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Obstacles and Solutions on the Ladder of Citizen Participation: a Systematic Review

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Description / Abstract

This article presents a systematic review of the English-language empirical literature about citizen participation to identify the obstacles to its implementation and the most successful ways to address them. Three sets of variables seem to impact effectiveness: contextual factors, including information asymmetries and public officials' attitude; organizational arrangements, including community representation criteria and process design; and process management patterns, including group dynamics and collaboration quality. Two recommendations stem from our analysis: internalize decisions in organizational procedures, and establish ongoing interactions between government bodies and their stakeholders. We conclude that half-hearted engagement is unlikely to lead to successful citizen participation.

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