Public Policies, Citizenship Outcomes and the Implications for Performance Measurement: An Analysis of the Program Assessment Rating Tool

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Abstract

Governments increasingly measure program performance, requiring agencies to focus on high level outcomes that reflect a program’s impact on society, including the latest and most sophisticated attempt to measure the impact of U.S. federal programs, the Program Assessment Rating Tool. This paper argues that this shift to outcome measurement has excluded citizenship outcomes. Citizenship outcomes are measures of the impact of a policy on the individual’s role as citizen. The concept is adapted from the growing policy feedback literature in political science, which has provided strong empirical evidence that certain policies have measurable effects on citizenship outcomes such as political participation, social capital, a sense of civic belonging and self-worth as a citizen. By examining Program Assessment Rating Tool assessments of policies examined by the policy feedback literature we demonstrate how current approaches to performance measurement have overlooked citizenship outcomes.

Introduction

"Results." "Performance management." "Outcomes." These words have infected the lexicon of contemporary governance. Governments increasingly attempt to measure program performance, requiring agencies to focus on high-level outcomes that reflect a program’s impact on society. The latest and most sophisticated attempt to measure the impact of federal programs, the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), reflects this trend. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget

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(OMB) urges program managers to collect performance data and focus resources on programs able to demonstrate measurable outcomes.

This paper argues that this shift to outcome measurement has been narrowly defined and has excluded what we refer to as citizenship outcomes. Citizenship outcomes are measures of the impact of a policy on the individual’s role as citizen. The concept is adapted from the growing policy feedback literature in political science, which has provided strong empirical evidence that certain policies have measurable effects on citizenship outcomes such as political participation, social capital, and sense of civic belonging and political efficacy. In this respect, government programs not only redistribute resources to individuals or groups of individuals, but also provide other public goods that shape and develop civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. While public management has focused a good deal on how to better measure the impact of services to individual citizens, we know far less on how policies affect forms of citizenship.

Political rhetoric consistently honors citizenship outcomes. Strong civic engagement is heralded as a cornerstone of the American political tradition (Tocqueville [1835] 1996) and speaks to our ideals of democratic self-governance and political equality (Barber 1984). However, the unequal distribution of participation and an overall weakening of civic life call into question the democratic ideal of "equal consideration of interests" (Dahl 1989; APSA Task Force 2004). Beyond normative arguments for a greater focus on civic engagement, social capital research suggests that it has a profound effect on the quality of governance (Putnam 1993; Knack 2002). Many programs assume the need for cooperation on behalf of citizens, non-profit organizations, and the private sector to succeed. On the other hand, programs that alienate intended beneficiaries might indeed lower participation rates as well as program effectiveness. There is, therefore, an instrumental benefit to understanding citizenship outcomes beyond basic democratic concerns.

We examine the limited attention given to the concept of measuring citizenship among public administration scholarship and discuss the ways in which the policy feedback literature has illustrated the links between policies and citizenship. To illustrate how performance measurement excludes citizenship outcomes, we take a case-study approach. We examine PART assessments in policy areas where the policy feedback literature has shown demonstrable citizenship outcomes, or where programs rely on citizen cooperation. We compare the different perspectives on what constitutes success. We conclude our paper by considering why measurement systems exclude
citizenship, and offer suggestions for a model of evaluation that might better capture such effects.

**Citizenship and Measurement: An Administrative Perspective**

Underpinning seemingly neutral administrative approaches are political philosophies regarding the relationship between government and the governed. For example, deLeon and Denhardt interpreted the Reinvention movement of the Clinton era as pursuing a market-based political philosophy that assumed that the aggregation of individual self-interests equated with the public interest, “while rejecting democratic citizenship, civic engagement, and the public interest, broadly conceived” (2000, 89). This argument drew from Michael Sandel (1996) who has proposed that of the two main traditions in American political life, the one that emphasizes government-citizen relations in terms of individual procedures and rights has come to dominate the alternate vision of individuals as active participants in civic life and governance. The latter vision is the more challenging, but government can help to foster it by encouraging a more active view of citizenship, increasing political participation, social capital and a sense of belonging among citizens. Such an approach is advocated by Denhardt and Denhardt (2000), who call for a “new public service” that creates a sense of shared interests and responsibility, and delivers services based on a sense of respect towards recipients. Public management practice should incorporate a more active consideration of the democratic context in which services are delivered: “a concern for democratic values should be paramount in the way we think about systems of governance. Values such as efficiency and productivity should not be lost, but should be placed in the larger context of democracy, community and the public interest” (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000, 557).

One important administrative activity which has displaced citizenship outcomes is performance measurement. Measurement provides a legitimating function, and the measurement of programs has supported the vision of governance as the delivery of services to collections of individuals, without consideration of the implications of such services for citizenship. This displacement has been made possible by the fact that the image of measurement as a neutral, rational and technocratic exercise in expertise disguises the subjective element of the process.

Measures do not exist in nature, but are socially constructed by individuals and organizations. While it is widely acknowledged that many programs have competing goals that are valued differently depending on the stakeholders involved, this insight has rarely been applied to perfor-
mance measurement. Performance measures represent values and viewpoints. Those who choose to select program goals and measures legitimate one perspective on the program over competing views. Some scholars have paid attention to the subjective aspect of performance measurement. Fischer and Forester (1993) heralded the "argumentative turn in policy analysis and planning," Stone (1997) has pointed to the social construction of numbers in policy debates, while Moynihan (2006) described the subjectivity involved in performance measurement, and the PART process in particular.

Once we accept the notion of subjectivity in performance measurement, we can begin to examine what values are represented. To the extent that scholars have examined this question, there seems to be a systematic oversight of measures relevant to democracy and citizenship. Boyne (2002) argues that there are a range of legitimate ways to consider performance, but his content analysis of English and Welsh local governments performance data illustrates how governments tend to focus on service output and efficiency measures, while paying little attention to responsiveness, equity and participation. Pitrowski and Rosenbloom (2002) point to how performance reporting under the Government Performance and Results Act had seen agencies pay little attention to non-mission based aspects of performance, providing freedom of information requirements as an example. Performance measurement has been found to exclude considerations of social equity at both the state (Jennings 2006) and federal levels (Jennings 2005; Radin 2006). Radin examined the PART assessments of programs with obvious equity dimensions. She found that unless equity was a primary goal of the program, PART did not examine it. Even for programs where equity was a goal of the program, results were often not disaggregated by ethnic groups or income (e.g. food stamps, school lunches, Head Start).

How Policies Make Citizens: The Policy Feedback Perspective

The policy feedback literature from political science provides a strong theoretical framework for understanding how policies shape citizenship outcomes, arguing that policy design can have profound impacts on civic orientations, political conflicts, and patterns of participation. As Schneider and Ingram suggest: “Experience with policy tells people whether they are atomized individuals who must deal directly with government and bureaucracy to press their own claims or participants in a cooperative process joining with others to solve problems collectively for the common
good” (1997, 340-341). As shown by recent empirical studies on policies as varied as Social Security, welfare, community development, and veterans assistance programs, policy design can have a direct bearing on civic engagement. In Andrea Campbell’s words: “policies help make citizens” (2003).

Although the policy feedback literature is fairly recent, its roots go back to the “political tradition” in political science – an approach recognizing that mass opinion and behavior are not just functions of individual characteristics and preferences, but are also the result of interactions between institutions and political actors, and the ways in which these interactions structure political communication, organization, mobilization and demobilization (Mettler and Soss 2004). Examples of this tradition can be found in the work of E.E. Schattschneider who asserted, “new policies create a new politics” (1935, 288) and Ted Lowi (1964), who argued that policies involve multiple types of political structure, norms, and conflicts, and thus reshape politics in different ways (see also Skocpol 1992).

During the last ten years scholars working on “policy feedback effects” have expanded upon this notion that policies function much like any other institution, affecting mass opinion and political behavior (Mettler 2002). Rather than treat policies as mere case-studies for how policies are made (Kingdon 1984; Baumgartner and Jones 1993), policies themselves are specified as the mechanism through which political conflicts are restructured (Skocpol 1992), individuals and groups are mobilized (Hanson and Rosenstone 1993; Campbell 2003), messages are conveyed to the public that encourage engagement or passivity (Mettler 2002; Soss 2005), and civic skills and dispositions are strengthened (Mettler 2002; Martsen 1993).\(^1\) As Mettler and Soss argue, policy design is not only about who gets what, when or how much, but also about the effects on the quality of political life and the “strength and logic of self-governance” (2004: 56; see also Schneider and Ingram 1993). Policies, by virtue of conferring social rights and benefits, altering institutions and affecting the demands placed on them, and creating new opportunities for political mobilization, can have long-lasting impacts. Paul Pierson argues that “[o]nce established, patterns of political mobilization, the institutional “rules of the game,” and even citizens basic ways of thinking about the political world will often generate self-reinforcing dynamics” (2000, 10).

While policy feedback research has reoriented thinking about how policies structure and constrain the political environment and the behavior of political actors (Pierson 2000), the design of

\(^1\)For an excellent review of this literature see Mettler and Soss (2004)
policies and the institutions created by them also have substantive impacts on democratic life and mass political behavior beyond the specific political conflicts they often engender. Mettler and Soss argue that policies "affect what individuals think, feel, and do as members of a polity" in five main ways by: (1) defining membership, (2) forging political cohesion and group divisions, (3) building or undermining civic capacities, (4) framing policy agendas, problems, and evaluations, and (5) structuring, stimulating, and stalling political participation (2004, 55). It is these impacts on democratic life and the act of citizenship that are the focus of this paper. Before turning to a discussion of the PART, we outline four broad categories of citizenship outcomes that inform our discussion of specific PART assessments.

**Social Capital and Civic Engagement**

Robert Putnam has defined social capital as the "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (1993, 167). At the individual level, social capital can be defined as the "tight reciprocal relationship between levels of civic engagement and interpersonal trust" (Brehm and Rahn 1997) and the norms of civic responsibility and reciprocity (Putnam 1993). Research has focused, in particular, on the links between social capital or "civic culture" (Almond and Verba 1963) and democratic stability and economic development (Putnam 1993; Granato, Inglehart and Leblang 1996, but see Jackman and Miller 1996). While there has been a debate in the literature as to whether there is a causal link between social capital and socioeconomic outcomes, there is a strong consensus that civic engagement, particularly through community and voluntary organizations, has been an important constitutive element of American democracy (Tocqueville 1996; Almond and Verba 1963; Skocpol 1992).

**Civic Belonging and Political Efficacy**

Policies also promote the political incorporation of social groups (Marshall 1965). While a policy like Social Security creates a target for political action, politicians also target program beneficiaries. But political mobilization of groups is only an outcome of a much broader process by which policies define membership and forge political community (Mettler and Soss 2004). Policies like Social Security give what Judith Shklar (1991) calls "standing" to individuals; they give dig-
nity and respect to beneficiaries and recognize them as full members of the citizenry. On the other hand, policies can delineate among social groups and differentially positioning them vis-a-vis the state (Marshall 1965; Soss 2005). As Schneider and Ingram argue, policies “socially construct target populations,” defining beneficiaries as “deserving” or “non-deserving” and as capable of self-government or requiring active government intervention (Soss 2005).

The ways in which programs confer benefits and how those benefits are framed by politicians and bureaucracies also shape how recipients are viewed as citizens by the mass public and “may influence the ways individuals understand their rights and responsibilities as members of a political community” (Mettler and Soss 2004, 61). Policy design shapes citizens’ psychological attachments to the political process by creating different environments for civic socialization. In this way, policies can lead citizens to draw different conclusions about the relevance of politics to their lives.

Thus, the messages conveyed to the public through the framing of policy agendas not only impact the political geography of interest groups, politicians, and administrative agencies, but also transcend that geography, affecting the broader political environment through the shaping of individual and collective civic dispositions and political attitudes. These messages can have profound impacts one’s sense of “political efficacy,” influencing whether individuals feel that they matter as citizens, that their voices will be heard, and that they have the opportunity to influence political outcomes (Campbell et al. 1954). It is this sense of political efficacy that helps determine, in part, who becomes politically engaged (Almond and Verba 1963) and lack of efficacy is often cited as a reason for political inactivity (Verba et al. 1995).

Political Participation

Public policies provide significant material incentives to participate, forming the basis for lobbying efforts that mobilize broad-based groups. More broadly, policies can foster participation by creating environments that encourage individuals to acquire civic skills and allow them to develop social and political networks. In this way, public policies can provide sources of “civic teaching,” helping individuals and groups develop the skills, resources, and knowledge to participate more broadly in political life (Landy 1993).

Policies may also create new opportunities to participate and open up avenues for citizens to
seek accountability and change. Indeed, collective action is more likely to occur when groups have the resources and organizational capacity to act (McCarthy and Zald 1977) and when there are new opportunities for political action (McAdam 1982). For example, the Community Action Program of the mid-1960s created new channels for civil rights activists to press their claims and increased the resources available to community groups that allowed them to build the organizational capacity necessary to effectuate change in anti-poverty policies at the local level (Browning, Marshall and Tabb 1984).

**Citizen Cooperation and Co-Production**

This last category extends the policy feedback literature, exploring those policies where program performance is directly affected by citizenship outcomes. At a broad level, there is evidence that strong local capacities for citizen engagement have been associated with improved program performance and governmental responsiveness (Putnam 1993; Knack 2002). Brehm and Rahn (1997) find that social capital is associated with increased confidence and trust in government institutions. Examining state governmental performance, Knack (2002) concludes that aspects of social capital, particularly generalized reciprocity and trust, are associated with better governance. Civic cooperation can provide substantive checks on elite power and work to hold government more accountable to the broader public interest (Almond and Verba 1965, 3).

But citizenship can also matter in terms of program performance and management. In terms of specific programs, many public services rely on behavioral changes of other forms of cooperation on the part of program clients. For such programs, services are not so much delivered to clients, as co-produced with them (Thomas 1995). The influence of policy design on citizenship can therefore have a direct effect the ability of programs that rely on co-production to succeed.

**Applying Policy Feedback to the Program Assessment Rating Tool**

The Presidents Management Agenda (OMB 2001) promised to better integrate performance information and budgeting, and the creation of PART was an effort to deliver on that promise. The goal of the PART is to evaluate all federal programs over a five-year period. Each program is assessed by an OMB examiner, with some input from agency officials. The PART itself is a 30-item questionnaire that evaluates programs in the areas of program purpose and design, strategic
planning, program management, and program results. The assessor attaches a numerical score to each section, the sum of which places the program into five different categories: effective, moderately effective, adequate, or, if assessors feel that the program lacks enough information to make a judgment, results not demonstrated.

PART is unusual in a number of respects. In contrast to the Government Performance and Results Act and most performance measurement systems in the U.S., PART represents an effort by a single executive branch actor, the OMB, to comprehensively define the appropriate goals and measures of all federal programs. The tool has been applied with a remarkable degree of transparency, with question-by-question detail on the assessor’s analysis publicly available. This transparency provides a rare insight into the information sources and judgment used by public officials in assessing program performance, allowing the type of research presented in this paper.

In order to address the specific question of how programs evaluations do or should consider citizenship outcomes, we compared PART assessments with the empirical studies of policies examined in the policy feedback literature. Consistent with the policy feedback literature examined in the previous section, we examined PART assessments into four broad areas: (1) social capital and civic engagement, (2) civic belonging and political efficacy, (3) political participation, and (4) citizen co-production and cooperation.

Our results are summarized in Table 1. We found a marked disjunction between how PART defines outcomes, and the evidence of citizenship outcomes outlined in the policy feedback literature. At best, some of the PART evaluations honored the role of social capital in terms of a general capacity at the local level for self-government and collective decision-making, but failed to measure social capital or explain how the structure of policies impact the forms and extent of civic engagement.

Social Capital and Civic Engagement: The G.I. Bill and Community Development Programs

In her study of WWII veterans and their participation in the G.I. Bill, Mettler reveals how public policies can help incorporate individuals into political life by cultivating shared norms of civic responsibility and reciprocity. Higher levels of education are associated with increased political participation (Rosenstone and Wolfinger 1980), but Mettler finds that use of the G.I. Bill’s educa-
Table 1: PART and the Policy Feedback Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>PART measure</th>
<th>Policy Feedback</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G.I. Bill</td>
<td>Average number of days to complete original education claim</td>
<td>Social capital: norms of civic reciprocity and extent of civic engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>Productivity, timeliness and accuracy in payments</td>
<td>Civic belonging and political participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Assistance to Needy Families</td>
<td>Increase in percentage of adults who become newly employed</td>
<td>Political efficacy: extent to which recipients believe they can discuss concerns with agency and that the agency is responsive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TANF)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development Programs</td>
<td>Increased employment, safe and stable housing, creation of accessible &quot;living wage&quot; jobs</td>
<td>Political participation: participation in governing boards and advocacy efforts; percent of households reporting that they feel a part of the community as a result of community revitalization efforts; volunteer hours devoted to community action efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Programs</td>
<td>Number of waterbodies partially or fully restored. Number of acres treated for wildlife resource concerns.</td>
<td>Citizen cooperation and co-production: effectiveness of partnerships in developing environmental strategies that demonstrate results.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Mettler’s study of the G.I. Bill raises interesting questions about how policy design might build or enhance civic dispositions. Indeed, public policies can provide resources such as education that make civic engagement easier, teach civic skills such as knowledge of how government works, and promote a participatory culture by opening lines of communication with public officials. Mettler...
points to an additional way that policies shape citizenship, by fostering “participatory norms and the development of social capital” (2002, 362). Many of the veterans interviewed by Mettler noted the significance of the G.I. Bill in their lives and that they felt they owed something back to American society. To the extent that they felt that they owed something back, Mettler finds that they were more likely to join civic organizations.

Though we do not see consideration of the social capital benefits of the G.I. Bill in the PART assessment (OMB 2003a), we might expect to see it in the PART assessments of the numerous community development programs. Such programs grew during a 1960s ethos of political participation and increasingly rely on non-profit organizations to deliver services. Indeed, one of the strongest arguments for more fully engaging non-profits and other community organizations is that the development of local networks in distressed communities can foster social capital. Empirical studies have suggested that social capital in these neighborhoods, in turn, leads to positive outcomes such as reduced loan delinquency rates (Baku and Smith 1998), improved housing quality, less crime in low-income housing programs (Saegard and Winkel 1998), and improved community stability (Temkin and Rohe 1998). As Lang and Hornburg state: “Observers of the urban scene have long noted the widely divergent impact that the same level of federal spending has on different communities. In some places you spend a dime and local government can leverage it into a million. In other places you can spend a million and it doesn’t amount to a dimes worth of difference in the lives of most citizens” (1998, 8).

Citizenship outcomes such as political participation, local citizen interaction with community organizations, levels of volunteerism, and involvement in local and agency decision-making, might therefore explain why some places are more successful in translating investments into successful community revitalization efforts. While making investments into a wide range of community development programs that cover such activities as economic redevelopment, housing improvements, homeownership, entrepreneurship and small business development, job training and other social services, the U.S government appears to accept the idea that civic engagement and social capital matter, but decline to measure these outcomes or test how they matter. For example, the PART analysis of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program points to its “stable dynamic platform for sustained community-based creativity and flexibility in address-

ing the multi-faceted problems of poverty” (OMB 2003b). The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is called on to “involve faith-based and community-based organizations to improve effectiveness, transparency of local grant-making processes, and citizen participation” (OMB 2004a) and the National Community Development Initiative (NCDI) is praised for building “local operating support collaboratives, which pool private and public resources to support community-based groups...the collaboratives also provide a mechanism for assessing and enhancing community group capacity, developing appropriate goals and outcomes and building strong and enduring local support for grassroots groups and their community development activities” (OMB 2003c).

All three of these assessments stress the importance of community networks in achieving programmatic goals, but this importance is not mirrored in the analysis or measures for the programs. Although OMB has begun to stress the use experimental data or “randomized control trials” in testing hypotheses about the socioeconomic impacts of governmental supports, little has been done by federal agencies when it comes to community development programs and none have tested the “capacity-building” initiatives that are often touted as a successful means of spurring community change. What is remarkable in the PART evaluations of these programs is that while on one hand they promote ideals of social capital, they offer little by way of conceptualizing what is meant by social capital or how it might be linked to program performance.

Civic Belonging and Political Efficacy: Welfare Policies

Mettler’s study of the G.I. Bill also underscores the how policy may directly impact individual feelings of political efficacy. This can be internal efficacy (whether individuals believe they possess the skills and opportunities to act) as well as external efficacy (whether individuals or groups believe that their concerns will be taken into consideration and that they have the influence to affect political outcomes). These feelings of efficacy are heavily predicated on family background, particularly whether one’s parents were engaged in politics, and on the formative years of civic socialization (Beck and Jennings 1982). On the other hand, Joe Soss’s work on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) reveals that political learning does not just culminate in high school civic education classes, but is a continual process of adult political learning that can be heavily influenced by individual interactions with
government programs. In this respect, different policy designs affect perceptions about how government works. The interactions with welfare agencies teach clients lessons about their roles as citizens – lessons that, in turn, have a direct bearing on their sense of effectiveness as citizens. Soss finds:

AFDC participants believe that government institutions will behave like the welfare agency, in an autonomous and directive (rather than open and responsive) manner. Furthermore, some AFDC participants think that other citizens may have opportunities to influence government, but most do not expect this privilege to be extended to people who occupy the degraded status of welfare recipient (1999, 372).

In contrast, recipients of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) are more politically active, view the Social Security Administration (SSA) as a more responsive agency, and are more likely to believe that they can play an “active role in the program” (Soss 1999, 366). It would be easy to attribute these attitudes to the lower incomes and educational status among AFDC recipients, but like Mettler’s work, Soss find that the political views and sense of political efficiency among AFDC clients differ from those expressed by SSDI recipients who have similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Indeed, “[f]or large numbers of Americans, treatment and responsiveness in the welfare system are not administrative sidebars to democratic governance. They are, in their own right, critical measures of what citizenship means in practice” (Soss 2005, 4).

These differences can be seen in AFDC’s successor, the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program (TANF). ³ Whereas TANF clients must appear in person and are often required to reveal very personal and even humiliating information, SSDI applicants can submit their information over the phone, through the mail, or with a face-to-face meeting with the agency, and they are not required to “establish any sort of virtuous personal behavior as a precondition for benefits” (Soss 2005, 5). These design features of SSDI leave applicants feeling that the SSA is professional and accommodating, that they can be “effective initiators and that the SSA can be a responsive institution” (Soss 2005, 7). By contrast, many states require that TANF applicants submit to fingerprinting and drug testing and sign “Individual Responsibility Plans” (Soss 2005; Schram 2000). It is not surprising then that TANF recipients come away from their experience with a more disempowering view of government and their role as citizens. Compared to SSDI beneficiaries, TANF recipients are less likely to believe that they can affect government decisions, that government

³The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act of 1996 replaced AFDC with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, P.L.104-193
listens to people like them, and that government is open and democratic (Soss 2005). Although an assumed goal of welfare reform was to promote self-reliant and productive citizens, the design of TANF often sends the opposite signal to many TANF recipients.

How does PART consider the this dynamic between policy design, disparities in how groups are affected by policies, and the civic repercussions? In short, it does not, even though the TANF PART is one of the most comprehensive we examine. The assessment reviews the program’s goals as defined in statute, assessing the extent to which the program has affected employability, gains in earnings, two-parent family formation, and out-of-wedlock childbirth among TANF recipients (OMB 2005).

However, the PART assessment does not consider the democratic implications of the “help and hassle” (Mead 1997) provisions of welfare reform. For example, the PART assessment fails to consider equity aspects of performance by overlooking a significant body of literature that has shown how differences among state welfare programs are largely attributable to the racial and political characteristics of each state. As the non-white percentage of caseloads increases, states are more likely to impose strict lifetime limits, deny benefits to children conceived by TANF recipients, and impose tougher sanctions on non-compliance (Soss et al. 2001; Gais and Weaver 2002; Fellowes and Rowe 2004). These states are also more likely to devolve responsibility to the local level, creating even more diversity in the treatment of clients (Soss and Shram forthcoming). Such disparities that fall along racial and ethnic lines may indeed translate into unequal political action among already disadvantaged social groups.

The PART recognizes the devolved state of program oversight, acknowledging a General Accountability Office (GAO) criticism that there is “inadequate state fiscal and program monitoring of local workforce boards that contract for services.” But this weakness is treated as a management issue relevant for the fiscal integrity of the program, rather than an equity issue that shapes the messages that program participants receive as to their worth.

Thus, there is a clear difference between how PART and those evaluations concerned with the citizenship outcomes of policy design evaluate a program’s impact on society. Soss’s work on welfare programs shows how client interactions with government agencies (as well as private and non-profit organizations that are now charged with delivering many social provisions), can negatively impact individual and collective political efficacy, causing many to view their experi-
ences in the welfare system as systematic of how government functions more broadly. Discussions about performance in the PART, on the other hand, are exclusively focused on socioeconomic impacts that, while central to the purpose of the program, may not only fail to acknowledge civic disparities, but also exacerbate them.

**Political Participation**

The policy feedback literature has argued that “policy-based mobilization” (Mettler and Soss 2004) is a critical way that policies affect citizenship. It is through participation that citizens learn to deliberate and look beyond their own self-interest (Pateman 1970; Barber 1984). Public policies can also foster civic engagement by providing opportunities for citizens to participate. For example, Head Start participants are more likely to feel that government is responsive and that they can influence the democratic process, a finding that is likely due to the more participatory design of Head Start, which requires that parents participate in policy councils and local decision-making processes (Soss 2005). As the last section suggested, the willingness of government to provide citizens with the chance to influence programs frequently depends on categories such as race, ethnicity, gender or whether citizens are seen as deserving (Schneider and Ingram 1997). For example, for policies affecting the middle-class citizen participation is often highly encouraged, most notably environmental decision-making. On the other hand, attempts to expand participation among the poor during the 1960s have largely been viewed as a policy failure (Moynihan 1969).

Policies targeted at those deemed as “deserving” citizens have either intentionally or unintentionally resulted in broad civic inclusion that has increased political participation, particularly those from otherwise disadvantaged backgrounds. Some policies, most notably Social Security, encourage client demand-making and have profoundly shaped how individuals view their rights and responsibilities as citizens. This impact is shown in the evolution of political standing given to those over the age of 65 in the United States: from the aged, to the elderly, to senior citizens (Campbell 2003). Senior citizens are now the most politically active group in the United States, and both political parties expend more effort to mobilize seniors than nonseniors (Campbell 2003). Social Security not only raised the incomes of millions of seniors, thus making it easier vote and participate in other political activities, but the growth in resources available to seniors has also
been coupled with the emergence of organizations that advocate on their behalf and political institutions that are concerned with capturing senior support. The material incentives provided by the program have certainly made it easier for seniors across socioeconomic strata to organize and voice their concerns, and Social Security has been found to activate political interests most among low-income seniors, a finding that is not surprising given their greater reliance on program benefits (Campbell 2003).

As Social Security demonstrates, new avenues for access and institutional participation can open opportunities for political mobilization and collective action. The Community Action Program, enacted as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s “War on Poverty” in 1965, also sought to create such opportunities. The program delegated responsibility for antipoverty efforts to local Community Action Agencies (CAAs) that were charged with administering programs with “the maximum feasible participation of residents of the areas and members of the groups served” (P.L. 88-452). Community Action broke tradition with how the government dealt with poverty, shifting from a model focused on the individual to initiating programs that sought to reinvigorate civic life and strengthen capacity to meet the needs of the poor (Quadagno 1994; Lineberry and Sharkansky 1977).

Although the program has been viewed as a policy failure (most famously by Daniel Patrick Moynihan), Sallie Martson (1993) argues that it had many long-lasting impacts on local political participation. It helped to politically incorporate racial minorities and became a source of African-American leadership in cities around the country (Martson 1993; Browning, Marshall and Tabb 1984). Furthermore, it helped foster a participatory tradition in local political culture, creating new public spaces for deliberation of matters affecting city development and the allocation of local resources (Martson 1993). While initially focused on empowering the poor, the new forums for participation helped to spur a “middle-class, growth related activism” that reinvigorated participation in local political life and created new opportunities for coalition-building among residents, social service agencies, and antipoverty advocates. Martson’s study of these coalitions in Tucson, Arizona shows how they continue to challenge established local institutions, even successfully electing neighborhood residents to office.

The Community Action Program was eventually dismantled as anti-poverty programs became increasingly racialized, attacked by a rising conservative backlash, and seen as a political liability
for Democrats (Quadagno 1994). While a direct PART comparison is not possible, two programs that emerged out of community action—the CSBG and the CDBG—give us the opportunity to contrast how the OMB frames the issues of participation and performance.

The CSBG PART assessment highlights the important role played by the program’s partnerships within the community, stating: "Without such partnerships, community action would not be able to achieve and sustain favorable family, community, and agency outcomes." However, when it comes to measurement, the assessment’s focus on socio-economic outcomes provides no insight into who is involved in these partnerships or how they improve results. OMB faulted the CSBG program for the lack of a national set of performance measures to assess progress uniformly across cities and states (OMB 2003b). This is a valid concern. However, as we discussed earlier in the paper, performance measures represent values and viewpoints. It is thus interesting to see which measures were chosen by the OMB and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to report at the national level.

In 2001, 22 states tracked the number of volunteer hours devoted to community action activities, 15 tracked participation on governing boards, and 5 states measured the proportion of households that felt more "a part of the community as a result of community action efforts" (NASCSP 2003). In 2004, 52 states tracked the number of volunteer hours in the community, 48 tracked participation in formal community organizations, government boards and non-governance groups, and the measure assessing social capital in the form of whether residents felt a part of the community was dropped (NASCSP 2005). Recently, HHS’s Administration on Children and Families (ACF), which administers CSBG, approved a set of 12 national indicators of community action performance, which includes measures of participation and volunteer activity (ACF 2004). While the focus on participation fits within our framework of a citizenship perspective, it remains unclear as to how HHS or OMB will utilize information on participation and we were unable to find any discussion of how participation connects to program performance.

The CDBG PART assessment also pays lip-service to the benefits of citizen participation. The CDBG PART highlights the importance of community partnerships and the program’s reliance

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4While CAP no longer exists, CSBG maintains a similar purpose and continues to fund the Community Action Agencies (CAAs), first authorized in 1965. Approximately 90 percent of funding is directed to states and eligible local entities (mostly CAAs) that coordinate and deliver social service programs to low-income communities, families and individuals (HHS FY05 Performance Report).

5Included in this set are the number of jobs created, new housing units constructed, and the provision of social services including education, health care, transportation and education.
on the non-profit sector to deliver results, but gives no insight into how these networks translate into best practices or how program partners engage community residents in creating effective strategies and programs. In terms of measurement, the PART emphasizes socioeconomic goals such as number of jobs created, and neighborhoods improving as a result of concentrated CDBG investment.

The policy feedback literature lends support to the importance of participation. For example, Berry et al. (1993) find that cities with strong civic participation programs have central governments that are more responsive to residents, engender greater trust in government, and exhibit less conflict between citizens and policymakers. Moreover, they find that providing greater opportunities to participate, begets more participation and that participatory institutions can legitimize citizen involvement as an effective political activity and increase feelings of political efficacy. In a similar vein, Archon Fung’s (2001; 2004) work on local school councils and community policing efforts in Chicago reveals the benefits of participatory and deliberative local institutions. These reforms have improved the political incorporation of disadvantaged groups, with “those in low-income neighborhoods participating as much or more than people from wealthier ones” (Fung 2001, 89). Moreover, Fung finds that the majority of people of color who are elected officials in Illinois first serve on local school councils, suggesting that these institutional reforms provide new opportunities for enhanced political participation.

Yet, PART assessments of CDBG and CSBG fail to consider participation as an important goal in its own right, and under-identify the linkages between policy design, citizen participation and performance. In some instances, program managers have focused on community service. More recently HHS has the number of community residents who participate on governing boards. Regardless of which measure is used we know very little about whether participation has had on an impact on individual or community-level outcomes. Yet, as Walzer (1988) notes, “participation in the delivery of services might constitute a kind of training for participation in the management and direction of services” (24). And, as recent studies have demonstrated, participation can transform institutional cultures and create broader political participation.

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6The PART update published in the FY07 Presidents Budget includes a new recommendation to involve faith-based and community-based organizations to improve effectiveness, transparency of local grant-making process, and citizen participation (OMB 2004a). However, there is no guidance on how the agency is to measure progress on this recommendation.
Citizen Cooperation and Co-production: Environmental Programs

We have argued thus far that citizen outcomes are in themselves important goals, and that government should track the impact of public programs on such goals. We now extend this argument. In some policies, citizenship outcomes also have an instrumental benefit, making programmatic goals more successful. The most obvious examples come from policies that create a political identity or encourage the participation of a stakeholder group, who then are motivated to influence future iterations of the policy. We argue that the feedback effect can also shape administration.

With increased devolution to non-profits and other private entities, many policies now depend on citizen co-production for success. We have already discussed some evidence of this in the area of social capital, which provides numerous examples of how social capital is not just a worthy citizenship outcome but also has instrumental benefits in terms of better governance. For example, evidence from the Community Action Program suggests that the program, which invested in local capacity to deliver services and engage the intended beneficiaries, effectively changed the policies of local institutions (Vanecko 1969). Where social service agencies improved their interaction with poorer residents and made efforts to improve community organization antipoverty programs became more responsive to the needs of the poor (Orden 1973).

With the reduction in resources and an increased reliance on federal grants-in-aid, many states and cities looked to contracting out for services as a way to cut costs. These trends present clear challenges to citizenship: as nonprofits have adopted a market logic to remain competitive, they have also become depoliticized, fearing that broader entitlement claims threaten their overall organizational viability (Smith 1993). At the same time, “government accountability to citizens is also undermined when responsibility for program admission, treatment, and outcomes is lodged with private organizations” (Smith 1993, 215).

On the other hand, proponents of citizenship participation have pointed to the possibilities of citizen co-production on program outcomes (Thomas 1995), and the new governance movement has argued that citizen involvement can reduce the transaction costs of monitoring personal behavior or corporate use of regulations (Snow 2005).

One of the policy areas where positive conceptions of devolution, citizen cooperation and co-production have been emphasized is in environmental policy. Decentralized and collaborative approaches in environmental policy have largely evolved in response to the limitations of tra-
ditional command-and-control environmental policymaking, particularly where there are large numbers of polluters and when it is difficult to monitor what each contributes to environmental problems (John 1994). Despite the potentials of greater citizen engagement, critics contend that greater devolution, particularly to policy networks, can actually result in the cooptation of federal agencies (Pressman and Wildavsky 1984 cf. Scholz and Wang 2006).

Scholz and Wang (2006) consider these arguments in their examination of the impact of local networks on enforcement and compliance rates for the Clean Water Act. Due to the multiplicity of stakeholders, partnerships tend to involve combinations of business interests, resource users, environmentalists and government agencies. Scholz and Wang (2006) find that such partnerships increase inspection rates and decrease violation rates through their ability to transform the behavior of federal and state agencies in regulating firms, and that they enhance regulatory and compliance outcomes even in conservative areas that would tend to be more resistant to enforcement efforts. They conclude: “[f]or watershed partnership analyses, the significant impact on enforcement and compliance rates supports the general policy assumption that appropriately designed local institutions can play an effective role in managing natural resources” (94).

The study conducted by Scholz and Wang (2006) concerned the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), a regulatory program that they found benefits from strong local partnerships and networks. A number of other federal programs work more directly in this area, providing grant dollars to states and localities to devise effective environmental management strategies. Nonpoint Source Pollution grants are one such example. Given that the problem of interest is pollution from disperse sources, collaboration and coordination are even more integral to this program’s success than perhaps that studied by Scholz and Wang. The PART assessment of this program focuses exclusively on the environmental impacts of the program. Specific measures include the number of waterbodies identified by the States as being nonpoint source (NPS) impaired that have been partially or fully restored and the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen loadings reduced through funded projects (OMB 2004b). While the PART assessment emphasizes the importance of partnership, it does not seek to measure these partnerships. Although the PART asks such questions as whether “all partners commit to and work toward the annual and/or long-term goals of the program” (question 2.4), answers on this assessment fail to take the opportunity to examine more deeply the roles played by program partners.
Another example from PART is the assessment of the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program. The purpose of the program “is to improve the capability of states, units of government, Indian tribes, nonprofit organizations, and councils to accelerate the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources; improve the general level of economic activity; and enhance the environment and standard of living in designated RC&D areas” (OMB 2004c). The PART evaluation of the RC&D program provides an interesting paradox: on one hand, the program is criticized for being nothing but a ”capacity-building” program that shows little evidence of doing much and on the other hand, the PART concludes that there ”appears to be no strong evidence or available analysis whether another approach or program design would be more effective” (OMB 2004c).

Like many community development programs, ”capacity-building” is assumed to provide some type of benefit. Yet, evaluative tools such as PART do not explore what is meant by ”capacity” or what types of benefits they actually provide. In its evaluation, OMB argues that the current measures fail to capture the programs contribution to the “improvement in local capability to address local needs.” This critique is well-founded, the measures used by RC&D program managers include the number of local businesses created in rural area, the number of acres treated for wildlife resource concerns, and the number of acres of watershed developed water quality. And, yet, it is not clear whether OMB or others have actually considered what ”success” would actually look like in this respect. Alternative methods of evaluation might consider links between the characteristics of local RC&D networks and outputs such as the development of conservation plans, and ultimately to environmental outcomes such as watershed improvements.

Beyond the Tyranny of the Logic Model

Why do measurement mechanisms such as PART systematically exclude citizenship outcomes? The intent of this paper is not to answer this question, but we speculate on possible reasons, considering both the perspective of public officials and stakeholders. One possibility is the tyranny of the logic model. A dominant theme of the measurement movement, especially as it has increasingly emphasized measuring program outcomes, is to develop logical links between inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes (Hatry 1999). These logic models are useful for establishing accountability and relevant information for managers by identifying how taxpayer resources are
transformed into government activities, which ultimately produce benefits. But the nature of the logic model is to look for the clearest connection between output and outcomes, and excludes more imaginative considerations of alternate outcomes such as citizenship.

The logic model also appears to reinforce what King and Stivers (1998) identify as an administrative habit of mind that emphasizes managerial control over fostering citizenship. Because of training, organizational culture, and the traditional approach to performance measures, public officials simply do not conceive of citizenship outcomes when thinking about programmatic effects. We think that if one can make the case that many programs have real, tangible and measurable impact on citizenship, more policymakers would be willing to incorporate these measures into standard performance measurement/evaluation approaches.

By emphasizing the most obvious relationships between outputs and outcomes, the logic model overlooks less obvious relationships and unintended consequences. However, we have already seen substantial efforts to measure some unintended effects, demonstrated by the PART’s intense focus on waste, fraud and abuse. More broadly, Harry Hatry, perhaps the most effective advocate for the logic model, explicitly argues for the importance of tracking all of the outcomes that a program fosters, even those not formally mandated by program statute:

Outcomes include side effects, whether intended or not and whether beneficial or detrimental. If the program recognizes in advance that such side effects can occur, it should design the performance measurement process regularly to assess them. As long as they are important and can be tracked, outcomes should be included in the performance measurement system, even if they are not explicitly identified in the programs mission and objective statements. Formal programs mission and objective statements seldom include all the outcomes that an agency needs to track (1999, 15).

The self-interested nature of stakeholder action may also weaken a citizenship approach. Mettler and Soss (2004) point to an early version of the policy feedback model coming in the form of Lowi’s (1964) typology of government policies. Lowi categorized policies as redistributive, regulatory and distributive or developmental policies. Such policies create their own stakeholder groups. Members of these groups care about tangible goods and services distributed to members, or regulation on their actions. Even when members of groups lobby for action, their concern is with the impact of policies on individuals and organizations, rather than as a collective. They therefore are more likely to support measures that track the distribution and impact of those goods and services rather than less tangible citizenship outcomes.
This paper has argued for incorporating citizenship concerns into the process of creating performance measures. One argument against measuring citizenship outcomes is that such outcomes are too intangible, their causes too complex and their measurement too difficult. However, the empirical work of the policy feedback literature suggests that these objections are incorrect. Such outcomes can be measured. Putnam (1993; 2000) uses measures of participation in civic and religious organizations, volunteerism, and political activity. Knack (2002) uses measures of social trust, volunteering and census response rates. Brehm and Rahn (1997) consider civic engagement, interpersonal trust, and confidence in government. Similar measures have been developed in urban studies (Berry, Portnoy and Thomson 1993; Stone 1996), studies of school reforms (Schneider et al. 1997) and in the community development literature (Holyoke 2004). We have seen some evidence that federal agencies have been able to develop measures considering such things as political participation and social capital (e.g. CSBG). Overall, however, the use of such measures is extremely rare and there is no evidence that program managers and OMB consider them in ways suggested by the policy feedback literature.

Citizenship outcomes are indeed complex, as are many of the outcomes government pursues, and are therefore best suited to careful evaluation. Performance measures, by themselves, rarely tell us much about causal relationships unless there is a clear link between outputs and outcomes. For more complex outcomes that are affected by factors other than government actions, we need program evaluations. Blalock and Barnow (2000) have argued that the focus on measurement has shunted aside the more insightful considerations of program performance provided by program evaluations. Yet, PART has shown that program evaluation can be used hand in hand with performance measurement and the tool has been credited with creating a renewed interest in evaluations.

However, incorporating citizenship into evaluation requires a change in approach in evaluation, away from what Dahler-Larsen (2005) refers to as the goal-oriented approach of evaluation to a theory-based approach. Goal-based approaches evaluate programs according to explicit and formal goals, and appeal to a “relatively simple theory of representative democracy” (Dahler-Larsen 2005, 624). The goal-based approach has problems (Dahler-Larsen 2005, 626-628), one of which is the failure to consider unanticipated outcomes or side effects. Theory-based evaluations seek to
develop and test causal theories for the relationship between policy design, administration and outcomes. Such theories do not have to be consistent with the programs stated goals and can deal with unanticipated effects. The policy-feedback literature provides the logic for a theory-based approach to program evaluation that incorporates citizenship outcomes, and appears to be consistent with the type of approach to evaluation that Dahler-Larsen is discussing when he writes:

Parts of the field of evaluation are in clear alignment with the dominant doctrines of public management focusing on outcomes, performance, and the like. Other parts of the field of evaluation see it as their mission to deliver forms of knowledge and organizational feedback, which are richer, more nuanced, more learning-oriented, or more oriented towards transformative social change than that, which is in demand by the dominant management discourses (2005, 637).

**Conclusion: Rethinking the Citizen-Government Relationship**

Should we try to measure citizenship? In this paper we have presented the case for doing so. The fact that measurement systems exclude citizenship suggests that this view might be fiercely debated. We would welcome such a debate, but it has not yet taken place. We consider some of the possible arguments in such a debate before concluding that the policy-feedback approach should prompt us to not just think about the relationship between citizenship and measurement, but more broadly the relationship between citizenship and administration.

If we assume that those who are affected by public policies care more about services rather than citizenship, it raises the question of why we need such citizenship measures. But both our politicians and political scientists tell us that citizenship outcomes such as social capital, political participation, and a citizen’s relationship with government are vital aspects of governance.

Some might argue that our approach is explicitly normative (Moynihan 2003), and that by seeking to expand what are considered outcomes, we are also implicitly promoting a more expansive view of the role of government in society. This argument will come from those who believe that the role of government should be more limited, and that citizenship is the product of families, communities and the qualities of the individual rather than the efforts of government. We acknowledge our argument is normative, but no less so than an approach to measurement that assumes a much narrower reach of government. We are at least explicit in laying out our claims even as the current approach to performance measurement is silent. As for the question of the sources of citizenship, this is an empirical question, and evidence cited here suggests that government can
have a role in shaping citizenship.

It might also be argued that citizenship outcomes are likely to be long-term measures of limited use for day-to-day management. But this is true for many types of outcome measures tracked by government (Hatry 1999), which are intended to prompt managers to think about the overall purposes of government action. We also contend that citizenship measures are relevant to management since many programs depend on the behavior of citizens. But even if citizenship outcomes had no practical relevance to management, managers are not the only audience for performance measures, as PART itself has recognized by seeking to simplify performance measures to make them more appealing to policy-makers and citizens (www.expectmore.gov).

Another reason to consider citizenship outcomes is because it helps us to rethink the relationship between government and citizens. For example, it has become a commonplace that public trust in government is declining because of low confidence in government services. In a 1998 speech Vice-President Al Gore, said "Well, I believe that our work in Reinventing Government has slowly and steadily begun to reverse the downward trend of Americans’ trust in their government, and the facts bear it out."7 One of the stated purposes of the Government Performance and Results Act (Section 2(b)) is: "improve the confidence of the American people in the capability of the Federal Government, by systematically holding Federal agencies accountable for achieving program results.” The premise of this approach is that people distrust government because they perceive it to be inefficient, and that administrative reform that demonstrates efficiency and effectiveness will repair the citizen-government relationship. While survey evidence suggests that those who do not believe government does a good job also distrust government, it is not clear in which direction the causal relationship runs, and more people cite complaints about politicians rather than bureaucrats as their primary cause for complaint. In addition, survey evidence shows that people tend to give relatively positive evaluation of specific agencies or interactions with government (Ingraham and Moynihan 2001).

An alternate view to the “results build trust” approach to the citizen-government relationship is suggested by the policy feedback approach presented in this paper, what Campbell (2003) has termed a “policies build citizens” approach. This view rejects the assumption that citizens are deeply attentive to efforts to foster efficiency. Instead, citizens pay attention to and are affected by the public services that they receive. This is a more policy-grounded view of the citizen-
government relationship, and it is also broader than the "results builds trust" view. The "policies builds citizens" approach suggests that if reformers really seek as their goal to improve citizens’ view of government, they should take into consideration the democratic implications of program design and delivery.

Performance measurement mechanisms such as PART provide one tool for examining these considerations. By increasing attention to program evaluation, PART presents an opportunity to broaden and deepen discussions of program performance and impact. To date, however, the OMB has emphasized socioeconomic measures not only as the ultimate form of measurement, but as the only vantage point from which to assess program performance. We do not disagree with the usefulness of such measures. Rather, we argue that by defining performance in such narrow terms, analysts and policymakers miss broader implications of how policies matter.

References


