

Perspectives on Public Participation Across the Urban- Rural Spectrum

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Measuring Public Participation

- Many things determine level of public participation with local decision-making, most effective styles
 - Individual level: education, age, income
 - Societal level: govt structure, public interest/ perception of roles for citizens, social networks
- What about urban-rural spectrum?
 - Thai study suggests difference in priorities—does this hold in US?
 - Limited comparison research, but some examination of participatory budgeting, other strategies to drive rural development in Europe
 - Panchayati raj system of rural self-administration in India

Perceived Attitudes on Participation Vary Minimally

- To see urban/ rural effects we need to account for known factors, such as attitudes toward participation
- Minor, but inconsistent, variations on aggregated measures of officials' willingness to involve citizens (%) and citizens' interest in involvement (lower is better)
- Change in interest due to specific events tied more closely to education than rurality

	Completely Urban/ Cluster	Mostly Urban	Mostly Rural	Completely Rural	Total
Citizen interest (out of 6)	2.35	2.33	2.46	2.49	2.44
Citizen disinterest (out of 6)	2.14	2.04	2.08	2.05	2.06
Citizens should have final say (%)	21.3%	20.7%	20.3%	27.8%	24.6%
Citizens can usually be trusted (%)	57.0%	48.4%	58.2%	53.3%	53.5%

Opportunity Availability

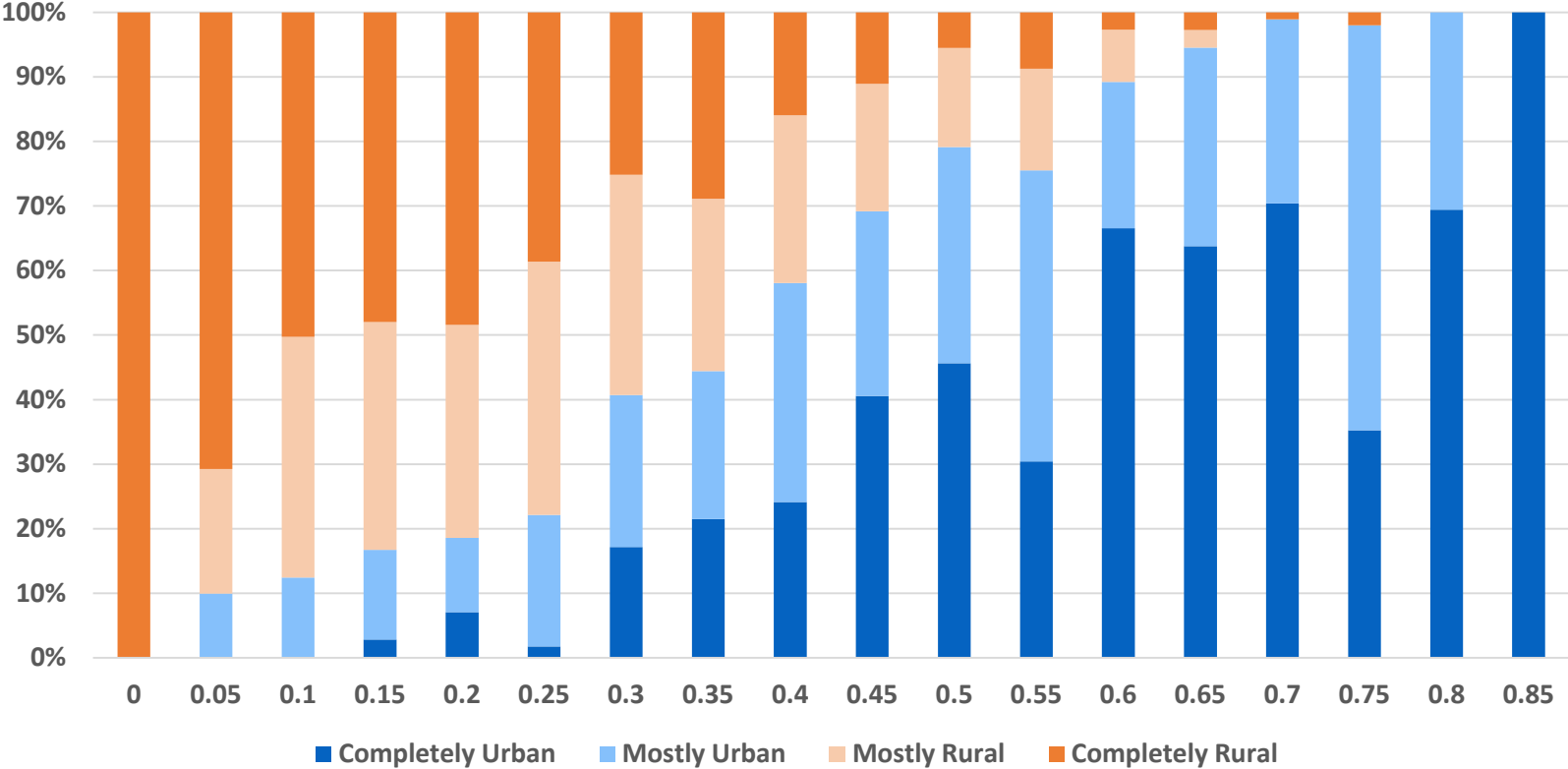
MPPS asked officials if they foster participation through:

- *Information:* Newsletters, news articles, website, government dashboards, tv (one-way communication)
- *Meetings:* Public comment opportunities, surveys, discussion forums, “coffee chats”, neighborhood meetings (two-way, but limited, communication)
- *Actions:* Committees, planning teams (general or neighborhood-specific), citizen openings on formal government boards/commissions (ongoing involvement)

These measures were aggregated and averaged to find the percentage of ‘yes’ responses for each jurisdiction.

Urban Areas Have More Formal Avenues to Participation...

Availability of Participation Avenues

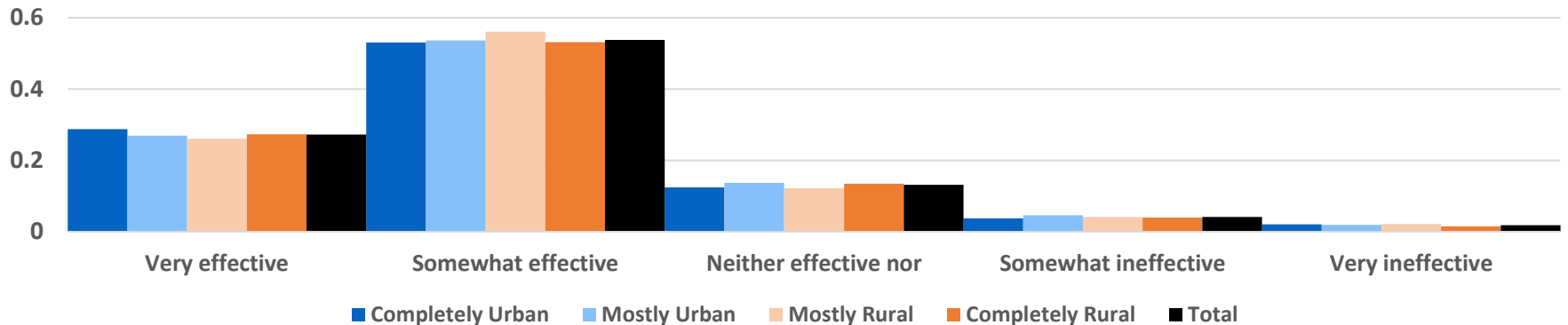


...But Only Slightly More Likely To Feel They Are Effective

	Completely Urban	Mostly Urban	Mostly Rural	Completely Rural	Total
Q5Info	3.74	3.72	3.71	3.73	3.72
Q5Meet	4.36	4.21	4.09	4.10	4.17
Q5Act	4.18	4.21	4.27	4.17	4.20
Q5Sum	4.03	4.02	4.02	3.99	4.01

- Aggregated differences in effectiveness are not significant ($p = .33$)
- Scores are 1-5 (higher is better)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ of methods see significant difference @10% confidence: newspaper ads (R), website (U), public comment (R), social media (U) and boards/ commissions (mixed)

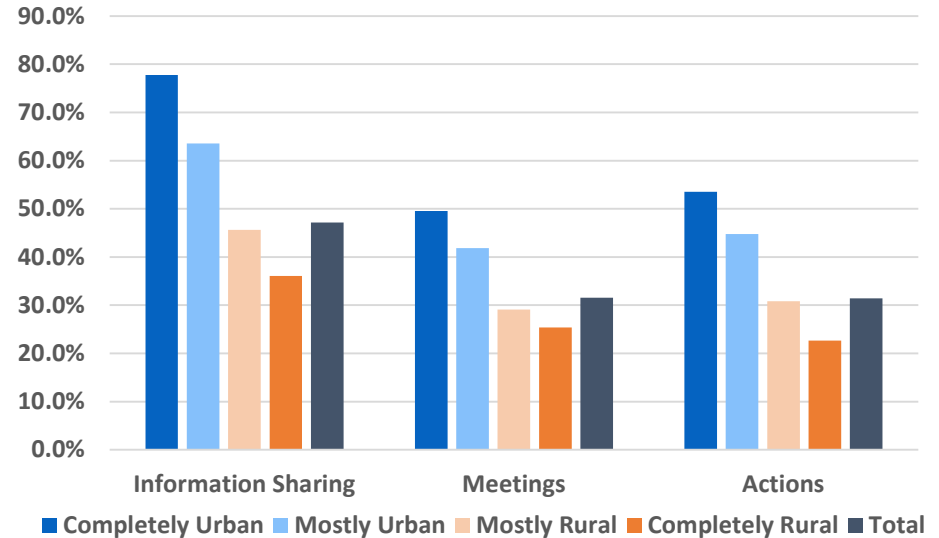
Aggregate Effectiveness



Consistency of findings

- Urban/ rural difference remained significant across availability of information sharing, discussion, and action categories
- Held when regressed on education, population, poverty rate, and party preferences
- Similar aggregation of participatory budget adoption (2009) also urban-dominated, despite primarily rural success worldwide

% Reporting Opportunities Available



Participatory Budget Availabilities

	Completely Urban/Urban Cluster	Mostly Urban	Mostly Rural	Completely Rural	Total
Mean Number of Methods	2.71	2.01	1.67	1.68	1.83
% of "None" Responses	84%	75%	76%	73%	75%

Conclusion

- Urban and rural interest, effectiveness are similar, but urban areas offer more formal avenues to participation
 - We may not be fully capturing rural methods of participation
- Why is this important?
 - Self governance allows for flexible, effective policy and can lead to better economic outcomes for region
 - Dialogues enhance inclusion and community well-being
 - Weight of local policy when national government is fragmented