

Discourses of Participation in the Philippines' Bottom-up Budgeting (BUB)

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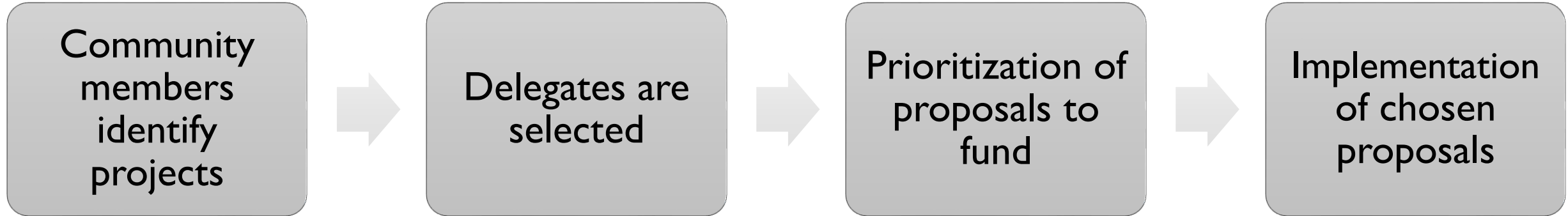
Overview

1. Participatory approaches
2. Participatory budgeting
3. Research objectives and methodology
4. Key findings of case study
5. Conclusions and recommendations

Participatory approaches

- Prone to political marginalization, selection bias and political interference (Cooke & Kothari, 2001)
- Participatory spaces can never be a neutral ground; molded by power relations (Cornwall, 2002)
- Nevertheless, participatory practices remains to be a widely adopted governance practice

Participatory Budgeting



- Philippine BUB started in 2012
- To promote participatory planning and budgeting involving poor local communities
- Inspired by the CDD participatory processes

Objectives

- Solicit and analyse narratives of BUB participation, on both formal and informal spaces of participation
- Find out the extent to which these local engagement practices contribute to exclusionary or inclusionary decision making in local governance

Methodology

- Secondary data review
- Semi-structured interviews among government officials, civil society groups and community members
- Community observations



BUB in Taytay



Civil Society Assembly



Local Poverty Reduction Action Team (LPRAT) meeting

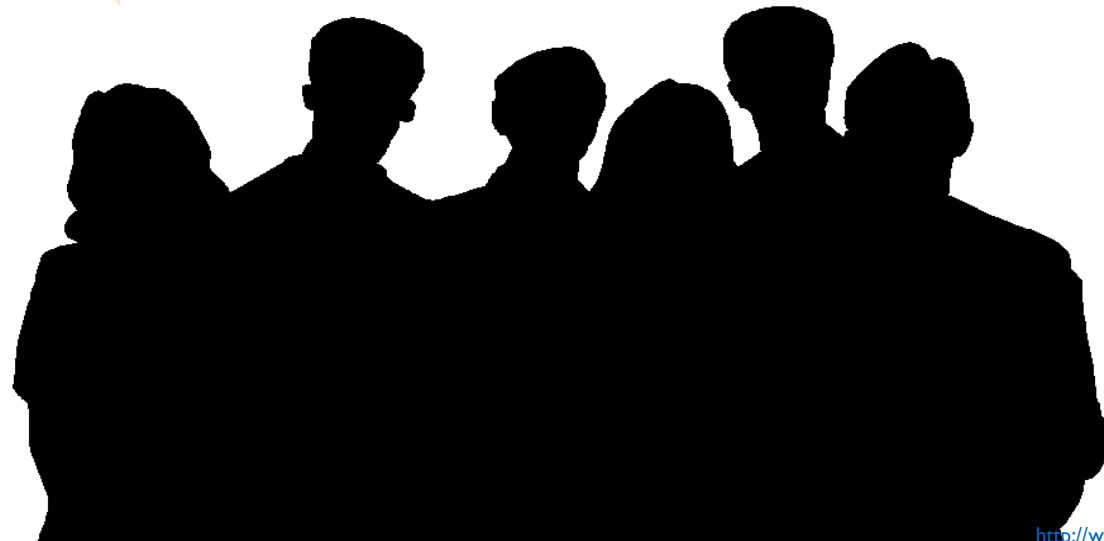
Key findings: Formal sphere

- Participation through consultations and meetings
- Time-bound, selective and government-facilitated
- Foucault's governmentality (Dean 2010) & "Rendering society technical" (Li, 2011)

There is participation, but it is limited

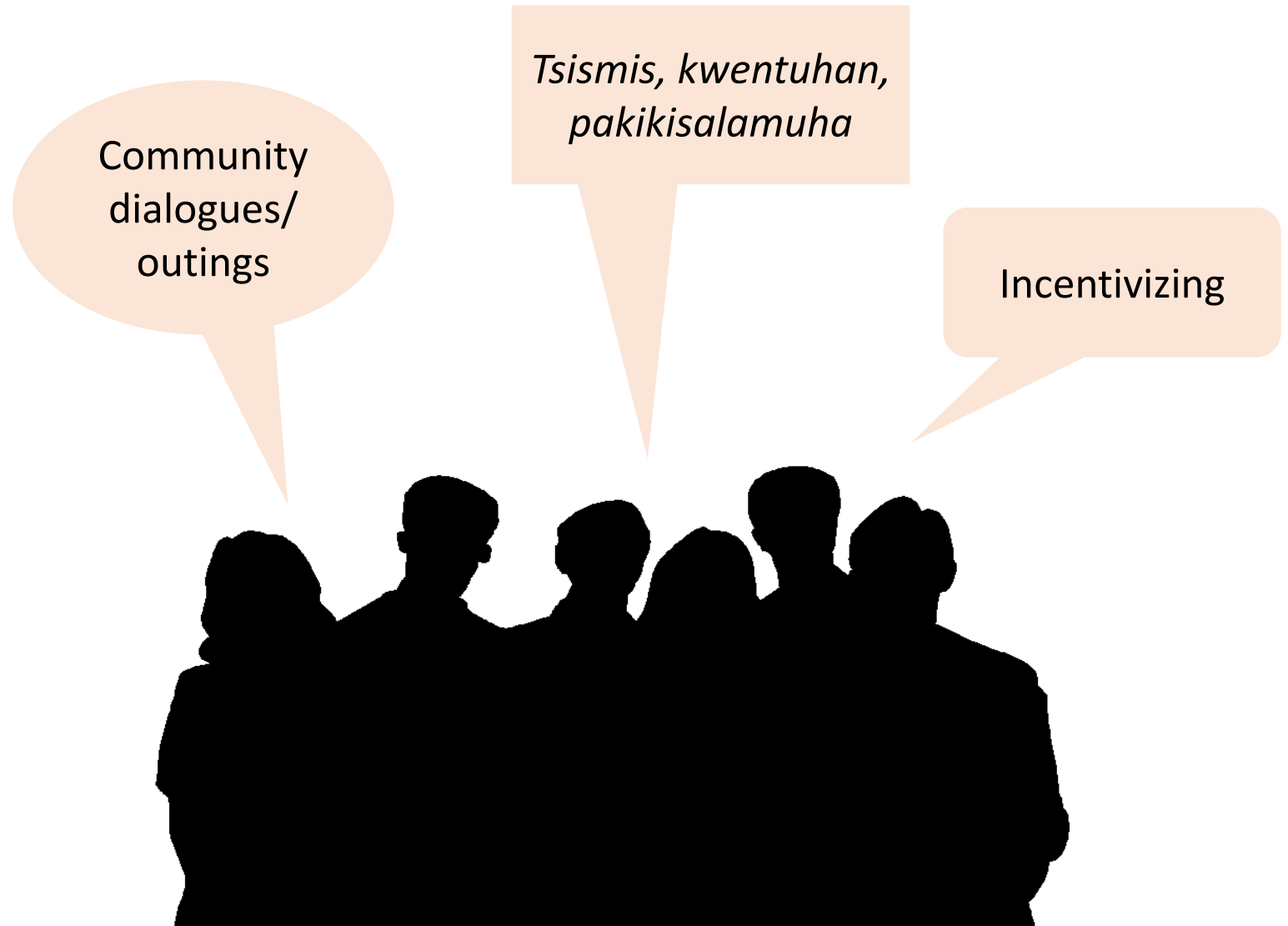
Consultation sessions are dominated by some sectors

Facilitator-driven



Key findings: Informal Sphere

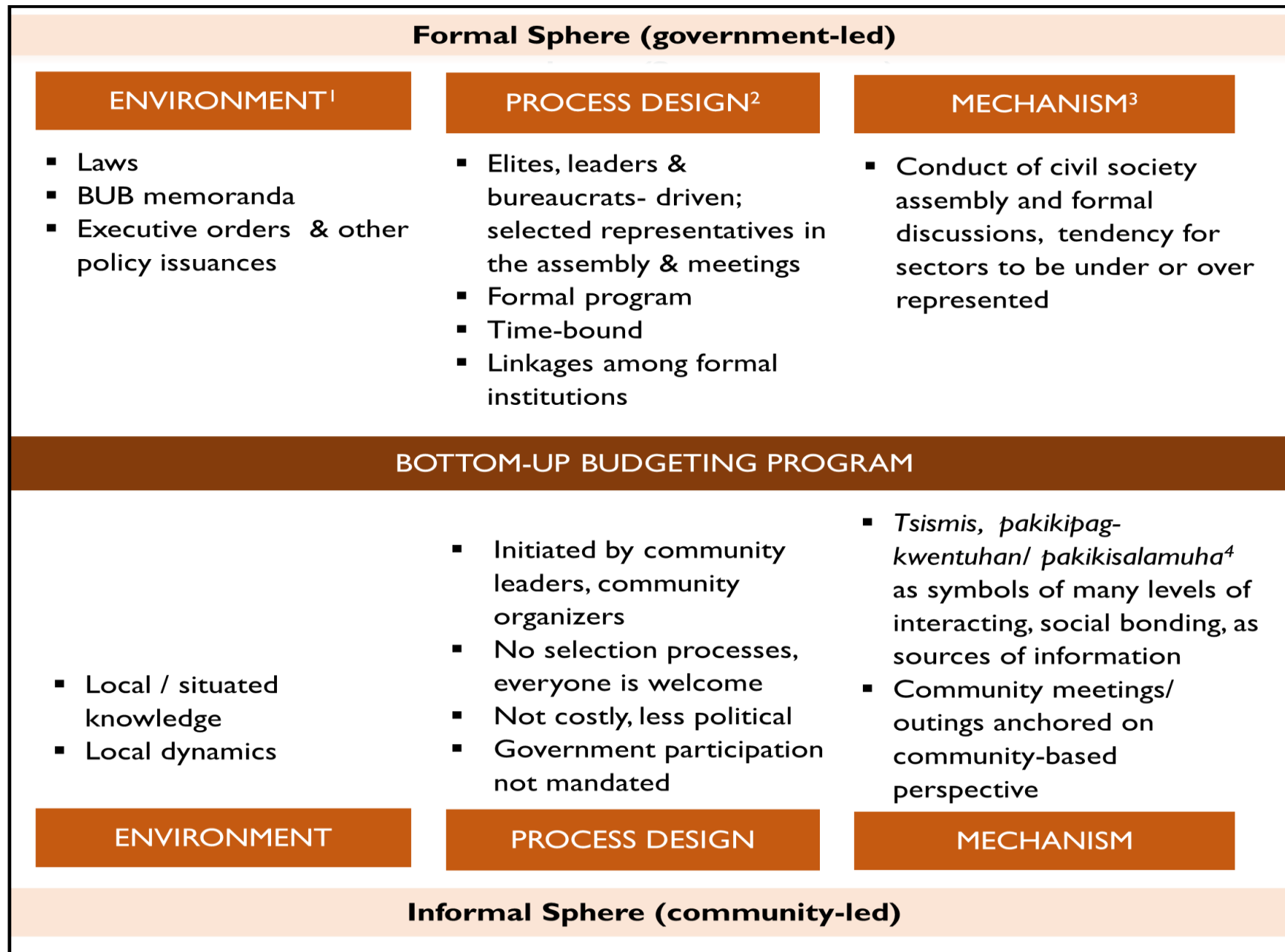
- Informal spaces also pose a danger of being controlled
- It is within informal spaces that members exercise their agency as individuals capable of articulating their concerns (Hailey, 2001)
- Social capital & Governmentality at work



What did I do with these findings?

The *Bibinka* Approach





¹ Local government context that affects citizen participation ; ² Considerations that enable quality citizen participation ; ³ Methods to gain broad participation (Ebdon & Franklin, 2006) ⁴ Gossip (loose translation), catch-up sessions/ socializing

Conclusions

- Participatory practices installed in the BUB process contribute to broadening participation albeit limited
- Participation is pliable
- Need to harness participation in both the formal and informal sphere

Policy Recommendations

- Program review might be needed in order to identify the flaws of the BUB that needs improvement (safeguards against pet projects, flexible project options)
- Treat BUB timeframe as guide and not as a limitation
- Social preparation (communities and implementers)
- Development communication strategies

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