Democratic Institutions, Participation, and Service Provision

- SDG 16 calls for states to “ensure responsive, inclusive, and participatory decision making at all levels”

- We take this to mean that the **intrinsic & instrumental** value of participation need to be strengthened

- Participation should make a difference

- Electoral fraud, vote buying or elite capture should not get in the way
Global Trends in Governance, 1946-2010

Source: Polity IV Country Reports 2010
Democratic Institutions, Participation, and Service Provision

Key questions:

1. How to strengthen participation in elections?
2. How to improve citizen-politician linkages?
3. How to improve citizens’ input into the policy-making processes?
4. How to improve service provision via social accountability?
How to strengthen participation in elections?

- Non-partisan information campaigns
- SMS-based information and GOTV
- Non-partisan information on candidates qualification and performance
- Informational campaign against vote-buying and in favor of voting in good conscience
- International and national observers in selected voting sites monitoring registration and Election Day
How to improve citizen-politician linkages?

- Improving citizen’s communication to politicians via communication technologies
- Promoting the leadership of non-elite members in democratic deliberations
How to improve service provision via social accountability?

– Community Development Reconstruction programs

– Representative-based meetings and direct election-based plebiscites in the planning of development projects

– Information campaigns, report cards, and community training
Evidence so far optimistic on the intrinsic value, less on the instrumental

- Increasing participation in democratic processes can produce a **legitimacy bonus**

- There is **less evidence** linking interventions to service provision or **quality** of governance

- Interventions **are less effective than anticipated**

- **Little evidence** that CDR and related programs are effective at altering local **norms**
Possible areas for future research:

– Can local **checks and balances** counteract local political elites?

– Can we **create linkages** across the political system, for example by communicating the results of community deliberations and service providers’ response to other branches of government, other offices in the bureaucracy, or political parties?

– Can an in-depth curriculum for civic education, and community organizing be transformative?

– Do interventions have **long lasting** effects?