what I do is just work with the [FMLN] municipality directly, only with them because they are the ones helping." In another right-leaning mid-sized town, I spoke to a group of local community

members that opted out of forming or joining an ADESCO in their village. "Here there is one [an ADESCO], but the problem is that they see everything as political. […] What they should do is during the time of politics come out and put on the party shirt and do politics. But when you are with the people, you take off that party shirt and put on the shirt of the people, you work with the people. You have to know how to differentiate, and most people in those types of committees do not know how to differentiate." When I asked the party affiliation of the other ADESCO, the informant confirmed that they were FMLN supporters.

In yet another small rural community, I sat waiting to meet with the mayor for over two hours listening to citizens of the opposite party—which they stated loudly—complain in the lobby about the unsatisfactory quality of services they were receiving in their neighborhood. The environment was tense, broaching on hostile. As soon as they left, perhaps by coincidence however unlikely, the mayor re-initiated the open audience hours. Every official and staffer in that municipality wore their party emblem on the right pocket of their shirts, further emphasized by baseball caps that also adorned the colors and symbolism of the mayor's party. Upon meeting the mayor, he too was wearing his party colors, albeit in a slightly more professional plaid. When asked how community leaders were selected in this town, he shared, "First, well, they have to sympathize or empathize with me as a public servant, and above all they should also want to work for the municipality." This was the only municipality that did not mention ADESCOs, rather "community leaders" who were hand-picked to serve.

Given that identity politics and favoritism was such a strong theme in my qualitative data, I was not confident in my initial quantitative model results. If I controlled my model somehow for party alignment with the mayor, would the association between PDD participation and trust in municipal government fade? Thus, I devised a test to see if people of

alternative parties to the mayor were being excluded from these spaces. To do this, I added a new variable to the AmericasBarometer dataset in 2008 for mayor's political party, using data from the municipal elections in 2006. I then generated a new binary (0/1) datapoint to identify those whose political party aligned with the mayor of their city and those that did not. As suspected, more PDD participants align with the mayor's party than seen in the population at large, a difference of 6 percentage points. I ran an ANOVA test to conclude that the 6-percentage-point difference is likely true of the population as in the sample ($p<.01$). However, only 19% of those that participate in PDD mechanisms aligned with the party of the mayor in 2008. For the 2018 data, I did not run this test because so few individuals reported identification with one of the two traditional war-era parties.

My line of inquiry then shifted to whether the heightened number of PDD participants aligning in political affiliation with the mayor was mediating the increased level of trust PDD participants have in the municipality. I ran a test with the 2008 data to see if those of an alternative party to that of the mayor also demonstrated higher levels of trust if they participated in PDD. The results confirmed the strong relationship between PDD participation and municipal trust, regardless of alignment with the party of the mayor. If one participates and is of the *same* party as the mayor, his trust level is dramatically higher than those that do not participate, by a jump of 9 percentage points in those that report they are "very confident" in the municipality. If one participates but is of a *different* party to that of the mayor, his trust level is still higher, though only by a jump of 2 percentage points in those that are "very confident" in the municipality. Participation has a positive effect on trust in the municipality, in both groups, affiliated or not with the mayor, at the $p<.05$ level according an ANOVA test on these associations. Even though ARENA and FMLN support drop off substantially at the

individual level within the AmericasBarometer dataset in 2018, 199 of 262 mayors elected to office in 2018 ran as either ARENA (53%) or FMLN (23%). So, in both 2008 and 2018, the majority of those that participate are not, in fact, of the same political party as the mayor.

These additional quantitative tests suggest that, despite the emphasis on political partisanship from my interviews, these processes do not fully exclude those of 'other' parties to that of the mayor. The tests also suggest that the statistically significant and positive relationship between trust in one's municipal government and PDD participation is also a valid and verifiable finding within the general population. Thus, I conclude that introducing PDD in a post-conflict environment with recently implemented decentralization can improve the legitimacy of newly formed municipal institutions. It does not matter which side of the political spectrum the participants are on vis-a-vis the municipal government, the impact of these processes on trust in municipal government is consistently positive, although the effect is greater for those of the same party as the mayor.

Returning to my qualitative data for counter-narratives, I looked for an answer as to why PDD participants of the opposite political party to the local mayor might also exhibit increased levels of trust. The central explanation from my participant interviews is increased transparency, a theme raised in fourteen municipal interviews and ten participant interviews. PDD participants knew quite a bit about the municipality, including justifications about why certain projects were contemplated or completed while others were not. Nearly all PDD participants acknowledged the fact that municipalities were underfunded, a point on which both municipalities and participants were 100% clear and aligned in their accounts of their experience with these processes. Participants also knew far more nuanced points about rules, regulations, and relationships that were holding back their neighborhood's development. This

was quite evident during the observation with the ADESCO president that opened a dialogue about how to proceed with the cemetery project that had come to a halt. While the community had raised funds to buy the plot to extend the cemetery, they did not have the knowledge or funds to pay for all the permits required. They had three possible options: 1) build without the permits and risk getting shut down or fined, 2) raise more money to get the permits done independently, or 3) donate the land to the municipality so that they could complete the permit process at their own cost. The negotiations the ADESCO president undertook with municipal officials to reach this level of understanding took several weeks, but without the elevated legal status of an ADESCO the process may have never moved forward. It is far easier to be critical of local government when one does not know its limitations. It is also more likely that one who is informed will be more confident in municipal works knowing all the steps, processes, and hurdles behind the scenes.

Another contributing factor may be that PDD participation plays a role in holding the municipality accountable, which therefore increases trust. This element was brought out in three municipal and three participant interviews. It was also clear in all five of my open Town Hall meeting observations and one of the project-focused committee observations. Reflecting on one community that I observed in project execution mode, the members of the local project oversight committee—who opted not to form or join the local ADESCO—were in political alignment with the mayor. The affiliation was so strong that at the top of the street an entire wall had been painted with the party emblem; it was the only sign you could see from any one of the houses on the newly-paved street. In my post-observation interviews, I asked why the committee did not formalize and become a registered ADESCO. The first reason provided was that the registration process was too complex, the second reason provided was that an

ADESCO already existed for the community but "it has become politicized." I clarified, "So you mean it is run by the opposite party?" "Yes," the committee member replied. This case revealed that communities of the same party do not necessarily need the ADESCO structure to get their needs met. They could use party favors for that. However, those of the opposite party could fall back on the ADESCO structure and other PDD mechanisms to demand voice and investments in their own community's development. "So, do you like the process of [ADESCO] registration?" I asked one ADESCO leader in an interview, "Of course, it's better because everything is legal." These spaces exist in law, stemming from the war-era, specifically to circumvent the exclusion of dissident voices in decision making.

***Economic Dimension***

Economically, municipal officials and participants in my interviews made an indirect connection between PDD processes and economic improvements because they increase the community's overall level of development. This link was made in fifteen of thirty-seven municipal interviews and seventeen of thirty-six participant interviews. The logic behind this connection was that infrastructural improvements and training programs facilitated through PDD forums led indirectly to improved individual finances, noted in twenty of my participant interviews. By directing municipal resources toward community-identified needs, a function of PDD processes reported in twenty-one of fifty-nine interviews overall, participants could target municipal investments on what mattered most for a community.

When participants equated positive economic outcomes with PDD participation in my interviews, it typically related to improved infrastructure leading to better health or small business environments. In rural communities, a paved street can mean the difference between

life and death. One ADESCO leader in a small rural village told me during his interview that he kept going because he had personally witnessed a neighbor pass away on route to the hospital because of poor road conditions. He shared, “When a patient is in serious condition, many times along the way they get stuck, they die. […] It’s hours to the hospital, it is a long journey that you have to walk. So that's the problem we have, because we don't have a health post. So, well, we will continue working until we get it.” In another case, a municipal official spoke about how adding a bridge to a rural community, divided from the municipal center by a river, directly increased their ability to access markets and earn an income, thus increasing their quality of life. Another official remarked, “What can I say? After not having water, and then to have water. The truth is it’s like a party! It’s a real accomplishment for these communities.” Also, development means business. “If a person who had no electricity, today has electricity […] now that person can start a business, a little store. To sell ice cream. To sell baked chicken, or eggs from the hens. All that benefits.” However, some officials warned that short-term outputs did not always translate into long-term outcomes for communities, especially when the infrastructure was not maintained.

ADESCOs requested infrastructure projects, such as paving roads, building bridges, or constructing new schools, at a ratio of 2:1 compared to social or cultural projects like holding community events, supporting soccer clubs, or training programs. However, social programs too were cited as improving economic well-being in the community. The most obvious economic link with PDD-petitioned social programs took the form of job trainings or workshops. As one participant described, “Two years ago at the start of my term, we petitioned for a workshop on cosmetology and they gave it to us in the ADESCO, so we participated. We wrote up the petition, took it to the municipality, and they sent it to Ciudad Mujer [a women’s

empowerment initiative]. That was how we ended up with the project. When you set out to learn new things, you get experience." Other participants talked about home gardening trainings and other vocational trainings coordinated by way of PDD processes.

The mechanism underlying these impacts is summed up well by one official: "Looking at it from an objective point of view, citizen participation helps us focus on the things that the community needs. That helps us a lot because it has happened where we were going to give them electricity and the community does not want electricity; the community wants drinking water. So, when people are open to citizen participation, they ask for what they need." Community development impacts were also highlighted, particularly with regards to infrastructure projects and community-based education programs.

However, participants in PDD processes often stated definitively, "No, there's no economic benefit. I'm a volunteer." Indeed, three municipal officials and ten participants reported that PDD did not impact on their own lives or communities. Some participants went even further, reporting a net loss in their own financial position because of their participation. One ADESCO leader in a small rural village told me during his interview that he wanted to quit because of the risks and costs of being a community leader. PDD participants usually paid for their own transport to events or meetings with the municipality. Substantial time was invested in coordinating and leading community projects. They did all this without pay. Thus, for many, participation could result in loss of income. Some communities had produced unique solutions to the challenge. As one ADESCO president stated, "From each inhabitant in the community, we ask an economic collaboration so that I can go to the mayor's office, to pay my expenses, to pay for transportation, and so that I can eat. We do a collaboration. It's not much, a dollar per month." However, in all but two of my interviews, I came to understand that

ADESCO leaders bear the brunt of the costs of citizen participation without a clear connection to any personal economic gain. Thus, while indirect benefits to the community and oneself are verifiable benefits of the PDD structure in El Salvador, I was not surprised to see that PDD participant's perception of their own economic well-being was no different than non-participants in my quantitative models.

***Social Dimension***

Improved social cohesion within a neighborhood or village was mentioned by municipal officials and participants in my interviews, usually about forming "friendships," increased "civility" in community interactions, and improved "harmony" between neighbors. This theme emerged in twelve PDD participant interviews and seven municipal interviews. Additionally, ten participants reported that they made connections with neighbors in PDD forums and eleven participants shared that they coordinate community events via their ADESCOs. As one municipal official described, "There are quite a few changes because there are people that did not have conversations with their own families, and in this type of activity they talk and then they have a more fulfilling relationship between neighbors, between families. So, they see each other and that is good because the harmony between a community is… well, it's a social and community harmony."

One participant shared how increased contact helped her better understand the conditions of her neighbors:

> We try to understand the subject, to understand what the problem is that's happening and many times it's like: 'No, that doesn't happen,' because they do not know the subject. It's something that's there but is not seen, it has been

> invisible. So, when a problem is invisible, it is not given much importance. I think that with this [PDD process] what is being highlighted, is we notice that there is a problem, there is a problem that needs to be attacked, that needs to be prevented and if it is not done it will continue and will continue, and grow and grow, and there will be more people affected, more people whose rights are violated. So, I think socially this has a very good impact.

However, some communities in which neighbors were already quite tight-knit did not feel that PDD contributed much to changes in community relations. As another participant asserted, "I think that we've maintained relations."

The relationships and social impacts of PDD described by officials and participants were typically limited to one neighborhood or village versus across neighborhoods or the full municipal population. I did not observe many instances in which participants of multiple communities or political parties deliberated in PDD forums. Indeed, I only saw cross-community and cross-party deliberation in three of my seventeen observations. This is likely because few PDD mechanisms in El Salvador were structured to bring together multiple neighborhood leaders or the public at large in dialogue, the closest of which were public assemblies or Town Hall meetings which were more informative than deliberative in nature. Only six PDD participants reported working with other communities to achieve mutually-beneficial goals, even though all but one municipality held city-wide open Town Hall meetings at least annually. Also, ADESCOs were more often geographically-based (96%) versus thematically-oriented (65%) and therefore did not involve much cross-community or cross-party interaction.

Another probable explanation for the limited social impacts seen in the quantitative models was a generally low level of participation. Increased participation and collaboration amongst community members was regularly referenced as a goal, not yet attained, of PDD forums. Indeed, officials reported a general apathy from community members toward getting involved at all. "Sometimes when we want to organize the ADESCOs, they don't understand that it is about strengthening the community, a more organized community will be able to weather the storm." Another shared, "when the community is organized, they get more projects than one that is not organized. That's because in the one that is not organized… nobody takes the initiative." Participants, too, talked about how they often ended up working alone on ADESCO Boards. As one participant explained, "Many people don't want to sign up to work on an ADESCO, because they don't want the responsibility. That's what comes up first, they don't want to be in charge." Reflecting on the dynamic in her ADESCO, one president shared, "The problem that we have is, look we have twelve people on the Board and a mini-Board in charge that is made up of six people, but of these … well, I think they just soldier on, as I say. They are conspicuously absent. […] I'm alone." This theme, brought up in thirteen interviews, is likely behind the decrease in PDD participation seen in the AmericasBarometer survey data from 2008 to 2018.

***Positive Peace***

Throughout my interviews, I asked PDD participants about how participation made them feel, as a reflection on their satisfaction with the system. In all but one case, municipal officials and participants said that PDD mechanisms should be retained in El Salvador, albeit with twenty-two individuals recommending adjustments. Common themes across both

municipal official and participant interviews were related to improved "quality of life" stemming from PDD projects and individual empowerment.

Projects that reportedly "changed lives" were tied to infrastructure improvements in around three-quarters of my interviews. One municipal official explained this tie quite well:

> If you do an infrastructure project, if you do an electricity project, if you do a water project, if you do a road project, it makes an impact within the community that improves the standard of living. That's why we prioritize these projects. If you go to the river to fetch water, go to the river to wash clothes, how much time do you spend doing that? How many diseases do you have because you are drinking contaminated water? When you have a tap in your house with fresh drinking water, you can spend your time on other things and to improve your well-being.

The frequently referenced link between community development and life quality speaks to how integral development is to 'positive' peace, seeking broader social justice and structural equity. This benefit of PDD participation, not only for the individuals involved but for the community overall, was brought up in sixteen of my fifty-nine interviews.

Additionally, municipal officials coupled PDD with individual and community empowerment. One official made the first link explicit: "Citizen participation for me is important because, and I think that it's for them more than for the municipality, it's important for them to participate. We see it reflected through these ADESCOs, that they, by participating, improve their self-esteem because they see that they are part of the solution to the problems of day-to-day life in the poorest communities in the city." Participants, by and large, talked about

how happy it made them to give back to the community and to have a better understanding of how decisions were being made in the municipality; it made them feel like they had agency. One participant spoke to me about the process she followed to petition the municipality for materials to build and repair houses for impoverished neighbors in her village. When the goal was finally achieved, she shared, "I was happy, very happy, so happy I can't even tell you." Another participant shared, "I feel glad, happy, because I understand a lot." Along a similar vein, one youth participant reflected on how engaging in PDD helped her to grow personally. She explained:

> The best thing for me has been that I have learned, more than anything. I am no longer that shy woman who felt afraid to put myself out there. I felt like that, didn't I? I used to leave and say, "Maybe they won't even listen to me." No, now I've learned so much, even though I'm not well-read, but now I do know I can do it, I can do it. Because I feel like we all have the capacity, but a lot of times we cut ourselves off and say, "Maybe" or "No." Now I feel very happy because I think, "I was able to organize myself."

In summary, both municipal officials and participants felt that PDD was making a positive overall impact on their daily lives and communities by allowing them to contribute to projects for the community while increasing their own capacity.

***Negative Peace***

Despite the statistically significant association between PDD and 'negative' peace found in my quantitative analysis from 2008, I heard only three stories during my fieldwork

about increased levels of personal violence experienced by PDD participants. That said, there were some notable instances in which both mayors and participants said they worried about safety. In one case, I spoke with a mayor in an urban city close to the capital known for high rates of gang violence who reported that he could not even venture into some neighborhoods controlled by the *maras*. Thus, as a logical extension, community leaders involved in PDD also experienced these types of problems. He explained, "We've had a series of difficulties, more in the past than today, where people from one neighborhood could not go to the other neighborhood because of the gangs. We've had great difficulty even with those that aren't gang members. […] The gangs have radicalized such that merely living in one community means you can't pass to another. And there's been a lot of murders due to this situation."

In the second instance, I interviewed an ADESCO president that reported his vice president had once been held at gun point and beaten in an ambush by gang members of a rival community on the way to a public assembly meeting with the mayor. As a result, he would no longer accept responsibility for taking any youth to programming across neighborhood borders. Likewise, this same PDD participant shared with me the immense amount of guilt that he felt because he could not get the municipality to replace a streetlamp lightbulb fast enough. "I told the municipality, 'Look, we have a light out in the sector, please come take a look.' Nothing. Time passed, one month, two months, three months, five months. And then in that same sector on one dark night, there they killed a kid, a student studying in the city. Right in front of there." His eyes filled with tears, "And for that reason, when I see things like that, I get worried. […] And look, they dropped that kid right off in front of where I live, his body there riddled with twelve bullets." He continued to talk about wanting to "throw in the towel" then and there with the ADESCO, and then he opened a plastic bag he had brought to our

interview. Inside was a lightbulb. “I don’t want this to happen again, so that’s why I came today to petition for the lightbulb.” His story was truly harrowing, but it was this very experience that pushed him to keep participating.

The most common narrative with regards to violence was that PDD mechanisms offered several ways of managing delinquency. This theme was reiterated in twenty-eight of my fifty-nine interviews in El Salvador. As the story above indicates, even the simple act of reporting and replacing a burnt-out lightbulb can make an impact. One mayor shared:

> As of the last three months of last year, we have controlled perhaps 80% of the problems we were having with assaults. Today, our town is characterized as a beautiful municipality where harmony amongst the population is very, very good. To give you an example, when I became mayor in 2006, there were still some social problems during our annual festivals in 2007, 2008, and 2009. Our festivals last from 11-14 days, and to ensure there is no crime during that time is a significant task. […] From 2010 to date, these past four years, we’ve not had one murder.

I heard a similar story in another small town. In both cases, community participation efforts were heralded as helping to bring down crime levels by bringing community stakeholders together in Violence Prevention Committees. Thus, despite the evidence of increased personal risk for PDD participants that emerged from the 2008 quantitative data analysis and a minor portion of my qualitative data, there is a strong counter-narrative in support of the role of PDD for ‘negative’ peace today. This is most likely the reason that I find a positive and statistically

significant association, though weak, between PDD participation and lower levels of perceived violence in one's neighborhood in 2018.

### 5e. Conclusion: PDD, Politics, or Just Time for Peace?

PDD in El Salvador has had a positive influence on trust in local government, however, impacts on economic well-being and social influences were muted in my quantitative models. Given that PDD was not integrated into the peace process overtly in El Salvador, municipal officials did not tend to equate PDD with peacebuilding directly. When the effects of PDD were linked to peace-related change across political, social, or economic dimensions, the connection was frequently mediated by macro-level partisan politics. This finding highlights a challenge of PDD implementation from the bottom-up, which is more innovative and contextually appropriate to local realities but also more easily derailed.

Though I rarely asked directly about the civil war or reconciliation in my interviews to maintain my focus on modern-day PDD and its impacts, the few times that it came up in my interviews lead me to believe that PDD has made a discernable impact, however limited it may be, on peace over the long-run. Opening spaces for citizen participation was a definite victory for FMLN in the final years of the war at a macro-level, and the positive effects of participation on trust in the newly-elected municipal governments is certainly laudable at the meso- and micro-levels. One official who said he had served behind the lines during the civil war in a medical evacuation role summed up his view on PDD and its links to the peace process in this way: "If you read the peace accords you will realize, right, that civil society seized strength over the military […] It was strengthened, citizen participation was strengthened. Look, anyone

speaks today, anyone says, anyone asks. Well, I guess that's why citizen participation has improved."

Overarchingly, the biggest challenge to PDD implementation in El Salvador according to my interviewees was partisan politics. The common refrain was that the ADESCOs and other PDD processes had become "politicized." While only two sitting officials shared that their own administrations had contributed to the politicization, many municipal officials pointed the finger at the "last administration." Participants were not discerning; political favoritism was pervasive. This dynamic suggests that, at least in this case, the post-conflict statebuilding agenda that encouraged an enduring power-sharing relationship between ARENA and FMLN has overshadowed the less predominant participatory deliberative democracy agenda. Additionally, officials spoke about the challenge of implementing PDD-generated projects due to insufficient funding. These issues were brought up in eleven municipal and nine participant interviews. This complaint was often accompanied by references or physical demonstrations of the number of petitions received per year in relation to municipal funds available. Without a specific budget designated to PDD implementation, even mayors with the best intentions cannot follow through on policy decision making in participatory forums. These common challenges indicate that PDD processes often fall victim to the two-party political polarization stemming directly from the civil war era and lack strong mechanisms to ensure or reinforce their implementation.

Time more than any other factor appears to have helped with the consolidation of peace, simply by running its course. As one municipal official reflects, "The impact of the war, well, perhaps it remains with the elderly. But the young, those people under 26 or 25 did not live that moment. So, they study those who can study, those who can work do, and we've moved

along because that time has been left behind us." One PDD participant reflects this same sentiment from her own perspective: "I did not live it [the war], but my parents did. They say that they suffered considerably, that it was very ugly how they lived. And now we live much better. In my community, I'd say it's tranquil. We don't have gangs or anything like that here. So, it's greatly improved." Over twenty-five years post-conflict, it is hard to say if things would be all that different without the introduction of PDD. Of all the quotes I collected in the field, there are two that I believe best characterize PDD implementation in El Salvador. The first speaks to how much leverage individual mayors and their political parties hold over the system: "Well the truth is that citizen participation has had its impact because many have organized to solve their problems. […] Citizen participation has always been important, the thing is that it depends on the mentality with which the official comes into office, right? If you want to do it in a participatory way or not, right?" The second highlights how far El Salvador has to go: "Here we are in the process of adapting. I always say, though I could be wrong, 'We have first world laws, but we continue to live as a country in poverty. So, in law, we are rich'."

# CHAPTER 6

# CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATIONS

This dissertation marks the first international comparative case study on the relationship between participatory deliberative democracy and post-conflict peacebuilding. Though the case studies themselves have been explored previously in the literatures on both peacebuilding and PDD, my research question linking these two fields and my comparative, mixed methodology are unique contributions to the scholarly community across public policy and peace studies. The primary aim of the study was to explore PDD as a mechanism to bolster the sustainability of post-conflict peacebuilding to prevent and mitigate a return to violence following civil war. Given the empirical evidence on the failure of peace settlements and the possibility of post-conflict societies backsliding into violence, it is vitally important that innovative approaches be evaluated for areas of impact and optimal contextual and structural factors that may contribute to effective implementation.

In the following section 6a, I compare my two case studies on the implementation of PDD in Central America. Next, in section 6b, I respond to the academic literature on the local turn in peacebuilding and assert that PDD makes up one tool in the kit of hybrid peacebuilding approaches. I then derive a set of policy implications from the comparative findings in section 6c. Tempering my assertions and policy proposals in section 6d, I reflect on the limitations of

the study and suggest future areas of research. I conclude in section 6e with suggestions about the how the lessons learned from these two cases can potentially inform other cases in which PDD implementation is being contemplated during post-conflict peace processes in the future.

### 6a. Comparing Outcomes Across Post-Conflict Contexts

In both Guatemala and El Salvador, the PDD processes implemented in the post-war era have influenced, to varying degrees, 'negative' and 'positive' peace. I also find evidence of PDD's impacts across political, economic, and social domains of peace as outlined in the propositions stemming from literature on other contexts. However, the associations between PDD and the multiple dimensions of peace differed by country as outlined below.

In both countries, PDD mechanisms have increased municipal points of contact with the public and improved transparency about public policies and service delivery as outlined in my qualitative interviews, resulting in statistically significant higher levels of municipal government trust by PDD participants than those that do not participate. As El Salvador introduced PDD earlier than Guatemala, this effect can be seen quantitatively in the analysis of AmericasBarometer data from 2008 as well as 2018. In Guatemala, the introduction and institutionalization of PDD at the beginning of the twentieth century results in a marked increase in trust at a statistically significant level when comparing 2008 and 2018 AmericasBarometer data.

Economic effects measured quantitatively across both contexts are non-existent regardless of the year of analysis. It is likely that the AmericasBarometer question used in this analysis, which asks about one's perception of his or her personal economic well-being as compared to one year prior, does not adequately capture the nuances of how PDD can influence

one's personal and community economic development. Qualitative data in both countries suggests that economic impacts, if any, are indirect for PDD participants. When projects are proposed in PDD forums to improve a community's economic development, individual economic outcomes can also improve. My interviews suggest that a lack of sufficient municipal funding, and thus follow-through on decisions made in PDD forums, often limits the influence of citizen participation on local policy and budgetary decision-making.

Socially, the two cases diverge significantly. While no impact on trust in one's neighbors is evident in El Salvador, there is a positive and statistically significant impact on this social dimension of peace in Guatemala when comparing PDD participants and non-participants, which becomes stronger over time. Likewise, the association between PDD participation and 'positive' peace represented by satisfaction with the democratic system strengthens over time in Guatemala, whereas there is no association in either of the years in El Salvador. My interviews suggest that Guatemala's PDD mechanisms are more robust for peacebuilding than those employed in El Salvador because they encourage cross-community, intergroup contact and devolve greater control over decision making to participants.

One of the most compelling findings in both countries is an association between PDD participation and firsthand experiences with violence in 2008, an effect that becomes null by 2018. While this finding might at first seem troublesome for the utility and promise of PDD in post-conflict contexts, my interviews suggest that PDD spaces have become an avenue for responding to violence within a community even as they expose some participants to increased physical vulnerability. PDD can therefore act as a release valve for participants to engage in local-level policy decisions relevant to addressing violence without resorting to violence themselves.

Despite differences across my case countries in the social and 'positive' peace dimensions, in both countries PDD is not associated with one's overall perception of peace in 2008, but a strong positive association emerges as of 2018. Table 19 below shows how PDD is associated with peace across various dimensions in both Guatemala and El Salvador in years 2008/09 and 2018/19.

***Table 19: Comparative Model Results for Guatemala and El Salvador***

| | Guatemala | | El Salvador | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2008/09 | 2018/19 | 2008/09 | 2018/19 |
| Independent / Dependent | PDD Participation (binary) | PDD Participation (binary) | PDD Participation (binary) | PDD Participation (binary) |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | .160 (.128) | .467* (.116) | .406* (.116) | .440* (.123) |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | -.004 (.039) | .027 (.035) | -.050 (.036) | .065 (.043) |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | .114** (.059) | .158* (.059) | .007 (.059) | .082 (.067) |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | -.062 (.046) | .105** (.051) | -.014 (.044) | -.027 (.050) |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | **1.38*** (.258)** | **1.22 (.191)** | **1.34*** (.221)** | **1.10 (.189)** |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of neighborhood violence | .133** (053) | .031 (.042) | -.015 (.048) | .068*** (.040) |
| Peace Perception (Overall)- additive peace perception index | .016 (.010) | .040* (.009) | .009 (.009) | .029* (.009) |

*p<.01, **p<.05, ***p<.10

Bolded results indicate a logit versus OLS model, in which odds ratios and standard errors are reported in place of coefficients and standard deviations

Despite a similar historical legacy of civil war and cultural context, Guatemala's experience with PDD and its impacts on peace differ from the case of El Salvador. The reason for these differences is linked directly to how PDD was implemented and structured either from the top-down or bottom-up as well as the macro-level legacies of the war-era—an emphasis on institutionalizing citizen participation in Guatemala, and a priority on bringing

the rebels into the political fold via power-sharing in El Salvador. In the following sub-sections, I compare my key findings from Guatemala and El Salvador for each dimension of peace to highlight pivotal lessons learned from these cases.

***Political Dimension***

The political effects of PDD are more consistent and of greater strength in El Salvador than in Guatemala. Even though participants reported several occasions of partisan favoritism within ADESCOs, El Salvador's PDD participants of all political affiliations, regardless of alignment with the party of the mayor, demonstrated a higher level of trust in municipal government than those that did not participate in both 2008 and 2018. As of 2008 in Guatemala, there was no statistically significant relationship between PDD participation and political trust. At that time, the Development Council system had been introduced, but it was in its infancy in terms of implementation. This dynamic shifted as Guatemala's COCODEs and COMUDEs became institutionalized and widely adopted, resulting in a strong positive association with trust of municipal government by 2018.

In both nations, the reason for the positive political effect of PDD on participants was two-fold. First, PDD improved communication between municipal officials and their constituents. As summed up by one official in El Salvador: "The impact it [PDD] generates is that the communities are informed of what the municipality is doing, and the municipality is aware of the needs of the communities. It is very difficult for the municipality to just know. There are 146 villages in our municipality and eighteen neighborhoods in the city itself. How can the municipality know exactly what this community needs, or the needs of this other one? So, the impact is that we now know the needs of these communities." Second, PDD processes

improved accountability through increased transparency. As one Guatemalan participant in an open Municipal Council meeting explained, "If we had forty people, and not just in a meeting but following up and following up, not only would our town, but all of Guatemala, would be different. Just by being present, we bring transparency and witness, in solidarity with Guatemala as a whole."

Despite this common trend in political-dimension outcomes between the two countries, the impact of PDD on political trust in the municipality was not always the same across contexts. In Guatemala, even ten years after the peace accords were signed, the effect was null. This was because Guatemala's system took substantial time to gain its place and acceptance amongst both municipal administrations and participants. El Salvador had a head start by introducing legally-protected PDD spaces in the Municipal Code prior to the end of their civil war. Thus, what peacebuilding practitioners can learn from this comparative finding is that PDD processes from both the top-down and bottom-up take time to have demonstrative effects on political trust. Trust in the system must be earned, and it appears that it took at least ten years to build up that confidence in local government amongst participants in these two post-conflict contexts. This lesson reaffirms the notion that peacebuilding investments, whether through PDD or otherwise, must be thought of as long-term endeavors.

***Economic Dimension***

Economically, both countries showed weak statistically significant relationships, if any, between PDD participation and perceptions of economic well-being amongst citizens. While open Town Hall meetings in both countries demonstrate a slight positive uptick in PDD participant perceptions of economic well-being versus non-participants in El Salvador in 2008

and Guatemala in 2018, the relationship was statistically weak ($p<.10$). This result is tied to poor economic and infrastructural development across the two nations in general. Although my interviews with participants and municipal officials suggest that there is a relationship between PDD and a community's economic development, that relationship is indirect and predicated on the ability of the municipality to follow through on decisions made in participatory and deliberative spaces. Unfortunately, in both countries, municipalities report that they struggle with insufficient funding to be able to invest in community improvements. Furthermore, participants themselves often spend substantial time and personal finances to participate in PDD forums.

Though it may present an increased risk to international donors to invest in a fragile economy and unstable political environment in the wake of civil war, funding for economic development funneled through PDD processes can improve the legitimacy of local government and its spending. Furthermore, PDD forums help to target investments to verified needs of communities under reconstruction. PDD processes also introduce extra layers of bureaucracy, which can help to curb corruption. While PDD is no panacea for addressing individual corrupt government officials, as both seen and heard during my qualitative fieldwork, it can certainly make a difference. Checks and balances, restricted pools of funding for community-based development, and monitoring systems installed in Guatemala and El Salvador, to a lesser extent, improve transparency and help direct resources to where they are needed most.

***Social Dimension***

With regards to social impacts, Guatemala saw substantial and positive gains in the association between PDD participation and trust in one's neighbors from 2008 to 2018. In El

Salvador, the effect was largely null in both years, apart from a slight decrease in trust associated with participatory budgeting and planning in 2008 ($p<.10$). This finding is rooted in how PDD is structured in the two countries.

In Guatemala, participants in the COCODE system attend regular, monthly COMUDE meetings with the municipality and other community stakeholders and leaders. They are prompted to make collective decisions about how municipal funds should be spent in competition and collaboration with individuals from other neighborhoods or villages. Participants I interviewed in the field shared that they built friendships and gained access to new networks in the COMUDE meetings. In these spaces, former conflict parties and victims of the civil war do indeed sit at the same table of debate with, typically, an equal voice and vote. Municipal officials also talked about seeing changes in how indigenous rural and *ladino/mestizo* urban populations interacted. In my observations, I noted that when leaders of different communities banded together to push an agenda, they held incredibly powerful influence over policy and community development decisions.

Alternatively, in El Salvador, PDD mechanisms did not facilitate interactions *between* communities as frequently as they did *within* communities. ADESCO leaders on the neighborhood or village Board of Directors did sometimes interact with other community leadership in public assemblies or open Town Hall meetings, but there was little, if any, deliberation in these spaces. Likewise, only participatory budgeting and planning processes called upon communities to prioritize their needs in a systemic way, and these processes took place on rare occasions such as every three to eight years. As such, PDD participants interacted most often on a one-to-one basis with the municipality to petition for their community projects. While this cadence of PDD interaction did not often lead to overt conflict or debate between

ADESCOs or the communities they represent, it did open up avenues for resentment to build when participants perceived that political favoritism had influenced policy or budgetary decision making. Thus, the social impacts of PDD participation in El Salvador were muted.

Guatemala's PDD system promoted cross-community contact and collaboration, thus aligning much more closely with Allport's (1954) ideal conditions for contact as a means to create affective friendships (Swart et al., 2011). In El Salvador, it was easy to avoid contact with the 'other' by simply setting up a separate ADESCO to bring together those of the same war-era political affiliation. Perhaps this is why El Salvador's municipal officials reported that a clientelist mentality was still quite prominent even though communities were making a marked shift toward mobilization to resolve their own challenges. Though up-and-coming generations of Salvadorans have started to reject the polarity of partisan politics, the possibility of cross-conflict-party contact and relationship building in PDD spaces was overshadowed by politics for over 25 years post-conflict. This finding highlights the importance of structuring PDD in a consistent way across communities with scaffolding points of interaction between cross-community stakeholders up to the national level, only possible with a top-down approach. PDD from the bottom-up, while innovative and locally situated, can certainly improve political trust and even economic outcomes for communities, but largescale social reconciliation following civil war necessitates a more comprehensive approach.

### *Positive Peace*

Ultimately, the combination of political, economic, and social impacts associated with PDD participation reflects on one's level of 'positive' peace. In El Salvador, PDD was not associated with satisfaction with the democratic system in either 2008 or 2018. In Guatemala,

satisfaction with the democratic system in 2008 is not associated with PDD participation, but a statistically significant and positive association develops as of 2018. The reason for this difference in outcomes relates to the way in which PDD was implemented in each country and how conflict parties integrated into the political system in the post-war era.

Meso-level implementation from either the top-down or the bottom-up influences how PDD participants interact as well as the amount of control they have over decision making in PDD forums. Guatemala's top-down PDD implementation has guaranteed a sustained, regular space at the table for citizens to influence decision making. In 100% of the municipalities I visited, they had registered COCODEs and held monthly COMUDE meetings amongst leaders. The national government monitored compliance with participation and transparency laws, and it also set a pool of funding aside for projects only accessed through the Development Council system. In El Salvador, PDD developed and propagated from the bottom-up, and though there were laws compelling municipalities to engage citizens in policy making, it was largely up to the discretion of the local mayor as to how and how often PDD forums would be engaged. Likewise, funding for community development was filtered through municipal administrations before it ever reached participatory processes.

As one of my ADESCO interviewees explained, funding for development is highly politicized in El Salvador because it goes through the municipality. She suggested that an independent body be established to evaluate community needs: "Go, visit the ADESCOs and see the needs, as an NGO. Coming from the outside, where do you see the priority? Where should you invest the projects that you bring, right? Then the system would be apolitical, because [funders] are not involving the mayor's office." I found this fascinating; she basically made an appeal for some form of Guatemala's development funding structure which calls upon

communities to determine where funds should be directed rather than the municipality itself. I must conclude, therefore, that El Salvador's system allows for more innovation, but opens up PDD spaces to the pitfalls of partisan politics. In Guatemala, PDD participants exercise far greater control over decision making.

The post-war political systems in each country also come into play. Guatemala's post-war political party system boasts both numerous and unstable parties, in stark contrast to El Salvador's two-party system still dominated by war-era FMLN and ARENA factions. In the decade preceding the peace agreements in both countries, liberal democracy gained gradual acceptance due to changes in elite strategy and an effort to garner greater appeal for investment by the international community. Peceny & Stanley (2001) reflect on the key reason the two countries diverged in terms of political structure following the civil wars. They share, "Guatemala's civil war ended without the benefit of forceful guarantees or power-sharing arrangements […] In the end the URNG put down its weapons in exchange for government promises to carry out liberal political and institutional reforms" (p. 170). In El Salvador, however, the FMLN became a major player in the political system asserting its place at the table and winning the presidency as of 2009.

Just as there is a protected space for citizens in PDD forums in Guatemala, so too have new laws been instituted allowing many parties to vie for public office. Even before the end of the war, the URNG and the governing party at the time had already greatly dwindled in influence compared to rising power in the private sector, the military, and conservative elites. By the year 2000, the key conflict party actors in the peace negotiation were reduced to a minority power within the new legislature (Peceny & Stanley, 2001), and these competing interests continued to shape the political scene in Guatemala for decades. In Guatemala's 2019

elections, over twenty parties put forth a presidential candidate. Best outlined in the words of Peceny & Stanley (2001): "[Guatemala's case] is in sharp contrast to El Salvador, where the FMLN rebels could compel significant concessions from the government, where ARENA had enough power to implement the accords despite opposition from some quarters, and where ARENA and the FMLN are still dominant actors in the political system" (p. 173). Certainly, in the 2019 presidential election in El Salvador, it was the first time since the war that a third-party candidate succeeded in winning the national executive office. Taken together, these divergent post-war approaches to PDD implementation and marco-level political structures altered the outcomes for 'positive' peace. The approach taken in Guatemala improved 'positive' peace conceptualized as satisfaction with the democratic system through the eyes of PDD participants. Whereas, El Salvador has remained entrenched in war-era partisanship, and PDD participation has had no discernable impact on satisfaction with the democratic system.

***Negative Peace***

The logit models used to measure the relationship between PDD and 'negative' peace turned up an initially strong and adverse relationship across both case countries in the 2008 AmericasBarometer data. However, upon entering the field, I did not encounter many stories from participants or municipalities about increased incidence of violence for those involved in PDD processes. While some notable cases of participants involved in violent episodes stick out amongst my interviews in both Guatemala and El Salvador, the vast majority of those I spoke with reported that PDD was used as a mechanism to combat violence by bringing together community stakeholders to solve problems of unoccupied youth, unemployment, and weak infrastructure associated with poverty and crime.

Given that the data used in this study is cross-sectional, I cannot confirm with certainty the direction of the relationship between PDD participation and experience with violence. In fact, I argue that the relationship has quite possibly changed directions over time. COCODE and ADESCO presidents in both countries sign up for two-year terms in most communities, and many serve in their posts for more than a decade, yet the question related to one's experience with crime in the AmericasBarometer survey is timebound to events within the last year. Thus, the relationship between PDD participation and experience with violence during the 2008 *mano dura* campaigns and before PDD-embedded Violence Prevention Committees were introduced in the mid-2010s, likely indicates that PDD participants were more vulnerable to violent crimes than non-participants at that time. As one municipal official shared about the transition moment between the pre- and post-peace accord system of citizen participation in Guatemala, "Nobody dared to assume this kind of leadership because everything had a cost… everything had a cost. For us here, the cost was in lives—as in many parts of the country—those who assumed those leadership roles ran the risk." Many of the stories I heard related to violence stemming from PDD participation recalled incidents from the early years of implementation.

There are factors, however, that point to the statistically significant relationship identified in 2018 running in the opposite direction. Based on my qualitative interviews from years 2017-2019, I am inclined to believe that many participants now get involved in PDD *in response* to their experience with violent crime to help resolve these issues. This could explain why the association between these two variables fades in my 2018 models. Modern-day PDD participants are using these spaces to eliminate crime in their neighborhoods and villages; as crime decreases, the association between personal experience with violence and participation

also diminishes. The implication of this finding is that there can be an increased physical risk to PDD participants in the early aftermath of civil war. However, the interim increase in risk can be mitigated when PDD spaces integrate forums and programs specifically designed to address community conflicts and violence.

In an article on the relationship between post-conflict violence and democracy, Diamond (2006) sums up the conclusion I draw from this result quite well, "No order, no democracy. Democracy cannot be viable (and neither can it really be meaningful) in a context where violence or the threat of violence is pervasive and suffuses the political calculations and fears of groups and individuals. Thus, the promotion of democracy in post-conflict situations cannot succeed without the rebuilding of order in these contexts, and the tasks of democracy building and of peace implementation are inseparable" (p. 96). He goes on to discuss how post-conflict settings may require an extended period of stabilization before elections are viable. I would argue that the same concept applies to post-conflict PDD. It is important to set up these institutions early on, or even before the civil war comes to an end as was done in El Salvador. It is even more imperative that such institutions be designed with the dynamics of conflict and violence in mind. Violence, including gang-related crime, must be mitigated for the sustainability of the peace process over time. PDD can be an integral part of a post-conflict nation's response to spoilers and those profiting from the post-conflict vacuum of authority by engaging citizens in violence prevention. My findings suggest that these processes can and do help with violence control once they are up and running.

### *Overall Perception of Peace*

With regards to building long-term and sustainable peace, PDD in Guatemala shows more promise overall as a tool for making multi-dimensional gains toward peace. While impacts in El Salvador are seen largely within the political dimension, the effects of PDD participation in Guatemala are demonstrated across political, social, and 'positive' peace dimensions with greater strength over time. That said, the data suggests that long-term implementation of PDD in both Guatemala and El Salvador is associated with promising overall perceptions related to peace, as demonstrated by the statistically significant relationship between PDD participation and the additive 'peace perception index.' These comparative findings suggest that the meso-level structure of PDD mechanisms and the macro-level political context greatly influence the outcomes reported in both countries.

## 6b. Policy Implications

In the field of peace and conflict studies, there is a strong tendency for scholars or practitioners to avoid abstracting lessons learned from highly contextualized case studies for alternative contexts and cases. In this spirit, the policy recommendations stemming from my research in Guatemala and El Salvador should not be construed as 'one size fits all' or 'best practices' that can be plucked from these cases and applied uniformly to other post-conflict nations. Indeed, despite the overlapping history and geography of these two neighboring nations, I would not propose that Guatemala's system be transferred to El Salvador or vice versa even though Guatemala's experience with PDD has resulted in more associated dimensions of peace long-term. Peacebuilding policy and practice must bear in mind how macro-, meso-, and micro-level systems interact. Only with a thorough understanding of such

dynamics should policy makers consider lessons learned from these cases as insights and possible policy implications for PDD implementation in alternative contexts. The divergent results for PDD participation and outcomes at the micro-level are attributed to meso-level PDD design and macro-level factors associated with how peace was negotiated. It all comes down to structure and context, both of which I discuss in greater detail below.

***Structural Factors***

Related to structure, my two case countries show how top-down versus bottom-up PDD structures influence impacts on peace. Guatemala's PDD mechanisms ensure that local leaders interact monthly with the municipality and with each other in COMUDE meetings. This space has been designed so that twenty leaders, selected as representatives of their micro-regions, have time for deliberation and sufficient decision-making power even when additional community representatives are invited to be present. In El Salvador, most municipalities only hold one annual public assembly or open Town Hall meeting with limited opportunity for deliberation because participant numbers tend to be much higher and the nature of the meetings is more informative. It makes sense, therefore, that Guatemalan officials indicate more cross-neighborhood relations and social capital improvements than El Salvador.

The first structural policy implication stemming from this comparative case is that PDD mechanisms should encourage cross-community contact. This is not to say that increasing community contact within a neighborhood or village is not valuable. Indeed, even in the case of Guatemala, COCODEs within each neighborhood were rolled out prior to bringing the leadership of all these groups together in the municipal-wide COMUDE meetings or departmental CODEDE meetings amongst mayors. It is beneficial for participants in these

processes to learn how to deliberate in a 'safe space' amongst those they know well, before they apply their deliberative skills in a potentially more conflictual setting. The challenge with ADESCOs in El Salvador is that they have not yet progressed to cross-community contact in most municipalities, bar one that I encountered during my fieldwork. At some point, most likely around 5-10 years post-conflict, local community members should be encouraged and incentivized to sit at the same table as their former, and possibly current, enemies to engage in dialogue. PDD can provide an appropriate space for this interaction, if it is set up to do so.

Second, PDD processes that truly empower citizens with the agency to make policy and municipal budget decisions have more positive effects on peace. Guatemalan COMUDEs have a greater degree of influence over decision making and a budget set aside specifically to cover projects suggested within that space. El Salvador's ADESCO leaders only have the power to request projects, but they do not participate in prioritizing needs or making the final call on which projects are funded. They also have no protected budget specifically for citizen-requested projects. Thus, it makes sense that Guatemala's PDD processes are reportedly more collaborative while Salvadoran PDD retains a clientelist quality. The fact that Guatemalan PDD participants show a higher level of satisfaction with the democratic system than non-participants speaks to the importance of this structural design feature.

A third structural policy implication stemming from this comparison between PDD in Guatemala versus El Salvador is the importance of striking a balance between decentralization of power to local government and citizen control over policy making. In El Salvador, participatory budgeting appears to have reached the highest rung on Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation and truly Empowered Deliberative Democracy (Fung & Wright, 2001). However, my interviews with municipal officials about this PDD process indicated that the

mechanism undermined an already tenuous and only recently established legitimacy for municipal government. In Guatemala, there was already a strong precedent for devolving some decision-making power to community leaders. Thus, it was not as shocking to introduce a revised form of PDD to the local participatory system. As these two cases demonstrate, it is beneficial to build post-conflict PDD mechanisms upon complementary civil society structures even if the distinction between new and old systems is not entirely clear at the onset. It is also helpful to scale up the Ladder of Citizen Control one rung at a time to avoid a clash of power. If during the war, citizens were at the level of "nonparticipation," as was the case in El Salvador, then they will often not have the capacity or baseline understanding of democratic decision making required to jump immediately to the level of "delegated power" or "citizen control" (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217).

A primary barrier to PDD in Guatemala and El Salvador outlined during interviews with municipal officials and participants was insufficient funding for projects put forth in PDD spaces. In Guatemala, funds were disbursed at the CODEDE level of the Development Council system for community projects decided upon in PDD spaces. Municipalities also received transfers from the national government, collected nationally via taxes, for operating costs such as service delivery and salaries. El Salvador funded municipalities via FODES, which directs nationally collected taxes back to local government. Twenty-five percent of FODES funds were earmarked for municipal operating costs such as building maintenance and employee salaries, the other 75% of FODES funds were to be directed specifically to infrastructure development projects. However, funds were not tied to project proposals stemming from a participatory forum as in Guatemala.

This scenario points to a fourth structural policy implication related to PDD implementation in post-conflict contexts with a decentralization agenda. Even as municipal transfers from the national government in both countries have increased over the years since decentralization began, these small increases have not made a significant impact. In an international aid report on El Salvador released recently by the World Bank (Aguilera, Stanley, Zhang, & Ijjasz-Vasquez, 2017) loan officers share that "municipalities remained highly dependent on fiscal transfers from the national government to cover operational expenses and debt service costs" (p. 1) throughout the loan period, indicating that only 2.3% of municipal revenue is self-sourced or earned income. This municipal financial reality indicates that this issue will not go away any time soon. Thus, in addition to increasing the responsibilities delegated to local government and bolstering capacity in municipalities, sources of funding should also be devolved. This is especially important for reinforcing decisions made with citizen input as participation reportedly drops off when implementation is stalled due to budget shortfalls, as shown by the decrease in El Salvador's PDD participants from 2008 to 2018.

A fifth policy implication builds upon the former. On a local level, one northwestern town in El Salvador developed a solid strategy to deal with funding gaps for community investments. In 1996, a forward-looking administration successfully passed a local business tax law which greatly increased their internal operating budget. The town is now one of the richest municipalities in the nation, and this has had a major impact on community development. In my interview with a municipal official in this town, he boasted that "95% of the rural area has electricity and running water, likewise we have been able to improve the transit system." He continued for several minutes speaking of various municipal programs they were able to administer to improve the community. This town was also one of the highest

ranked municipalities in terms of transparency by El Salvador's Institute of Access to Public Information, an achievement I attribute to their ability to fully staff their offices with qualified professionals. Thus, I recommend that municipalities be guided to raise their own funds to cover PDD projects. However, this is far easier to propose on paper than in practice. Trust must be extant to successfully collect taxes, while taxes can help to ensure funding is available for community-determined developments that improve trust in local government.

In Guatemala a complex bureaucracy has developed, underpinning the Development Council system, which inhibits timely follow-through on implementation of PDD-determined projects. While this has been a reported challenge in El Salvador too, Guatemala's municipalities and PDD participants mentioned this challenge far more frequently. The reason for this commonly reported challenge is that spending through the COCODE system, and indeed spending for community projects in general, has come with an increased need for transparency. There are several layers of permits and studies required for each development project, especially capital projects with potential environmental or ethical impacts. Additionally, Guatemala has set up a public bidding system for government contracts. Given that corruption is a well-known challenge in Guatemala, these checks and balance systems are not necessarily a bad idea. However, they do add time and complexity to the completion of community development projects.

Additional training and communication for COCODE leadership can help to curb the learning curve and set expectations about municipal project timelines. These training spaces can also be helpful for generating dialogue and problem-solving without the pressure of debating specific project proposals and thus generating possible competition between communities. Indeed, in both Guatemala and El Salvador, civic participation training programs

I observed ranked highly on both the DQI and CQI scales. A sixth structural policy implication can be derived from this analysis, suggesting that local, national, and international time and funds be directed toward regular training events either in parallel to or outside PDD forums.

***Contextual Factors***

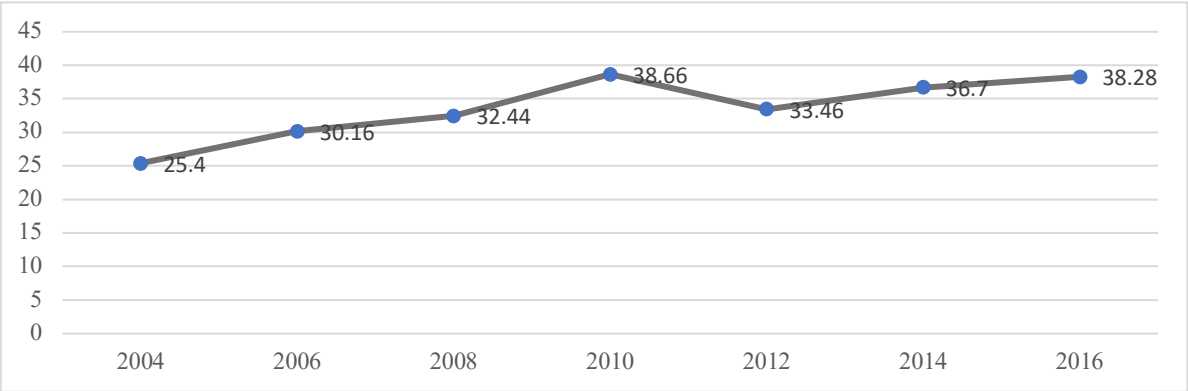
When it comes to macro-level contextual factors, Guatemala and El Salvador differ greatly in the way that public participation versus politics were balanced during the peace processes. In Guatemala, citizen participation processes were a principal component of the peace accords, above and beyond integration of the rebel URNG as a political party. Thus, PDD took center stage as a tool for overcoming the root causes of the conflict and post-conflict challenges that may have plunged the country back into war. A seventh policy implication from this comparative case, this time of a contextual nature, is that including participatory deliberative democracy within the national-level and elite discourses on peace can greatly improve the chances of PDD success over time.

On the other hand, one of the greatest challenges facing PDD processes in El Salvador was partisanship. The reason that this challenge was reported so consistently in my interviews with PDD participants in El Salvador stems from the internal conflict itself and how the integration of the FMLN into the political process was prioritized in the peace agreement. Indeed, PDD was never mentioned in the peace accords and is rarely thought of in modern-day El Salvador as having anything to do with the peace process. There are two lessons from this case, however, that offer hopeful signs and policy implications on this frontier. First, time has eventually chipped away at the conflict parties' dominance and diminished the hold of the war-era political parties on national political power. Second, the local electoral formula was

recently reformed to encourage greater deliberation amongst politicians themselves, a policy prescription that is worth further discussion and exploration as a political peacebuilding tool in other post-conflict contexts, though it has not been the focus of my dissertation research.

During the longest stretch of my fieldwork in El Salvador, I had the opportunity to observe the first national election since the civil war in which a third party, neither ARENA nor FMLN, would win the executive office. Though many were surprised by the land-slide victory of now President Nayib Bukele running under the banner of the *Nuevas Ideas* and GANA parties, the popularity of the two war-era political parties has been on the decline for years. Using the AmericasBarometer data on political sway, I found that a little over a decade after the Chapultepec Peace Agreement was signed in 2004, forty-three percent (43%) of the nationally representative sample still identified strongly with either the far-right or far-left and a quarter (25%) of the population self-identified with the 'middle' of the political spectrum. By 2016, only a quarter (25%) of the population identified strongly as either far-right or far-left on the political spectrum, and the middle had grown to thirty-eight percent (38%) of the population. Figure 2 below demonstrates that El Salvador's population shows an overall trend toward the 'middle' in terms of political ideology over time.

***Figure 2: Percent of the Salvadoran AmericasBarometer Sample in the 'Middle' of the Political Spectrum from 2004-2016***



In a separate investigation I undertook, also using AmericasBarometer data, I find that this shift toward the 'middle' of the political spectrum is strongly correlated (r = -.93) with the gradual decline in the percent of the population that remembers the civil war. I believe that this trend and its strong correlation with declining memory of the war highlights some of the challenges that political power-sharing presents for long-term post-conflict peacebuilding.

Power-sharing, or consociationalism (Lijphart, 1969, 1977), has long been promoted as a policy approach to conflict management in intrastate conflicts by incorporating the primary warring parties into the post-conflict political system. Early studies on the effects of power-sharing agreements focused on political or democratic stability (Lijphart, 1969), but more recent research has explored the impacts of power-sharing on the durability of peace (Cammett & Malesky, 2012; Hartzell & Hoodie, 2003; Mukherjee, 2006; Ottmann & Vüllers, 2015; D. Rothchild & Roeder, 2005; Wantchekon, 2000). While many scholars find that power-sharing can aid peaceful transitions to democracy (Hartzell & Hoodie, 2003; Wantchekon, 2000), others contend that power-sharing can result in extremist forms of exclusion and further factionalism (Horowitz, 1993), especially in the long-term (D. Rothchild & Roeder, 2005). Rothchild & Roeder (2005) argue that "after intense conflicts [power-sharing institutions] typically have a set of unintended but perverse consequences. They empower ethnic elites from previously warring groups, create incentives for these elites to press radical demands once the peace is in place, and lower the costs for these elites to escalate conflict in ways that threaten democracy and peace" (p. 29). In El Salvador, power-sharing may have brought the conflict between the government and rebels to an end, but it has also entrenched modern politics in war-era ideological divides. Only with time and the relative increase of younger populations with little to no memory of the war has the legacy of war-time politics started to break down

in El Salvador. Thus, an eighth policy implication of this study is that the enduring effects of political power-sharing agreements on efforts such as decentralization and PDD must be weighed against their utility in negotiating an end to direct conflict.

Another related issue in El Salvador is that the country had a 'winner take all' electoral formula until 2015. This meant that the political party securing the most votes in any one municipality would then hold all seats on the Municipal Council. So, while representative politics was employed at the national level to help bring the war to an end, this was not the case at the local level until recently. This local-level election policy closed the door on meaningful cross-conflict-party interactions for both municipal politicians and citizens. Without any ideological balance within municipal administrations for over twenty years post-conflict, it was relatively easy to exclude individuals of alternative political parties (and thus the opposing war-era conflict party) from the policy-making arena. 'Plural Municipal Councils,' as they are called in El Salvador today, have given proportional representation in the Municipal Council to all parties that receive a vote in local elections. This also means that PDD participants, even those in the political minority, now have officials on the Municipal Council to ask for support of their projects even if they are not aligned with the mayor. This new electoral formula increases the potential of breaking down entrenched war-era partisanship divides by giving citizens of all political stripes a real voice in PDD spaces, and more broadly, in the future. A ninth policy implication stemming from this contextual factor is that all spaces for public deliberation and decision making must be modeled in a way that is conducive to cross-party discourse. The former 'winner take all' electoral formula and subsequent administration composition cut out deliberation at the meso-level and consequently undermined both macro-level power-sharing efforts and micro-level PDD processes.

When we compare PDD as implemented in El Salvador versus Guatemala, the structural and contextual factors in the latter case have had more success than the former in helping to advance multiple dimensions of peace over time. However, this does not mean that Guatemala's system should be duplicated in every post-conflict context. There are many factors at play in post-conflict societies, from different forms of traditional mechanisms used for community decision making to the key negotiation points within a peace agreement. The structure of PDD must be designed in each case to respond to these contextual factors, and it must be acknowledged that short-term impacts are likely to be detrimental to 'negative' peace even if they support 'positive' peace in the long-run.

### 6c. Responding to the Literature

Reflecting on this comparative case study of PDD in Guatemala and El Salvador illuminates several of the key inflection points and lessons learned by scholars writing within peacebuilding literature. As I set out to explore the central research question for this study, I situated the premise of this dissertation within the context of the liberal versus local peacebuilding debate. As this debate has evolved over time, so too have the real effects of local PDD evolved in my case countries. This study's contribution to this debate and the wider literature on peacebuilding is that it takes the long-view. It highlights two divergent ways that internationally supported peacebuilding, national political systems, and local-level PDD processes have shaped peace in Central America. In this section, I embed my research in the literature by detailing how the debate has evolved over time and underscoring how the results of this study reflect a present-day consensus that there is no one liberal or local approach to building peace.

Though the role of local actors was recognized as an important component of peacebuilding in the late 1990s (Lederach, 1995), studies on the effects of post-Cold War peacebuilding approaches and the role of civil society were only just emerging at that time. Critical analysis on the liberal peace and empirical scholarship on the role of civil society and local leadership in the peace process came to the forefront of the peacebuilding literature in the mid-2000s. In the academic journal *Conflict, Security & Development*, a special issue was released in 2006 to explore "some of the assumptions and practices of institutions and agencies that promote the liberal peace in the context of the post-Cold War phase of globalization" (Turner & Pugh, 2006, p. 471). The editors of that edition concluded from the articles therein that "peacebuilding was failing civil society" (Turner & Pugh, 2006, p. 472). Also, in 2006, the World Bank released a report outlining the functions of civil society in building peace and called for additional evaluation and research on the topic. They framed the challenge of discerning civil society's influence on peace processes as such:

> Civil society has a unique potential and can make many positive contributions to peacebuilding and conflict mitigation. […] Despite many successful initiatives on the ground, however, civil society should not be considered a panacea. The existence of civil society per se cannot be equated with the existence of peacebuilding actors. Similarly, civil society strengthening and support does not automatically contribute to peacebuilding. While civil society organizations are frequently actors for peace, they equally have the potential to become actors of violence. […] Without greater clarity on objectives and intended impacts, and without addressing institutional constraints and

> distortions, activities run the risk of being well-intentioned but unlikely to achieve sustainable results (World Bank, 2006, p. v).

My own interest in peacebuilding sparked in 2005 as the UN launched the Peacebuilding Commission. I started my master's program in Peace Studies at the University of Bradford in the UK to delve deeper into the topic in 2008. By then a chorus of voices had joined in calling out the liberal peace for its failures and shortcomings. Some of my favorite article titles from this era include: "The Tragedy of Liberal Diplomacy: Democratization, Intervention, and Statebuilding" (Jahn, 2007c, 2007b), "On the crisis of the liberal peace" (N. Cooper, 2007), and "Myth or Reality: Opposing Views on the Liberal Peace and Post-War Reconstruction" (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2007).

Nearly a decade later, the tide had shifted, and a more tempered conceptualization of both top-down liberal peace and bottom-up local peace had emerged. Several scholars had started a counter-discourse to highlight that the liberal project has taken on many forms and been applied in a diversity of ways, often specifically tailored to a local context during peace agreement negotiations (Selby, 2013). Central critical theorists within the debate such as Oliver Richmond and Roger Mac Ginty had started writing about 'hybrid peace' and the variety of ways that external and internal actors within peace processes mix and combine their influence and strategies in pursuit of peace (Mac Ginty, 2010; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2015; Richmond, 2009; Richmond & Mac Ginty, 2014). The critique became more refined as well, as it challenged peacebuilders to reconsider the concept of 'local' altogether as "de-territorialized, networked, and constituted by people and activity rather than place" (Mac Ginty, 2015, p. 841)

and focus on individual's 'everyday peace' (Firchow & Ginty, 2017; Mac Ginty, 2014; Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016).

Just as the peacebuilding literature has come to temper its criticism of the liberal peace and enthusiastic embrace of all things local, El Salvador and Guatemala have played out this debate on-the-ground and in real-time. Both countries were looped into the liberal project through peace agreements negotiated via the UN and overseen by subsequent international military observer missions. In these two cases, liberal peace served its typical function, that which "reinforces the position of power-holders (national, regional, international elites and their private-sector allies)" and "uses statebuilding as its principal vehicle of reform, promoting Western-style governance and electoral processes" (Mac Ginty, 2010, p. 394-395). However, the elite-led negotiations opted to engage and involve, to varying degrees, local leaders and civil society. In Guatemala, the liberal peace directly called for local participation and set up laws and systems to ensure its implementation; whereas in El Salvador, local participation was not a central component in the peace accords and thus developed municipality by municipality, intergovernmental intervention by nongovernmental intervention, over time and with little oversight. In other words, each peace process demonstrates a different type of 'hybrid peace.'

Looking to Mac Ginty's (2010) conceptualization of the hybridization of peace processes, Guatemala demonstrates the "compliance powers of the liberal peace" in which "promoters of the liberal peace are able to mobilize a formidable suite of compliance mechanisms to encourage conformity and to discipline attempts at deviance" (p. 398). He goes on to explain how systems of compliance typically filter down from international to national and then to local, often via the funders of peace processes and their elite local agents. Certainly, in the case of Guatemala, we can see this top-down compliance piece in action even today as

municipal funding is released by the national government and international donors based on adherence to the established laws and bureaucratic norms of the COCODE system. Yet, we might also see the case of Guatemala as exemplary of the "the ability of local actors, structures, and networks to present and maintain alternative forms of peace and peacemaking" that "draw on traditional, indigenous, or customary norms and practices" (Mac Ginty, 2010, p. 403) because of how closely the COCODEs mirrored the structure and function of traditional community mayors in (generally) indigenous communities. In combination, top-down compliance structures paired with a PDD mechanism echoing tradition have resulted in an incredibly powerful platform for citizens to influence municipal decision making with promising long-term effects on peace.

In the case of El Salvador, we can see an alternative approach, one which Mac Ginty (2010, p. 400) might classify as the "incentivizing powers of the liberal peace" at work. While the UN mission in El Salvador certainly helped to enforce compliance around elections and demilitarization, there was a far more carrot-versus-stick approach to promoting decentralization and local participation in public policy making. Recall that PDD evolved through several iterations on each mechanism, often with the support of international NGOs or aid (e.g. USAID). Thus, cooperation with PDD initiatives under the umbrella of the liberal peace in El Salvador can be characterized as "a route through which to access resources, whether power or legitimacy or livelihood" with the caveat that "'incentives' and rewards are [often] illusory and unevenly shared" (Mac Ginty, 2010, p. 401). Indeed, those that signed-up to implement early prototypes of PDD such as open Town Hall meetings in the 1990s, participatory budgeting in the 2000s, and participatory planning in the 2010s have reaped the reward of gaining access to small pools of money to support the processes and assist with

implementation follow-through. However, these systems and the incentives driving their development have not withstood the test of time as participation has decreased and initial promising outcomes have faded away.

Embracing hybridity versus a binary view of peacebuilding provides a solid framework to explain how top-down and bottom-up forces have shaped PDD processes, and ultimately peace, in both Guatemala and El Salvador. In response to my key research question—*How, if at all, does the implementation of participatory deliberative democracy in post-conflict contexts impact peacebuilding?*—my research offers two divergent and context-specific responses. The structure of PDD and the context in which it is implemented mediate the effects of PDD on political, economic, social, 'positive,' and 'negative' dimensions of peace in Guatemala and El Salvador. The top-down approach as seen in Guatemala took longer to have an effect, but the modern Development Council system is remarkedly robust and influential on political, social, and 'positive' dimensions of peace as Guatemala verges on the 25th anniversary of its peace agreement. El Salvador's bottom-up approach has elicited a wide variety of experimental PDD mechanisms over nearly thirty years post-conflict, but fewer institutionalized processes, incentives, or monitoring systems result in muted effects across all but the political dimension of peace. Yet, despite the divergence of PDD impacts in these two cases, the overall result is similar*:* PDD does indeed have a positive and measurable influence on long-term, sustainable peace. I therefore submit to the scholarly community that, regardless of the nature of hybrid peacebuilding, PDD can play a beneficial role in peace processes.

### 6d. Study Limitations

I addressed the topic of research design limitations in Chapter 3 for each of the methods I employ in this study, but I return to this topic again as I conclude to emphasize the

predominate ways this study is limited by my approach and illuminate possible additional avenues of exploration for future researchers. As hinted at in Chapter 3 and the section above, this analysis is limited by two key factors. First, my researcher identity influenced my entrée to the field, the data I was able to collect, and my interpretation of that data. Second, though my research design includes various levels of analysis and research methods to ensure a thorough investigation of PDD implementation and its impacts in Guatemala and El Salvador, the data used is itself limited. The quantitative data is limited as it has been collected by a secondary party and is cross-sectional in nature, making comparisons over time both challenging and unfulfilling as compared original longitudinal data. The qualitative data used in the study is limited by the time I was able to commit to my fieldwork, the locations I was able to access and study in greater depth, and the individuals I was able to interview. Third, my research design as a mixed methods study does not sit squarely within any one epistemology. The mixed methodology employed lends strength to my analysis and conclusions drawn therein, but it may not appeal to researchers that prefer either a strictly positivist, interpretivist, or critical approach. I discuss each of these limitations in turn in the paragraphs to follow.

First, regarding my identity, I am a Western female working toward a doctoral degree, factors which inevitably come into play in international research. These intersectional identities greatly influenced by ability to gain entrée in the field. Throughout my fieldwork, I was regularly reminded by passers-by and my interview participants of my 'outsider' status as a blond-haired, blue-eyed, white, US-American entering Central America. Being a *gringa,* white female foreigner, carries with it both positive and negative connotations in Latin America. On the one hand, I benefited from stereotypes related to my assumed level of

expertise, socio-economic status, or possible association with international development funders in the US. On the other hand, I encountered distrust related to rising tensions between the US and Central American nations surrounding the migrant caravans during my fieldwork as well as the historical role the US played in both the Guatemalan and Salvadorian civil wars, intervening on the side of the authoritarian government against the leftist rebels.

Whether or not I agree with modern US policies on migration or historical intervention in these countries' civil wars, I was seen by default as a representative of the US in all my interactions abroad. Indeed, several interviewees referenced having recently spoken with my *compatriota*, countryperson, the Ambassador of the United States during my visits, as if we knew one another. While I made it clear that I did not work for the US government, conversation often circled back to the work of USAID, the migrant caravans heading to the US border, or other US-centric themes. My approach to navigating these passing comments, and at times in-depth conversations, was to make light of the association, saying – "Goodness, the Ambassador is going think I am following her!" – or to ask questions to show my naïveté about the relationships each community had with US development programs or funding structures.

As a female researcher, I also needed a strategy to navigate Latin American *machismo,* the male dominant social hierarchy extant across the region. Thus, I often played the role of "honorary male" when conducting my research with formal entities (Warren, 2001, pp. 214-216). I made conscious choices about how to present myself to gain credibility in a largely masculine field site both in the way I chose to dress, often in business casual pant-suits, and how I held myself in initial interactions. This approach, however, was not always well received by PDD participants, particularly female participants in largely indigenous communities in Guatemala. When working with individuals of this demographic, I would often highlight my

identity as a mother to open the door to conversation. Some PDD participants even requested that I bring my infant daughter along to our interviews. As these two approaches demonstrate, I employed various facets of my identity to gain entrée to the field.

While I made various efforts to avoid clashes of my identities in the field, these same factors contributed to the extraordinary ease I experienced gaining entrée to the field and whilst conducting interviews. I was never denied an audience with a municipal official during my visit(s), and aside from some awkward bilingual blunders, conversation flow was easy, respectful, and uninhibited. Mayors were particularly forthcoming with their trials, tribulations, and frustrations related to PDD, the office itself, national politics, and citizen engagement. Only on one occasion did I encounter a PDD participant that did not want to talk about their experiences with me. In this case, the individual was interested in participating, but he was not comfortable signing the consent form for the interview because he could not read, so I discontinued the engagement.

Another element of my identity, this time as both a researcher and an international public policy practitioner, influenced my ability to collect data and my interpretation of that data. As a professional, I have evaluated municipal PDD programs in the US, worked as a Peace Corps volunteer focused on community economic development and citizen participation in South America, and facilitated cross-sectarian dialogues and trainings in a post-conflict reconciliation center in Northern Ireland. My practitioner identity allowed me to navigate municipal relationships and bureaucratic hurdles with relative ease. I was no stranger to the process of petitioning officials for interviews and negotiating my continued engagement with a community through observations and participant interviews. However, my interest in this project and my interpretation of the empirical evidence therein was equally influenced by my

practitioner perspective and experiences. While I have hesitations about international development and peace work in practice, I believe that conscientious implementation of PDD *should* have a positive impact on peace across multiple dimensions. Thus, during the collection and analysis of my data for this study, I often felt compelled to emphasize the possible negative impacts of PDD or temper my endorsement of certain PDD structures to avoid overstating a result that I am naturally drawn to and hope is true.

Second, related to the limitations of my data, both my quantitative and qualitative datasets are inherently imperfect. Within my quantitative model, the variables selected for operationalization are not perfect measures of the peace-related dimensions in my conceptual framework and the data is not optimally structured for multi-year comparisons. Just as my quantitative data has its limitations, so too does my qualitative data. These limitations are three-fold. Primarily, my interviews and observations were conducted over a limited period and often during election season. Timing influenced individual perspectives on PDD and its effects as well as the discourse in PDD forums I was able to observe. Secondly, I did not visit every single municipality across Guatemala and El Salvador for this study, and I spent quality time in only a handful of sites. Thus, I cannot state with confidence that the trends and behaviors I noted in my sample are representative of all municipalities in these two countries, and I also cannot claim to know about PDD or its effects with the detail of an ethnography. Finally, the way I accessed PDD participants was mediated by my relationship with the municipality in each community. This dynamic introduced bias in my interviewee sample, particularly in El Salvador. I expand upon these challenges with each type of data below.

As with any study conducted using secondary data, creativity must be employed to select the variables that most closely align with the proposed theoretical constructs. For

example, Allport's theory of intergroup contact is largely supported by evidence using psychological laboratory experiments and quasi-experiments in the field with interviews and surveys that directly ask participants in contact about their views of a defined 'other' (white Americans rating their feelings toward black Americans, Israeli students asked about Palestinian students, etc.) rather than their trust of 'others' generically (Pettigrew, 1998). Additionally, researchers that study trust (e.g. Lewicki & Tomlinson, 2014) have identified a difference in calculus-based trust, granted when the 'other' faces consequences for breaking with agreed upon expectations, versus identity-based trust, in which one grants trust due to affinity with the 'other' over time. It could be that municipal trust is interpreted on a calculus-based spectrum whereas trust of 'others' in general is interpreted on an identity-based spectrum in the minds of respondents. In short, given that the AmericasBarometer is a secondary dataset, the measures are not as precise as they could be in an original survey. A survey tool modeled after those used by expert social scientists exploring these theories directly may produce more consistent and comparable results with former studies, though such an endeavor is outside the scope of this dissertation.

On a related theme, the AmericasBarometer is not really designed for measuring individual change in public opinion over time. Questions from one survey cycle to the next change, and thus measures are not always comparable from one time period to the next either. Likewise, the individuals surveyed each round are different from the prior cycle; the data is not longitudinal. Thus, though I have presented my case above as a study about the evolution of PDD and its impacts in my case countries, my quantitative analysis would be much stronger if I had access to consistently worded questions from year to year or an static sample of respondents to track over time.

My qualitative data also has its limitations. The first of the limitations is the timing of my fieldwork. My interviews and observations were conducted over a limited and intermittent period spanning from autumn of 2018 to summer of 2019 in Guatemala and summer of 2017 to spring of 2019 in El Salvador. This was an exciting and tumultuous period in both countries, which influenced individual perspectives on PDD and its effects as well as my observations. The most notable timing-based factor was how my research window overlapped with elections. In Guatemala, all my research took place within one calendar year of elections across all levels of government. While most of my elite interviews with municipal officials took place outside the official three-month election campaigning window in 2019, the reality is that the campaign was in full swing for most of my time in the field. Additionally, nearly all my observations and participant interviews did fall within the campaign season. Likewise, in El Salvador, there was a municipal election cycle between my first and second visits to the field and a national presidential election which took place just as I started my observations and participant interviews. Thus, though I am inclined to believe that politics plays a key role in PDD processes outside election season based on my interviews, I cannot say with complete certainty that this is true. It could be that the partisan favoritism theme I heard time and again in El Salvador was overstated due to timing.

Additionally, my study failed to quantify the qualitative trends I identified in a way that could be representative of all municipal administrations because I only worked with a sub-set of municipalities. Related, but on the opposite side of the methodological spectrum, it also did not get to the depth of an ethnography. My research falls short of being fully immersed and reflexive, to dig deeper into the relationship between PDD and peace in just one community. It also did not employ cutting-edge measurement tools currently under development by those

that study peacebuilding's 'local turn' in alternative contexts. In my interviews, I asked individuals about the impacts of PDD bucketed within my own conceptual framework on peace, not about how PDD or 'everyday peace' is conceptualized by the individuals living in these societies (Mac Ginty, 2014; Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016).

Finally, taking part in observations at the invitation of the municipal government, even when used as a validity check on the data gathered from municipal officials, introduced bias into my understanding of PDD in each country. In order to counter-act this bias, I developed a sampling matrix that prioritized diversity along key societal divisions, and I made a concerted effort to speak with individuals of multiple political parties and ethnic groups following each PDD forum observation. However, it was impossible to avoid all bias introduced by the role of the municipality in opening up opportunities for me to meet with participants, whether due to selectivity of the PDD spaces I was invited to, travel safety and time available in the field, or purposeful manipulation of the individuals I would encounter. In El Salvador, this bias was the most striking in that I was unable to speak to a proportional set of ARENA supporters involved in PDD processes. Although I am confident that biases case study wide were less pronounced due to my sampling strategy, I cannot state with certainty that the views expressed by PDD participant interviewees were completely balanced.

Third, my research design, though satisfactory for answering my research questions, may be unsatisfactory to researchers that lean more heavily toward either quantitative or qualitative methodologies and associated epistemologies. Those that wear their epistemological traditions as a skin versus a sweater (Marsh & Furlong, 2002) might question my mixed methods approach. While I stand behind my embrace of multiple research questions and mixed methodology, my design will not appeal to all.

Those of a purely positivist camp might take issue with my interest in the 'big picture' behind PDD impacts on peace in multiple countries. Rather than answer all the questions, they would suggest that I aim for parsimony and leave further inquiry to the community of scholars to attempt another proof or rejection of my conclusions via alternate methodologies or in additional contexts, as recommended by King et al. (1994). To these critics, I counter that parsimony ignores the socially constructed structures that influence causation, risking oversight of some variable that may have a greater impact than those I chose to include in my statistical models. Others of the interpretivist camp (e.g. Yanow, 1999) may reject that I suggest an objectively derived 'best practice,' 'policy implication,' or 'lesson learned' at all. They would argue that it is not possible for me to engage in scientific method without imposing my own interpretation on the issue studied (Marsh & Furlong, 2002, p. 23) and that "agreed facts" are as far as I could go (Marsh & Furlong, 2002, p. 29). Critical scholars like Piven (2004) would jump on board arguing that my ontological grounding undermines my entire project because research is power at play.

Unable to disagree whole-heartedly on any of these counts, I can only respond to these critiques by acknowledging this limitation and my biases. I contend that the greatest weakness of this approach is also its greatest strength. To each set of critics in turn, I would say that this study has aspired to seek out the truth about the influence of PDD in these two post-conflict contexts and sought to give voice to communities that have bravely set out to engage citizens in public policy decision making under less-than-ideal circumstances.

My research is only a small piece of the larger puzzle that seeks to improve post-conflict peacebuilding practice. It is my hope that future researchers pursue further academic inquiry on this topic via alternative means. To this end, I posit that my results occasion more

questions for future research. First, how is 'everyday peace' defined for PDD participants? Second, is PDD having a positive effect based on participants' own conceptualizations of peace? Future research on PDD and peace should, as the broader peacebuilding community has come to realize, delve into the words, actions, or symbols that signal 'everyday peace' to those involved in such processes. As we better understand how peace manifests itself as 'local,' we may illuminate new relationships between PDD and locally defined peace. Third, might PDD be an effective tool for peacebuilding *if it was structured specifically for this purpose*? PDD in Guatemala and El Salvador was introduced to open spaces for political participation following ideologically-driven civil wars. PDD structure in both cases, at least at first, flowed from this narrowly defined function. However, PDD structures could be developed with more than the political dimension of peace in mind. Researchers should therefore explore how PDD could be purposefully integrated into peacebuilding cross-dimensionally, pulling on the lessons learned from this comparative case study and other investigations.

**6e. Conclusion**

This study highlights that PDD mechanisms do hold value for peacebuilding and have indeed positively influenced the two post-conflict peace processes I investigated in Central America. In particular, PDD processes help municipal officials to increase contact with citizens and allocate resources to community needs. To varying degrees, PDD can also improve a community's social relationships and shift citizen mentalities from clientelist to cooperative. The results suggest that PDD processes imposed from the top-down—as in Guatemala—influence a greater number of peace-related dimensions than those implemented from the bottom-up—as in El Salvador. On the one hand, top-down imposition guarantees and protects

spaces for citizen participation and encourages cross-community deliberation. On the other hand, bottom-up implementation allows for innovation but undercuts the consistency and reliability of PDD impacts. However, the top-down versus bottom-up dichotomy is not the only influential factor.

A hybrid and more systemic perspective that acknowledges the interactions between macro-, meso-, and micro-level systems reveals that PDD implementation is only one element of why and how PDD influences peace processes. Macro-level political structures, particularly with regards to how they integrate conflict parties in the aftermath of war, can serve to facilitate or impede PDD. Meso-level factors such as the structure of PDD mechanisms including how many people participate, the level of deliberation possible, and how often they are used influence how much control and empowerment citizens have over policy and budgetary decision making. Finally, micro-level factors such as individual political party affiliation and alignment with municipal leadership, urban versus rural living conditions, education level, gender, and personal motivation to participate also influence effects. Other post-conflict nations considering the implementation of PDD either as integral to the peace process or as complimentary to peacebuilding have much to learn from the cases of Guatemala and El Salvador.

Policy implications from this case are most directly transferable to Colombia, currently struggling with its own peace process implementation heavily predicated on how accords balance typical statebuilding efforts alongside PDD implementation and sharing many cultural and contextual elements of my case study nations. The study also presents compelling reflections for other post-conflict contexts considering implementation of PDD, with the important caveat that cultural and historical features are likely to mediate the associations I

find in this study. There are two such cases that are currently exploring PDD implementation. The first is Northern Ireland, a case in which conflict ended in 1998 with the Good Friday Agreement, but which has experienced several roadblocks in the peace process. Bohman (2012) and Hayward (2014) have called for the introduction of deliberative democracy in this case to help build the deliberative capacity of citizens, their representative officials, and transnational supporters of the peace process alike. The second case is that of Israel/Palestine, in which some scholars (e.g. Ahmed, 2005) have suggested that only local deliberative democracy may offer inroads to peace in this protracted conflict.

Looking toward the future, I view this research as part of a larger agenda on improving peacebuilding practice through discourse whether in political spaces, business meetings, community groups, or team-based sports. In subsequent studies, I look to explore how a similar research design and methodology in other post-conflict nations with alternative historical and cultural contexts might illuminate additional links between PDD and peace. I also aspire to conduct broader research to bridge conflict resolution theory with other disciplines across the humanities. Just as PDD was not devised in either of this study's case countries with its effects on multiple dimensions of peace in mind, business recruitment policies or training on sportsmanship may well influence peace in ways we do not yet know. Long-term, I endeavor to uncover more mechanisms that fit within the hybrid peacebuilding toolkit.

APPENDIX

## APPENDIX I:
## INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

***Note: Bolded questions are the most important, if lacking time others can be cut.*

**Municipal Government Official Protocol**
**ORIGINAL**

***Sobre e/la Participante:***

- **Para empezar, ¿Puedes describir un poco sobre su rol con la municipalidad/organización?**
- **¿En qué manera/forma está usted trabajando en programas de democracia participativa?**
- ¿Cuantos años ya está usted con la municipalidad/organización?
- ¿Cómo empezó usted trabajando con esos programas de participación ciudadana?

***Funcionamiento/La Implementación:***

- **¿Cuáles programas de democracia participativa están implementando o aportando (ej: *cabildos abiertos, planes estrategias participativas, presupuestos participativos*)?**
- ¿Puede usted describir cómo funcionan esos programas?
    - ¿Cuáles pasos tienen?
    - ¿Cuantas veces durante el año lo hacen?
- ¿Tienen acuerdo o una colaboración con otras organizaciones en la comunidad para implementar esos programas?
    - ¿Quiénes son?
    - ¿Cómo están colaborando?
- ¿Cuánto cuesta estos programas?
    - ¿Cuáles cosas necesitan pagar para realizar los proyectos?
    - ¿Cómo financias estos programas?
- ¿Cuándo se involucró la municipalidad/organización en programas de democracia participativa?
- ¿Por qué empezaron esa forma de democracia participativa en su municipalidad?
- ¿Quién es el encargado de cada programa? ¿Y cuál es su rol oficial con la organización?
- Imagina usted que hay un día/paso del proceso que sale súper bueno- ¿cómo se ve?
- Imagina usted que hay un día/paso del proceso que sale súper malo- ¿cómo se ve?
- ¿Tienen entrenamiento para los que participan?
    - ¿Qué temas se tocaban en el entrenamiento?
- ¿Las personas involucradas representan sus mismos o sus partidos/grupos en el proceso? ¿Cómo se manifiestan?
- ¿Cuándo hay un cambio de la administración, cuál es el impacto típicamente en la implementación de los programas participativos?
- ¿Cuántas personas están involucradas cada vez?

- ¿Quiénes son las personas que participan?
    - ¿Son líderes de la comunidad?
    - ¿Son los más felices o los más enojados de la comunidad?
    - ¿Son más jóvenes o ancianos?
    - ¿Son más hombres o mujeres?
    - ¿Son más de un partido político u otro?
    - ¿Son más de un barrio u otro?
- ¿Qué hacen para alcanzar la gente? ¿Cómo reclutas?
- ¿La gente les gustan los programas?
    - Si- ¿por qué le gusta?
    - No- ¿por qué no le gusta?
    - ¿Quién le gusta y quién no?
- ¿Cuáles programas son más populares (en términos de números de involucrados)?
- ¿menos populares?

***<u>Los Impactos:</u>***

- **¿Cuáles son algunos de los impactos de la democracia participativa en su comunidad/el país que ha visto usted?**
- **¿Cómo conoce usted que este impacto tiene algo que ver con la participación ciudadana?**
- ¿Qué quiere/piden la gente que están involucrados?
- ¿Cuáles resultados son lo más común de esos procesos?
- ¿Hay desacuerdos o choces entre los participantes o la comunidad sobre/durante el proceso?
    - Si- ¿cómo se manifiestan? / ¿cómo les resuelvan?
    - No- ¿por qué cree usted que es tan pacífico?
- ¿He visto diferencias en esas personas después de su participación? ¿Cómo cambian la gente?
- ¿Hay ideas/proyectos/puntas de vista que regresan año después del año?
- Cuéntame sobre un momento que se destaca en su mente sobre uno o dos de los programas de democracia participativa que salió exitoso. ¿Por qué selecciona usted este momento?
- ¿Está ayudando el desarrollo económico de la comunidad/el país en su opinión? ¿Cómo conoce?
- ¿Está ayudando la reconciliación entre personas individualmente/de la comunidad/el país? ¿Cómo conoce?
- ¿Está ayudando la confianza y capacitación en las instituciones/municipalidades al nivel local? ¿Cómo conoce?
- ¿Deben continuar estos programas? ¿Por qué?

***<u>Colaboración</u>***

- **¿Qué quiere aprender usted sobre la democracia participativa en El Salvador? ¿Hay oportunidades para colaboración entre nosotros mientas estoy investigando este tema en su país?**

## TRANSLATION

***About the Participant:***

- **To start, can you tell me a little bit about your role or title with the municipality/organization?**
- **How you have been involved in working with participatory democracy programs?**
- How many years have you been working here?
- How did you get started working with citizen engagement programs?

***Implementation:***

- **Which types of participatory democracy programs is your organization implementing or supporting (ex: *town hall meetings, participatory strategic planning, participatory budgeting*)?**
- How do these programs function?
    - What steps do they have?
    - How many times a year do they run?
- Do you have agreements or collaborations with other organizations in the community to implement the programs?
    - Who are they with?
    - How do you collaborate?
- How much to do the programs cost?
    - What are the costs involved?
    - How are they financed?
- When did your organization start these programs?
- Why did your organization get involved in these programs?
- What is the role of the person in charge (consultant, city official, etc.)?
- Is there universal participation in these processes? One person, one vote?
- Who ultimately decides which projects are selected and how they are implemented, the community or the municipality?
- Imagine a day/step of the process that goes really well; what does it look like?
- Imagine a day/step of the process that goes really poorly; what does it look like?
- Do you train participants?
    - What is in the training?
- Does politics enter the process? How so?
- When there is a change in administration, what is the typical impact on the implementation of participatory programs?
- How many people get involved in each program/process cycle?
- Who participates?
    - Community leaders?
    - The happiest/most vocal and unhappy in the community?
    - The youth or the elderly?
    - Men or women?
    - One political party more than another?
    - One neighborhood more than another?
- How do people get involved? How do you recruit them?
- Do people like the programs?

    - Why or why not?
    - Who likes them and who does not?
- What programs are the most popular (in terms of number involved)?
    - Least popular?
    - Why?

***<u>The Impacts:</u>***

- What are some of the impacts you have seen for the community/country? How do you know it's related to the program?
- What do the people that get involved want from the process?
- Are their goals typically the same or divergent from each other?
- What are the most common requests in participatory processes?
- Are there projects/ideas/views that come back year after year?
- Are there ever any disagreements or clashes between participants or in the community over/during the process?
    - If yes- How do these conflicts manifest?
    - If no- Why is the process so peaceful?
- Tell me about a moment that stands out in your mind about one or two of the programs that was particularly successful. Why did you select this moment?
- Do you see differences in people after their participation? How do people change?
- Is it helping the economic development of the community/country? How can you tell?
- Is it helping with reconciliation between people individually, in the community, or across the country? How can you tell?
- Is it helping build confidence and capacity for local institutions? How can you tell?
- Should these programs continue? Why or why not?

***<u>Collaboration:</u>***

- What do you want to learn about participatory democracy in El Salvador? Are there opportunities for collaboration between us while I am here studying this topic?

**APPENDIX II:**
**OBSERVATION FIELDNOTES TOOL**

**PART I: NOTES**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Date/Time** | | | | |
| **Location** | | | | |
| **PDD Mechanism** | | | | |
| **Counts- People** | # of People: | # of Govt Reps: | # of Facilitators: | |
| **Counts- Gender** | Males: | Females: | | |
| **Counts- Ethnicity** | White: | Hispanic: | Black: | Other: |
| **Counts- Age** | <18: | 18-30: | 30-60: | 60+: |

Episodes- *agenda items/blocks of time & like events*

| Episode | Description | Take-away |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

**Note on Observation= Description/Evidence for Conclusions + Takeaway/Value Judgement

Behavioral/Attitude- *What are people doing in interaction? Does it align with what they say?*

| **Description** | **Takeaway** |
|---|---|
| | |

Values/Standards- *What values are being projected by actors? Any standards being applied?*

| **Description** | **Takeaway** |
|---|---|
| | |

Environmental- *How do people present themselves (clothes, hair, etc.)? Room set-up? Building/space selected for the event? Tools/artifacts used (flip charts, note cards, voting blocks)?*

| **Description** | **Takeaway** |
|---|---|
| | |

Stereotypical/Ritualistic- *Are there any rituals to start/end event? Norms of behavior expected explicitly or implicitly in interactions?*

| **Description** | **Takeaway** |
|---|---|
| | |

Specialized Terms/Language Use- *What jargon is used and what does it seem to mean? How are typical words used and transformed by use in this context?*

| **Term** | **Meaning** | **Takeaway** |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

**PART II: DQI – Discourse Quality Index**

Participation refers to a speaker's ability to participate freely in a debate.
*(0) Interruption of a speaker*
*(1) Normal participation is possible*

| Description | Takeaway |
|---|---|
| | |

Level of justification refers to the nature of the justification of demands. Here we judge to what extent a speech gives complete justifications for demands. The completeness of the justifications is judged in terms of the inferences that are made.
*(0) No justification: A speaker says that X should or should not be done, but no reason is given.*
*(1) Inferior justification: Here a reason Y is given as to why X should or should not be done, but no linkage is made between X and Y — the inference is incomplete. This code also applies if a conclusion is merely supported with illustrations.*
*(2) Qualified justification: A linkage is made as to why one should expect that X contributes to or detracts from Y. A single such complete inference already qualifies for code 2.9*
*(3) Sophisticated justification: Here at least two complete justifications are given, either two complete justifications for the same demand or complete justifications for two different demands.*

| Description | Takeaway |
|---|---|
| | |

Content of justifications captures whether appeals are made in terms of narrow group interests, in terms of the common good, or in terms of both.
*(0) Explicit statement concerning group interests: If one or more groups or constituencies are mentioned in a speech, then a code of 0 is assigned.*
*(1) Neutral statement: No explicit references to group interests or to the common good.*
*(2a) Explicit statement of the common good in utilitarian terms: There is an explicit mention of the common good and this is conceived in utilitarian terms, that is, with reference to the 'greatest good for the greatest number' (Mill, 1998).*
*(2b) Explicit statement of the common good in terms of the difference principle: There is an explicit mention of the common good and this is conceived in terms of the difference principle, that is, with reference to helping the least advantaged in a society (Rawls, 1971).*

| Description | Takeaway |
|---|---|
| | |

Respect for the groups that are to be helped through particular policies. AND Respect toward the demands of others Note: respect toward demands is not always coded.

*(0) No respect: This code is reserved for speeches in which there are only negative statements about the groups.*
*(1) Implicit respect: We use this code if there are no explicitly negative statements, but neither are there explicit positive statements.*
*(2) Explicit respect: This code is assigned if there is at least one explicitly positive statement about the groups, regardless of the presence of negative statements.*

| Description | Takeaway |
|---|---|
| | |

Respect for counterarguments is a summary judgment of the respect toward all these arguments.

*(0) Counterarguments ignored: There are counterarguments, but the speaker ignores these.*
*(1) Counterarguments included but degraded: This code applies when a speaker acknowledges a counterargument, but then explicitly degrades it by making a negative statement about it or the individuals and groups that propose the argument. A single negative statement is sufficient to assign code 1, unless the speech also contains positive statements about a counterargument (in which case a code of 3 applies). If neutral statements accompany a negative statement (and there are no positive statements), a code of 1 also applies.*
*(2) Counterarguments included — neutral: We use this code if a counter- argument is acknowledged and if there are no explicit negative or positive statements about it.*
*(3) Counterarguments included and valued: This code applies if the counter- argument is acknowledged and is explicitly valued. We assign this code even if there are also negative statements.*

| Description | Takeaway |
|---|---|
| | |

Constructive politics concerns consensus building, or what we call constructive politics.

*(0) Positional politics: Speakers sit on their positions. There is no attempt at compromise, reconciliation, or consensus building.*
*(1) Alternative proposal: A speaker makes a mediating proposal that does not fit the current agenda but belongs to another agenda. In such cases, the proposal is really not relevant for the current debate, although it may be taken up in a different debate.*
*(2) Mediating proposal: A speaker makes a mediating proposal that fits the current agenda.*

| Description | Takeaway |
|---|---|
| | |

**PART III: CQI – Contact Quality Index**

Equal Status captures the treatment of each group (majority and minorities) in the interaction.
*(0) Clear inequality of treatment toward one or more groups from facilitator/coordinator*
*(1) Equality of treatment from facilitator/coordinator toward all groups*
*(2) Equality of treatment between and across all groups*

| Description | Takeaway |
|---|---|
| | |

Institutional Support for Contact refers the local government's role in facilitating contact.
*(0) No support: Municipality does not have any presence in this process (not by definition a PDD mechanism)*
*(1) Inferior support: Municipality has "rubber stamped" the convocation of this process by recognizing the group or mechanism but is not itself facilitating the interaction.*
*(2) Qualified support: Municipality is actively facilitating the process and guiding participants in some form of structured conversation and contact.*
*(3) Sophisticated support: Municipality provides training and/or process debriefing before and/or after the PDD process to encourage productive dialogue, respectful contact, and justified/feasible decision making.*

| Description | Takeaway |
|---|---|
| | |

Cooperation toward Common Goals indicates whether the group sees the interaction as a way to achieve common interests, cooperatively across majority and minority groups, or not.
*(0) Explicit statement concerning prioritizing own group interests: When only one group or constituency is identified as the beneficiary of proposed action.*
*(1) Neutral statement: No explicit references to group interests or to the common good.*
*(2) Explicit statement of the mutual interests: There is an explicit mention of the mutual interests or common goals achieved through proposed action with a call for cooperative/collaborative implementation.*

| Description | Takeaway |
|---|---|
| | |

Group Salience refers to the identification of individuals in the interaction as representative of the minority/majority group versus outliers.
*(0) Explicit reference(s) to participant as unique or different from representative group*
*(1) Explicit reference(s) to participant as representative of his/her group (Hewstone & Brown, 1986).*

| Description | Takeaway |
|---|---|
| | |

**APPENDIX III:**
**KEY QUESTIONS FROM LAPOP SURVEY AND THEIR OPERATIONALIZATION**

| Original Survey Question | Author's Translation | Operationalization |
|---|---|---|
| ¿Hasta qué punto tiene usted confianza en su municipalidad? | **How much trust do you have in your municipality?** | Confidence in Government |
| ¿Considera usted que la situación económica del país es mejor, igual o peor que hace doce meses? | **Would you consider the economic situation of the country to be better, the same, or worse than in the last 12 months?** | Perception of Economic Well-being* |
| Hablando de la gente de aquí, ¿diría que la gente de su comunidad es muy confiable, algo confiable, poco confiable, o nada confiable? | **Speaking about the people from around here, would you say that the people from your community are very trustworthy, sometimes trustworthy, a little trustworthy, or not trustworthy?** | Feelings about Community Trust |
| En general, ¿usted diría que está muy satisfecho(a), satisfecho(a), insatisfecho(a) o muy insatisfecho(a) con la forma en que la democracia funciona en Guatemala/El Salvador? | **In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, unsatisfied, or very satisfied with how democracy functions in Guatemala/El Salvador?** | Satisfaction with Democratic System** |
| Hablando de la ciudad o el pueblo en donde usted vive, ¿cree que los niveles de violencia son en general altos, medios, o bajos? (2008)<br>—<br>¿Considera usted que el nivel de violencia actual en su comunidad/colonia es mayor, igual, o menor que el de otras comunidades/colonias en este municipio? (2018) | **Speaking of the city or town in which you live, do you think that the levels of violence are in general high, medium or low? (2008)**<br>—<br>**Considering the level of current violence in your community or neighborhood, is it higher, equal, or lower than other communities or neighborhoods in this municipality? (2018)** | Perception of Violence in Neighborhood |
| ¿Ha sido usted víctima de algún acto de delincuencia en los últimos 12 meses? | **Have you been a victim of any act of delinquency in the last 12 months?** | Experience with Physical Violence |

*Note: The 'peace perception index' combines all subjective perception questions above (all but the final row in the table).

**Note: I had originally planned to use a "satisfaction with life" variable as a measure of 'positive' peace, however, this question was cut between survey rounds 2008/09 and 2018/19. No other measures about life satisfaction were retained, so I included a measure on satisfaction with the democratic system as this most closely aligns with the democratic peace thesis and loosely with Galtung's (1969) "absence of structural violence."

## APPENDIX IV:
## SUMMARY STATISTICS OF EACH MODEL VARIABLE, BY COUNTRY AND YEAR

### Guatemala – Independent and Dependent Variables

| 2008/09 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Sample Size (n) | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | SD | Expected Sign |
| **Independent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Participation in PDD (binary version) | 1536 | | | | | |
| Yes (demopart=1) | | 667 | 43.42% | | | + |
| No (demopart=0)* | | 869 | 56.58% | | | - |
| Participation in PDD (additive version) | 1536 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for three PDD types (pdd_sum ramge: 0-2) | | | | 0.43 | 0.5 | + |
| Participation by PDD mechanism | 1536 | | | | | |
| Town hall meeetings (np1_si=1) | | 211 | 13.74% | | | + |
| community improvement committees (cp8_si=1) | | 599 | 39.00% | | | + |
| participatory budgeting/planning (muni5_si=1) | | NA | NA | | | + |
| **Dependent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | 1469 | | | | | |
| No Trust (b32=0) | | 163 | 11.10% | | | - |
| Little Trust (b32=1) | | 275 | 18.72% | | | - |
| Some Trust (b32=2) | | 584 | 69.57% | | | + |
| High Trust (b32=3) | | 447 | 30.43% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | 1479 | | | | | |
| Worse (soct2=1) | | 763 | 51.59% | | | - |
| Neutral (soct2=2) | | 671 | 45.37% | | | - |
| Better (soct2=3) | | 45 | 3.04% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | 1508 | | | | | |
| No trust (it1=0) | | 86 | 5.70% | | | - |
| Little Trust (it1=1) | | 482 | 31.96% | | | - |
| Some Trust (it1=2) | | 561 | 37.20% | | | + |
| High trust (it1=3) | | 379 | 25.13% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | 1403 | | | | | |
| Very unsatisfied (pn4=0) | | 50 | 3.56% | | | - |
| Somewhat unsatisfied (pn4=1) | | 563 | 51.32% | | | - |
| Somewhat satisfied (pn4=2) | | 720 | 40.13% | | | + |
| Very satisfied (pn4=3) | | 70 | 4.99% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of violence in neighborhood | 1505 | | | | | |
| High (vic50=1) | | 357 | 23.72% | | | - |
| Medium (vic50=2) | | 398 | 26.45% | | | - |
| Low (vic50=3) | | 750 | 49.83% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | 1529 | | | | | |
| Yes (vic1=1) | | 261 | 17.07% | | | - |
| No (vic1=0)* | | 1268 | 82.93% | | | + |
| Peace Perception (Overall)- peace perception index | 1272 | | | | | |
| Count (pp_count range: 0-15) | | | | 9.05 | 2.12 | + |
| Percent (pp_percent range: 0-100) | | | | 0.6 | 0.14 | + |

| 2018/19 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **Sample Size (n)** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Expected Sign** |
| **Independent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Participation in PDD (binary version) | 1596 | | | | | |
| Yes (demopart=1) | | 730 | 45.74% | | | + |
| No (demopart=0)* | | 866 | 54.26% | | | - |
| Participation in PDD (additive version) | 1563 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for three PDD types (pdd_sum ramge: 0-3) | | | | 0.64 | 0.8 | + |
| Participation by PDD mechanism | 1596 | | | | | |
| Town hall meeetings (np1_si=1) | | 236 | 14.79% | | | + |
| community improvement committees (cp8_si=1) | | 638 | 39.97% | | | + |
| participatory budgeting/planning (muni5_si=1) | | 134 | 8.40% | | | + |
| **Dependent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | 1570 | | | | | |
| No Trust (b32=0) | | 252 | 16.05% | | | - |
| Little Trust (b32=1) | | 432 | 27.52% | | | - |
| Some Trust (b32=2) | | 525 | 33.44% | | | + |
| High Trust (b32=3) | | 361 | 22.99% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | 1558 | | | | | |
| Worse (soct2=1) | | 1012 | 64.96% | | | - |
| Neutral (soct2=2) | | 482 | 30.94% | | | - |
| Better (soct2=3) | | 64 | 4.11% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | 1554 | | | | | |
| No trust (it1=0) | | 233 | 14.99% | | | - |
| Little Trust (it1=1) | | 601 | 38.67% | | | - |
| Some Trust (it1=2) | | 391 | 25.16% | | | + |
| High trust (it1=3) | | 329 | 21.17% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | 1457 | | | | | |
| Very unsatisfied (pn4=0) | | 216 | 14.82% | | | - |
| Somewhat unsatisfied (pn4=1) | | 643 | 33.22% | | | - |
| Somewhat satisfied (pn4=2) | | 484 | 44.13% | | | + |
| Very satisfied (pn4=3) | | 114 | 7.82% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of violence in neighborhood | 1550 | | | | | |
| Higher (pese1=1) | | 163 | 10.52% | | | - |
| Equal (pese1=2) | | 403 | 26.00% | | | - |
| Lower (pese1=3) | | 984 | 63.48% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | 1591 | | | | | |
| Yes (vic1=1) | | 324 | 20.36% | | | - |
| No (vic1=0)* | | 1267 | 79.64% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- positive peace index | 1379 | | | | | |
| Count (pp_count range: 0-15) | | | | 8.43 | 2.09 | + |
| Percent (pp_percent range: 0-100) | | | | 0.56 | 0.14 | + |

## Guatemala – Control Variables

| 2008/09 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Sample Size (n) | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | SD | Expected Sign |
| **Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Geography- urban or rural hometown | 1538 | | | | | |
| Urban (ur=0)* | | 822 | 53.45% | | | - |
| Rural (ur=1) | | 716 | 46.55% | | | + |
| Community Development Demographics- internet usage | 1407 | | | | | |
| Daily usage (www1 range: 1 everyday - 5 never) | | | | 4.5 | 1.1 | + |
| Community Development Demographics- clean water access | 1538 | | | | | |
| No (r12=0) | | 384 | 24.97% | | | - |
| Yes (r12=1) | | 1154 | 75.03% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- age | 1538 | | | | | |
| Years (q2 range: 18 - 87) | | | | 39.5 | 15.6 | + |
| Individual Demographics- education | 1534 | | | | | |
| Years (ed range: 0 - 18) | | | | 6 | 4.8 | + |
| Individual Demographics- gender | 1538 | | | | | |
| Male (sexo=0)* | | 772 | 50.20% | | | - |
| Female (sexo=1) | | 766 | 49.80% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- race | 1499 | | | | | |
| Ladino (etid=1) | | 838 | 55.90% | | | + |
| Indigenous (etid=2) | | 640 | 42.70% | | | - |
| Other (etid=3) | | 21 | 1.40% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- religion | 1532 | | | | | |
| Catholic (q3=1) | | 865 | 56.46% | | | + |
| Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal (q3=2,5) | | 479 | 31.27% | | | + |
| Other (q3=3,6,7) | | 27 | 1.76% | | | - |
| None (q3=4)* | | 161 | 10.51% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- media usage | 1459 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for four media types (asum ramge: 0-12) | | | | 5.5 | 2.6 | - |
| **Theoretical Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Individual Demographics- political party | 1538 | | | | | |
| Right (l1=0)* | | 660 | 42.91% | | | - |
| Left (l1=1) | | 488 | 31.73% | | | + |
| None/NA (l1=.) | | 390 | 25.36% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- income, centered at mean | 1268 | | | | | |
| Monthly Wage Brackets (q10_mean range: 0 - 9500Q +) † | | | | $134 - $202 | N/A | + |
| Individual Demographics- particpation in other community groups | 1484 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for three group types (other_part ramge: 0-9) | | | | 2.9 | 1.9 | + |

† Average exchange rate from Guatemalan Quetzal to USD was 7.46 in 2008

| 2018/19 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Sample Size (n) | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | SD | Expected Sign |
| **Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Geography- urban or rural hometown | 1596 | | | | | |
| Urban (ur=0)* | | 804 | 50.38% | | | - |
| Rural (ur=1) | | 792 | 49.62% | | | + |
| Community Development Demographics- internet usage | 1593 | | | | | |
| Internet access in home (r18=1) | | 380 | 23.85% | | | + |
| Community Development Demographics- clean water access | 1593 | | | | | |
| No (r12=0) | | 271 | 17.01% | | | - |
| Yes (r12=1) | | 1322 | 82.99% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- age | 1596 | | | | | |
| Years (q2 range: 18 - 87) | | | | 38.03 | 15.2 | + |
| Individual Demographics- education | 1549 | | | | | |
| Years (ed range: 0 - 18) | | | | 8.07 | 4.52 | + |
| Individual Demographics- gender | 1596 | | | | | |
| Male (sexo=0)* | | 777 | 48.68% | | | - |
| Female (sexo=1) | | 819 | 51.32% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- race | 1596 | | | | | |
| Mestiza/Ladino (etid=2)* | | 794 | 49.75% | | | + |
| Indigenous (etid=3) | | 580 | 36.34% | | | - |
| Other (etid=5) | | 127 | 7.96% | | | - |
| Don't know / Don't respond (etid=.) | | 95 | 5.95% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- religion | 1528 | | | | | |
| Catholic (q3=1) | | 772 | 50.52% | | | + |
| Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal (q3=2,5) | | 633 | 41.43% | | | + |
| Other (q3=3,6,7) | | 40 | 2.62% | | | - |
| None (q3=4)* | | 83 | 5.43% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- media usage | 1580 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for four media types (asum ramge: 0-12) | | | | 2.97 | 1.34 | - |
| **Theoretical Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Individual Demographics- political party | 1596 | | | | | |
| Right (l1=0)* | | 580 | 36.34% | | | + |
| Left (l1=1) | | 852 | 53.38% | | | - |
| None/NA (l1=.a, .b, .c) | | 164 | 10.28% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- income, centered at mean | 1440 | | | | | |
| Monthly Wage Brackets (q10_mean range: 0 - 5500Q +) † | | | | $141 - $162 | N/A | + |
| Individual Demographics- particpation in other community groups | 1596 | | | | | |
| Parent associations (cp7_si=1) | | 772 | 48.37% | | | + |
| Women's groups (cp20_si=1) | | 175 | 10.96% | | | + |
| Religious groups (cp6_si=1) | | 1073 | 67.23% | | | + |

† Average exchange rate from Guatemalan Quetzal to USD was 7.62 in 2018

## El Salvador – Independent and Dependent Variables

| 2008 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Sample Size (n) | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | SD | Expected Sign |
| **Independent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Participation in PDD (binary version) | 1549 | | | | | |
| Yes (demopart=1) | | 510 | 32.92% | | | + |
| No (demopart=0)* | | 1039 | 67.08% | | | - |
| Participation in PDD (additive version) | 1546 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for three PDD types (demopart_sum ramge: 0-3) | | | | 0.42 | 0.67 | + |
| Participation by PDD mechanism | 1549 | | | | | |
| Town hall meeetings (np1_si=1) | | 185 | 11.94% | | | + |
| community improvement committees (cp8_si=1) | | 415 | 26.79% | | | + |
| participatory budgeting/planning (muni5_si=1) | | 51 | 3.29% | | | + |
| **Dependent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | 1544 | | | | | |
| No Trust (b32=0) | | 180 | 11.66% | | | - |
| Little Trust (b32=1) | | 282 | 18.26% | | | - |
| Some Trust (b32=2) | | 576 | 37.31% | | | + |
| High Trust (b32=3) | | 506 | 32.77% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | 1538 | | | | | |
| Worse (soct2=1) | | 1109 | 72.11% | | | - |
| Neutral (soct2=2) | | 337 | 21.91% | | | - |
| Better (soct2=3) | | 92 | 5.98% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | 1537 | | | | | |
| No trust (it1=0) | | 133 | 8.65% | | | - |
| Little Trust (it1=1) | | 347 | 22.58% | | | - |
| Some Trust (it1=2) | | 511 | 33.25% | | | + |
| High trust (it1=3) | | 546 | 35.52% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | 1518 | | | | | |
| Very unsatisfied (pn4=0) | | 182 | 11.99% | | | - |
| Somewhat unsatisfied (pn4=1) | | 686 | 39.00% | | | - |
| Somewhat satisfied (pn4=2) | | 592 | 45.19% | | | + |
| Very satisfied (pn4=3) | | 58 | 3.82% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of violence in neighborhood | 1542 | | | | | |
| High (vic50=1) | | 391 | 25.36% | | | - |
| Medium (vic50=2) | | 514 | 33.33% | | | - |
| Low (vic50=3) | | 637 | 41.31% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | 1547 | | | | | |
| Yes (vic1=1) | | 294 | 19.00% | | | - |
| No (vic1=0)* | | 1253 | 81.00% | | | + |
| Peace Perception (Overall)- peace perception index | 1517 | | | | | |
| Count (pp_count range: 0-15) | | | | 8.69 | 2.19 | + |
| Percent (pp_percent range: 0-100) | | | | 0.58 | 0.15 | + |

| 2018 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **Sample Size (n)** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Expected Sign** |
| **Independent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Participation in PDD (binary version) | 1511 | | | | | |
| Yes (demopart=1) | | 467 | 30.91% | | | + |
| No (demopart=0)* | | 1044 | 69.09% | | | - |
| Participation in PDD (additive version) | 1481 | | | | | |
| Additive scale for three PDD types (demopart_sum ramge: 0-3) | | | | 0.38 | 0.64 | + |
| Participation by PDD mechanism | 1511 | | | | | |
| Town hall meeetings (np1_si=1) | | 123 | 8.14% | | | + |
| community improvement committees (cp8_si=1) | | 392 | 25.94% | | | + |
| participatory budgeting/planning (muni5_si=1) | | 71 | 4.70% | | | + |
| **Dependent Variables** | | | | | | |
| Positive Peace (Political)- trust in municipal government | 1502 | | | | | |
| No Trust (b32=0) | | 145 | 9.65% | | | - |
| Little Trust (b32=1) | | 274 | 18.24% | | | - |
| Some Trust (b32=2) | | 531 | 35.35% | | | + |
| High Trust (b32=3) | | 552 | 36.75% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Economic)- perception of economy | 1489 | | | | | |
| Worse (soct2=1) | | 817 | 54.87% | | | - |
| Neutral (soct2=2) | | 576 | 38.68% | | | - |
| Better (soct2=3) | | 96 | 6.45% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Social)- trust of others in the neighborhood | 1456 | | | | | |
| No trust (it1=0) | | 130 | 8.93% | | | - |
| Little Trust (it1=1) | | 488 | 33.52% | | | - |
| Some Trust (it1=2) | | 397 | 27.27% | | | + |
| High trust (it1=3) | | 411 | 28.23% | | | + |
| Positive Peace (Overall)- satisfaction with democratic system | 1470 | | | | | |
| Very unsatisfied (pn4=0) | | 194 | 13.20% | | | - |
| Somewhat unsatisfied (pn4=1) | | 738 | 31.16% | | | - |
| Somewhat satisfied (pn4=2) | | 458 | 50.20% | | | + |
| Very satisfied (pn4=3) | | 80 | 5.44% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- perception of violence in neighborhood | 1487 | | | | | |
| Higher (pese1=1) | | 85 | 5.72% | | | - |
| Equal (pese1=2) | | 324 | 21.79% | | | - |
| Lower (pese1=3) | | 1078 | 72.49% | | | + |
| Negative Peace (Overall)- personal experience of violence | 1507 | | | | | |
| Yes (vic1=1) | | 311 | 20.64% | | | - |
| No (vic1=0)* | | 1196 | 79.36% | | | + |
| Peace Perception (Overall)- peace perception index | 1416 | | | | | |
| Count (pp_count range: 0-15) | | | | 9.22 | 2.11 | + |
| Percent (pp_percent range: 0-100) | | | | 0.61 | 0.14 | + |

## El Salvador – Control Variables

| 2008 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Sample Size (n) | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | SD | Expected Sign |
| **Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Geography- urban or rural hometown | 1549 | | | | | |
| Urban (ur=0)* | | 965 | 62.30% | | | - |
| Rural (ur=1) | | 584 | 37.70% | | | + |
| Community Development Demographics- internet usage | 1543 | | | | | |
| Daily usage (www1 range: 1 everyday - 5 never) | | | | 4.2 | 1.4 | + |
| Community Development Demographics- clean water access | 1549 | | | | | |
| No (r12=0) | | 450 | 29.05% | | | - |
| Yes (r12=1) | | 1099 | 70.95% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- age | 1549 | | | | | |
| Years (q2 range: 18 - 87) | | | | 38.5 | 16.5 | + |
| Individual Demographics- education | 1525 | | | | | |
| Years (ed range: 0 - 18) | | | | 8.4 | 5.3 | + |
| Individual Demographics- gender | 1549 | | | | | |
| Male (sexo=0)* | | 742 | 47.90% | | | - |
| Female (sexo=1) | | 807 | 52.10% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- race | 1549 | | | | | |
| White (etid=1) | | 289 | 18.66% | | | + |
| Mestiza (etid=2)* | | 975 | 62.94% | | | + |
| Indigenous (etid=3) | | 101 | 6.52% | | | - |
| Black/Afro Salvadorian (etid=4) | | 51 | 3.29% | | | - |
| Other (etid=5) | | 49 | 3.16% | | | - |
| "Don't Know" (etid=6) | | 84 | 5.42% | | | |
| Individual Demographics- religion | 1548 | | | | | |
| Catholic (q3=1) | | 833 | 53.81% | | | + |
| Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal (q3=2,5) | | 493 | 31.85% | | | + |
| Other (q3=3,6,7) | | 30 | 1.94% | | | - |
| None (q3=4)* | | 192 | 12.40% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- media usage | 1546 | | | | | |
| Average across four media types (noticias_avg range: 0-3) | | | | 1.39 | 0.595 | - |
| **Theoretical Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Individual Demographics- political party | 1549 | | | | | |
| Right (l1=0)* | | 831 | 53.65% | | | - |
| Left (l1=1) | | 587 | 37.90% | | | + |
| None/NA (vb11=.) | | 131 | 8.46% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- political party | 1549 | | | | | |
| FMLN (vb11=302) | | 367 | 23.69% | | | + |
| ARENA (vb11=301) | | 195 | 12.59% | | | - |
| Other (vb11=303, 304, 305, 306, 311, 377) | | 27 | 1.74% | | | - |
| None/NA (vb11=.)* | | 960 | 61.98% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- income, centered at mean | 1490 | | | | | |
| Monthly Wage Brackets (q10_mean range: 0 - $1441+) † | | | | $145-288 | N/A | + |
| Individual Demographics- particpation in other community groups | 1549 | | | | | |
| Parent associations (cp7_si=1) | | 573 | 36.99% | | | + |
| Women's groups (cp20_si=1) | | 61 | 3.94% | | | + |
| Religious groups (cp6_si=1) | | 795 | 51.32% | | | + |

| 2018 AmericasBarometer Survey Cycle | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Sample Size (n) | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | SD | Expected Sign |
| **Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Geography- urban or rural hometown | 1511 | | | | | |
| Urban (ur=0)* | | 946 | 62.61% | | | - |
| Rural (ur=1) | | 565 | 37.39% | | | + |
| Community Development Demographics- internet in home | 1501 | | | | | |
| No (www=0) | | 968 | 64.49% | | | - |
| Yes (www=1) | | 533 | 35.51% | | | + |
| Community Development Demographics- clean water access | 1510 | | | | | |
| No (agua=0) | | 286 | 18.94% | | | - |
| Yes (agua=1) | | 1224 | 81.06% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- age | 1511 | | | | | |
| Years (q2 range: 18 - 87) | | | | 39.9 | 16.6 | + |
| Individual Demographics- education | 1392 | | | | | |
| Years (ed range: 0 - 18) | | | | 9 | 4.6 | + |
| Individual Demographics- gender | 1511 | | | | | |
| Male (sexo=0)* | | 755 | 49.97% | | | - |
| Female (sexo=1) | | 756 | 50.03% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- race | 1511 | | | | | |
| White (etid=1) | | 345 | 22.83% | | | + |
| Mestiza (etid=2)* | | 625 | 41.36% | | | + |
| Indigenous (etid=3) | | 70 | 4.63% | | | - |
| Black/Afro Salvadorian (etid=4) | | 66 | 4.37% | | | - |
| Other (etid=5) | | 179 | 11.85% | | | - |
| "Don't Know" (etid=6) | | 188 | 12.44% | | | + |
| Individual Demographics- religion | 1496 | | | | | |
| Catholic (q3=1) | | 697 | 46.59% | | | + |
| Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal (q3=2,5) | | 293 | 19.59% | | | + |
| Other (q3=3,6,7) | | 26 | 1.74% | | | - |
| None (q3=4)* | | 190 | 12.70% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- news engagement frequency | 1497 | | | | | |
| Average across four media types (noticias_avg range: 0-4) | | | | 3.2 | 1.1 | - |
| **Theoretical Control Variables** | | | | | | |
| Individual Demographics- political sway | 1511 | | | | | |
| Right (l1=0)* | | 635 | 42.03% | | | - |
| Left (l1=1) | | 714 | 47.25% | | | + |
| None/NA (vb11=.a, .b, .c) | | 162 | 10.72% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- political party | 1511 | | | | | |
| FMLN (vb11=301)* | | 88 | 5.82% | | | + |
| ARENA (vb11=302) | | 147 | 9.73% | | | - |
| Other (vb11=303, 304, 305, 306, 311, 377)* | | 249 | 16.48% | | | - |
| None/NA (vb11=.a, .b, .c) | | 1027 | 67.97% | | | - |
| Individual Demographics- income, centered at mean | 1397 | | | | | |
| Monthly Wage Brackets (q10_mean range: 0 - $900+) † | | | | $ 121 - $ 215 | N/A | + |
| Individual Demographics- particpation in other community groups | 1511 | | | | | |
| Parent associations (cp7_si=1) | | 632 | 41.83% | | | + |
| Women's groups (cp20_si=1) | | 75 | 4.96% | | | + |
| Religious groups (cp6_si=1) | | 983 | 65.06% | | | + |

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