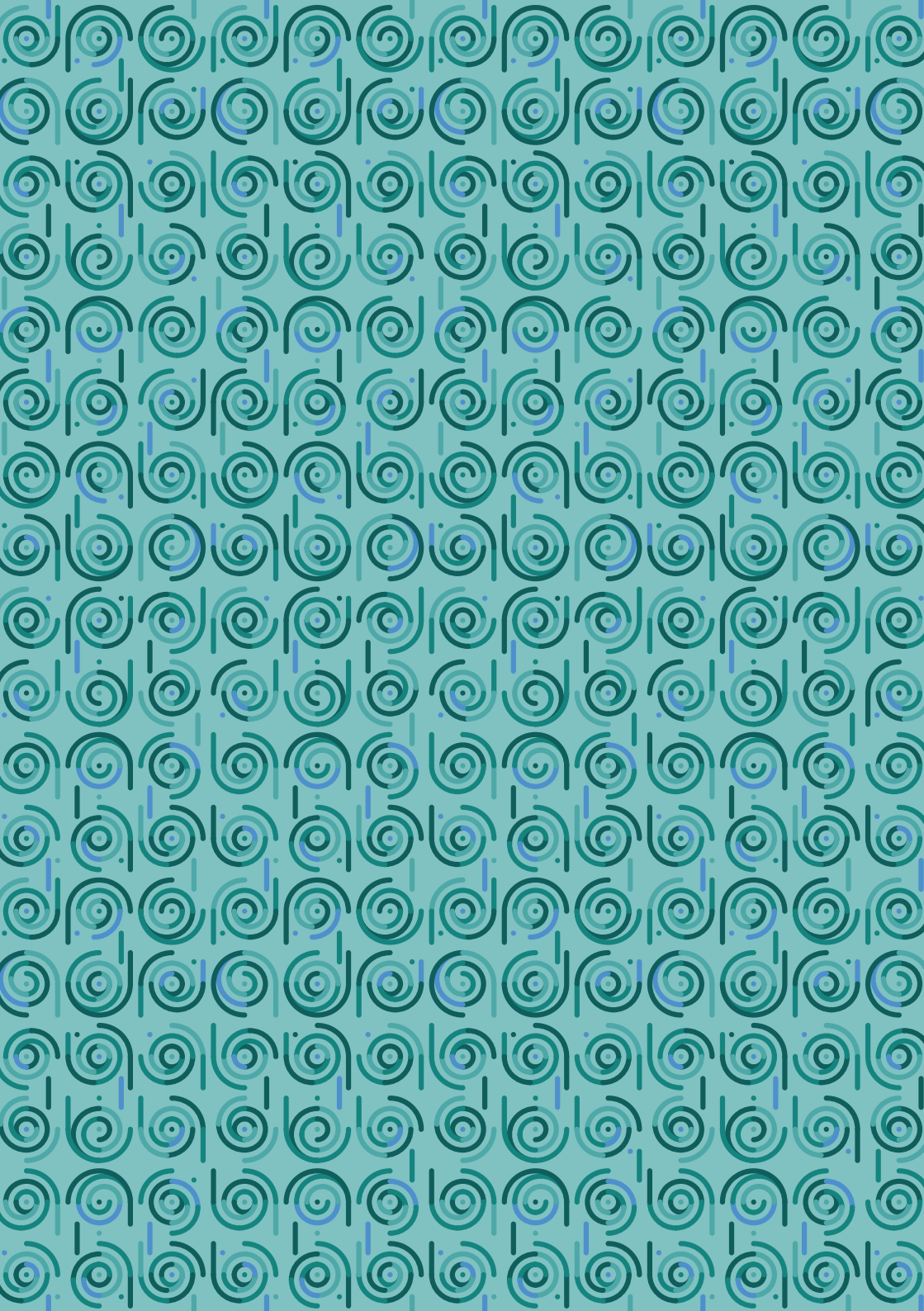


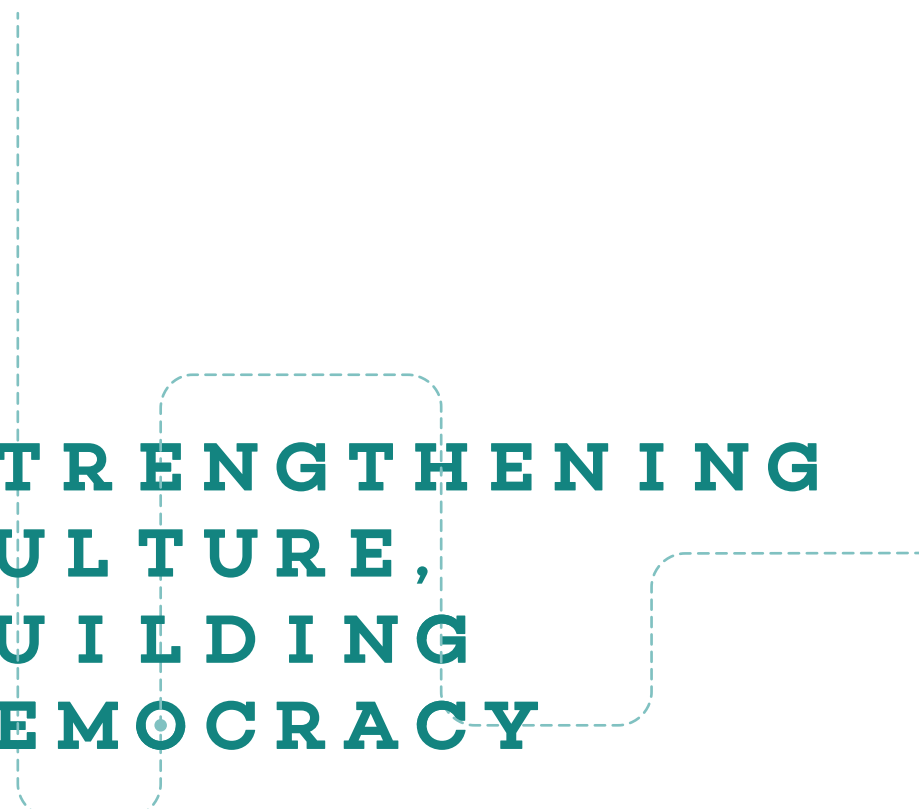


STRENGTHENING
CULTURE,
BUILDING
DEMOCRACY



Atuação





**STRENGTHENING
CULTURE,
BUILDING
DEMOCRACY**

Acknowledgements

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This endeavor would not have been possible without the contributions of our excellent staff, our research committee, our partners, and our investors. We would like to thank the members of our research committee: **Guilherme Cunha Pereira**, CEO of *Grupo Paranaense de Comunicação*; **Kelly McMann**, Professor at Case Western Reserve University; **Laza Kekić**, former Regional Director for Europe at The Economist Intelligence Unit; **Marta Lagos**, Director at *Latinobarómetro*; **Mélida Jimenez**, former Program Manager at International IDEA; **Michael Coppedge**, Professor at the University of Notre Dame and head of the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project; **Rafael Cortez**, Political Analyst at *Tendências Consultoria Integrada*; and **Sarah Repucci**, Director of Publications at Freedom House. We are very grateful to our partners **David Humphreys** and **Romina Bandura**, from The Economist Intelligence Unit; **Lucas Finoti** and **Flávio Osten**, from the Department of Marketing Strategy at the *Universidade Federal do Paraná* (UFPR); **Sabrina Campano Cardoso**, Director at *Zoom Agência de Pesquisas*; and **Simara Greco**, **Fernando Lorenz** and **Morlan Guimarães**, from the *Instituto Brasileiro de Qualidade e Produtividade* (IBQP). We also thank all the investors of Instituto Atuação for their commitment to democratic culture and the future of Brazil, as well as the sponsors of the Local Democracy Index launch event, **Construtora Laguna** and **Renault Brasil**.

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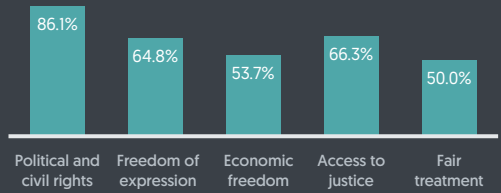
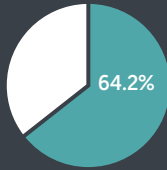
THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY INDEX

Instituto Atuação developed the Local Democracy Index to measure the quality of democracy in cities.

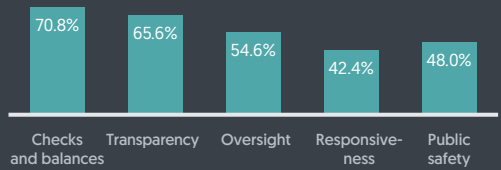
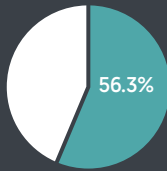
The first evaluation was done in Curitiba, the capital of the State of Paraná, Brazil. The final score calculated for democracy in the city was **49.5%**.

By administering **900 public questionnaires**, conducting in-depth interviews with specialists in the field of democracy, and evaluating secondary data, we were able to analyze the following categories: 1) civil rights and liberties; 2) the functioning of the local government; 3) electoral process and pluralism; 4) political participation, and; 5) democratic culture. After averaging the attributes that compose each category, the scores are as follows:

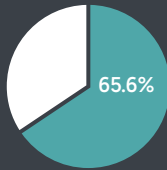
Civil rights and liberties



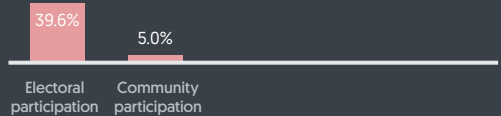
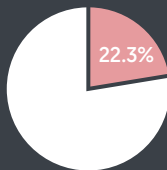
The functioning of the local government



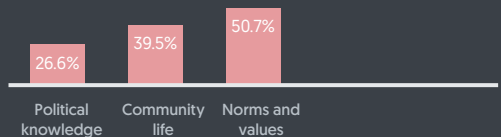
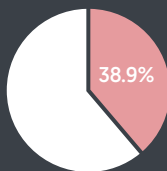
Electoral process and pluralism



Political participation



Democratic culture



The low scores in the categories of **democratic culture (38.9%)** and **political participation (22.3%)** reflect an apathy of the population towards government issues and demonstrate a fault in Curitiba's democracy that is mostly related to **civil society**. This awakens a sense of urgency. Without a strong foundation of democratic culture, institutions, liberties and rights are unsustainable in the long term. Hence, Instituto Atuação identified the need to directly address the root of the problem in our democracy: society itself.

If **democratic culture** is “a set of beliefs, attitudes, norms, perceptions and the like, that support participation”¹, then in what way is society responsible for the lack of democratic culture and **political participation**? The best way to answer such a question is to imagine how things ought to be. Democratic culture demands that people believe democracy is built at the home, street, neighborhood, city, state, and, finally, national level. There must be a common notion that the citizen holds the power to generate transformation in society and politics.

Democracy is also upheld in communities through associations, civil interactions, and **local participation** in governance. Democracy is the recognition of the value of communities, in such a way that “decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen”². Placing emphasis on the local level is crucial for the

1. Almond, Gabriel A.; Verba, Sidney. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. New ed. Sage Publications, 1989.

2. Elstub, Stephen. *Towards a Deliberative and Associational Democracy*. Edinburgh University Press, 2008.

strengthening of democratic culture. Communities are the groups most able to identify challenges and provide adequate solutions “from the bottom up” by engaging citizens. An inert political culture that depends on the public administration for everything cannot be considered democratic.

Therefore, it is necessary that people trust each other³, creating social bonds to solve challenges at the local level. People also need to trust in leadership, understanding there are social entities engaged in the resolution of problems. Finally, people need to believe they live in a democracy capable of ensuring that their personal efforts will be fruitful.

“ Placing emphasis on the local level is crucial for the strengthening of democratic culture”

The issue of **trust** is one of the sources of the problem of democratic culture. Without trust, the sense of community that enables a public space for citizen action is unable to flourish. A culture of mutual trust generates a network of reciprocal relations, binding society together. The higher the **social capital**⁴, the bigger the perception of a sense of community and, thus, the stronger the public sphere. The smaller the social capital, the lower the mutual trust. Thus, developing democratic culture requires generating trust among citizens.

3. Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American Community*. Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2000.

4. Putnam, 2000, p. 19: “social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them”.

The lack of trust is clear in the apathy of our political behavior. It is seen in excessive bureaucracy, which is perceived as the only way to regulate social and economic relations. It is found in the stiffening of commercial relations. And it is apparent in the disrepair of civil society that makes it hard for individuals to live together, work together, help each other, and define individual roles, and create community ideals.

“ (...) developing democratic culture requires generating trust among citizens”

Thus, one needs to abide by the principle of **subsidiarity**, which is a philosophical concept that recognizes that autonomous civil associations are the primary means of resolving challenges in society. This necessitates trust in community interactions at the local level, recognition of the human inclination toward cooperation, and belief that the relationships among individuals in society yield positive fruits. By strengthening civil society as the intermediary of individuals and of the State, we are recognizing that a network of social relations is fundamental to human personality and to the political apparatus.

The Local Democracy Index identified that part of the challenge to democracy is the deficit of democratic culture and political participation. Of all the attributes in the index, the ones with the lowest scores are community participation (5.0%), political knowledge (26.6%) and community life (39.5%). The deficit can be seen in the lack of social trust, which has an outsized impact over other indicators evaluated in the index.



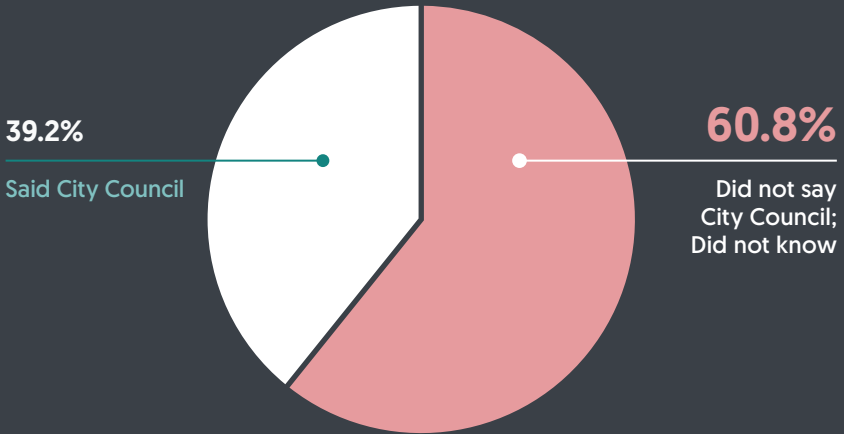
THE CRISIS IN DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

It is concerning that Curitiba scores so low in the category of democratic culture (38.9%). To better understand the problem, we chose to analyze democratic culture based on three attributes: political knowledge, community life, and norms and values. These attributes were derived from the adopted definition of democratic culture: “a set of beliefs, attitudes, norms, perceptions and the like, that support participation”. Political knowledge relates to the perception and to the knowledge available to people concerning their political reality; community life deals with the social relations which orient attitudes and inclinations; and norms and values are the beliefs people have about society, politics and social trust.

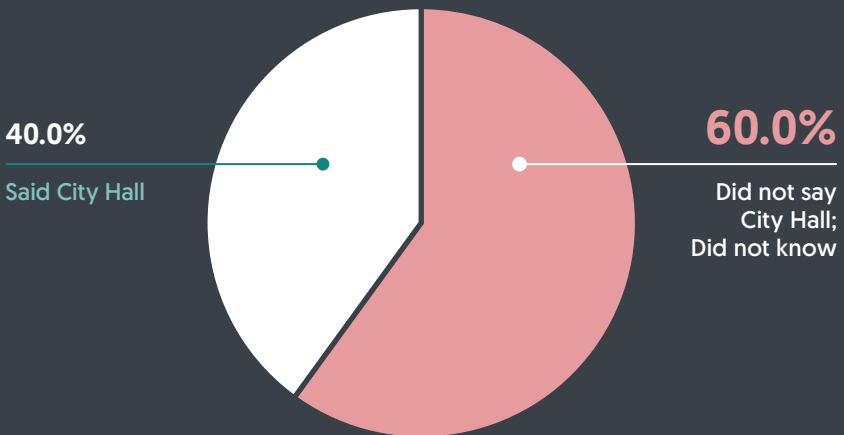
“ (...) only a little over a quarter of the respondents minimally understand the structure of the State”

Political knowledge was the attribute with the lowest score (26.6%) among the three. It was found that only a little over a quarter of the respondents minimally understand the structure of the State. When we asked citizens which entity of the State was primarily responsible for the creation and the approval of municipal laws, 60.8% of the respondents could not provide the correct answer (the City Council). This issue persisted when respondents were asked about the municipal executive body (60.0% could not say City Hall). The paradox is that despite the low scores on questions about designations, when asked about the primary role of the City Hall, only 0.3% of the respondents said they were unsure. So, even though the concept of the Executive Power was unclear to citizens, there were many expectations of its performance. This indicates a

Knowing which is the municipal legislative body



Knowing which is the municipal executive body

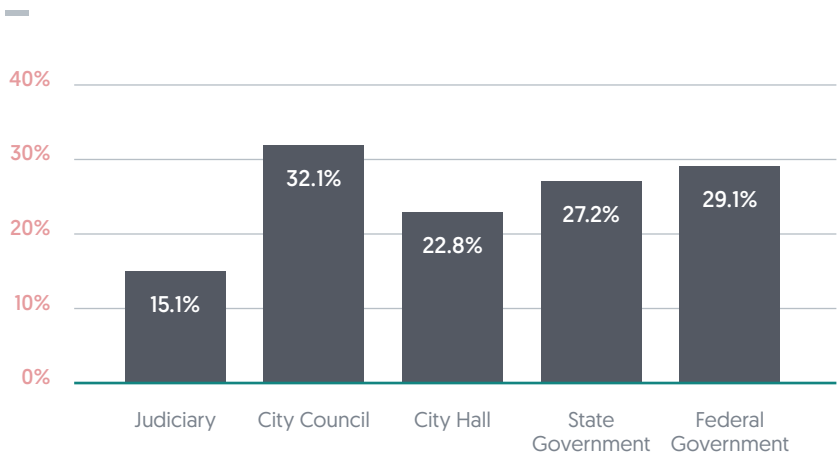


big problem: people are unaware that they are unaware, expecting too much from what they don't know.

The high expectations of the government indicate that citizens lack understanding about their own role. Instead of addressing problems through personal initiative, citizens immediately demand a solution from the government.

The combination of high expectations from the citizenry and the government's inability to fulfill them generates low levels of institutional trust. It is like Thomas Sowell once wrote: "when the people want the impossible, only liars can satisfy them"⁵. When questioned about the trust they have in different governmental institutions (0 being the minimum score and 10

Percentage of respondents giving a score zero for trust (by institution)

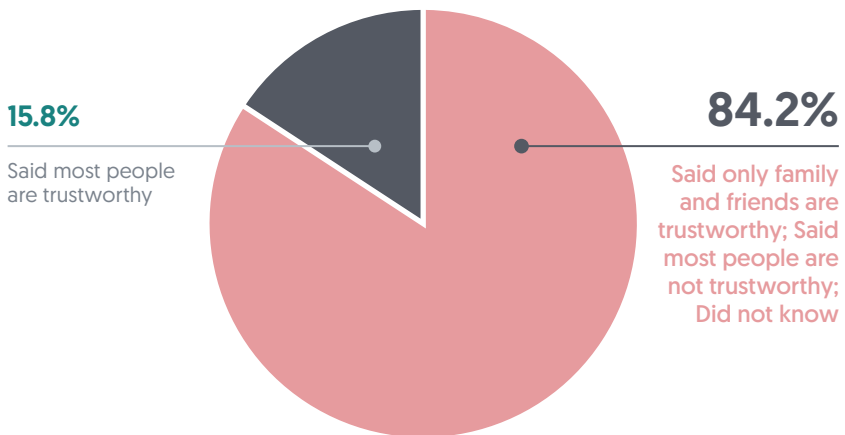


5. Sowell, Thomas. *Big Lies in Politics*. In: *Creators*, 2012.

being the maximum score), it was found that 15.1% of interviewees distrust the Judiciary completely, attributing a trust score of 0 to this branch. Other institutions, such as the City Council, the City Hall, the State Government and the Federal Government, are completely distrusted by 32.1%, 22.8%, 27.2%, and 29.1% of citizens, respectively.

The low levels of trust also extend to civil society: only 15.8% of the respondents said most people are trustworthy. This lack of trust in society impedes the strengthening of democracy. If democracy rests upon the idea that individuals are the primary actors ensuring community welfare, then believing in democracy requires faith in the competence of citizens as decision-makers.

Level of interpersonal trust



As previously mentioned, civil associations are the spokespeople for social reform. However, as the Local Democracy Index identified, com-

munity life also performs badly in Curitiba. More than 90% of the respondents indicated that they have rarely or never participated in collective activities in the community. Adhering to the idea that associations are the “schools of citizenship”, we see the weakness of community life as another reason for the crisis of democratic culture.

“ (...) civil associations are the spokespeople for social reform”

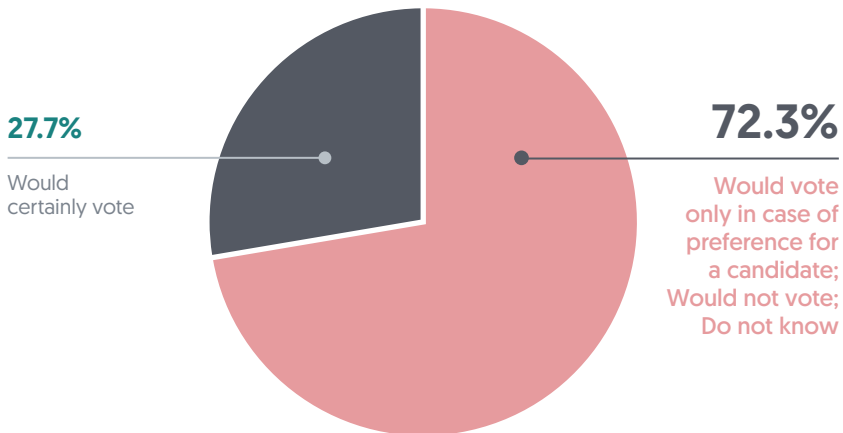
Without participating in associations, citizens do not collectively learn about political institutions and are unable to find space for engaging in community decision-making, as democracy requires.

CORRODED POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The evaluation of political participation was completed with consideration of the fact that voting is mandatory in Brazil. Therefore, the act of voting itself does not qualify as a measure of active participation. Instead of measuring the voter turnout, we asked the citizens of Curitiba if they felt committed to the electoral process. Only 27.7% of interviewees attested that they would definitely keep exercising the right to vote if voting was optional. This implies that voting has been reduced to a mere legal obligation, instead of a meaningful opportunity for participating in political transformation.

Beyond the low disposition to vote in elections if voting was optional, the survey also identified a low interest in political party affiliation. Only 3%

Willingness to vote, should voting be optional

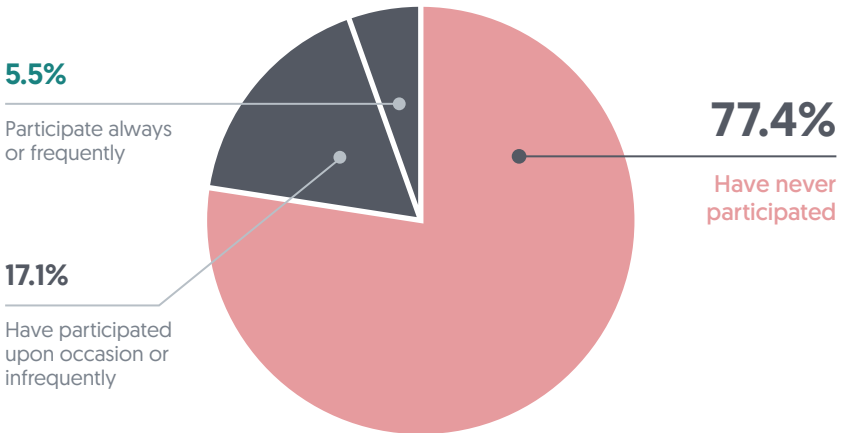


of the respondents were affiliated with parties, and of this minority of respondents, half admitted to rarely participating in party meetings. Beyond the lack of participation via political parties, results also show detachment between the civil society and the political sphere. Although there are a

“ (...) voting has been reduced to a mere legal obligation, instead of a meaningful opportunity for participating in political transformation”

variety of platforms allowing for public expression (public hearings, meetings at the City Council, protests, etc.), people do not seem interested in participating. More than 90% of the respondents indicated that they have never participated in a public hearing or in a meeting at the City Council, while 77.4% said the same about political protests, activism, or petitions.

Participation in protests, activism, or petitions



The population clearly lacks the desire to participate. The reason is not some sort of government censorship or the suppression of protests – civil and political rights scored 86.1%, while freedom of expression scored 64.8%. In other words, people know they have the right to protest and to express themselves but do not do it. The lack of citizens exercising these rights further indicates that political participation's abysmal score (22.3%, the lowest of all main categories) is a direct result of a deficit in democratic culture.

Tempering that assessment, it is essential to recognize that expecting 100% of citizens to directly participate in protests, activism and petitions, is not desired, nor realistic. Political participation manifests itself through other, more profound and substantial facets in the citizen's daily life. A well-structured community is generally capable of mobilizing itself and of advocating for desired reform. The communal task of building

social capital “can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions”⁶. This associative condition encourages the individuals to participate in politics.

“ A well-structured community is generally capable of mobilizing itself and of advocating for desired reform”

The acquisition of social capital, in turn, requires broad participation, especially in the concerns of community and municipal life. How, then, can one expect individuals to participate more in politics at the local level? In order to think of effective solutions for its community challenges, civil society must incentivize citizens to participate. This is the only way a tangible sense of political participation can emerge. By introducing politics into everyday life, a truly democratic culture can be created and become rooted in the lives of citizens.

“ In order to think of effective solutions for its community challenges, civil society must incentivize citizens to participate”

6. Putnam, Robert D., Leonardi, Robert, and Nanetti, Raffaella. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press, 1993.

THE LABORATORY FOR CHANGE: *CIDADE MODELO*

The Local Democracy Index taught us that the challenges of democracy are, largely, derived from the internal issues of communities. People trust neither their institutions nor each other. There is also a prevailing sense that citizens have unreasonable expectations of the government, given that many do not recognize their own responsibilities.

To reach its vision of transforming Brazil into a full democracy, Instituto Atuação has developed a **laboratory** capable of finding the means to reach a fully democratic culture: the *Cidade Modelo* (Model City) program. This program will test theories and solutions for the deficit in democratic culture at the local level, in order to effectively transform political reality and reach conclusions of global relevance. The program seeks to find the main catalysts of a structural transformation by investigating the relevance of public safety, education, trust, etc. to democracy.

“ This program will test theories and solutions for the deficit in democratic culture at the local level”

The *Cidade Modelo* Program is based on three principles: an evidence-based **diagnosis** of the problem, a conception of a systemic approach to it, and a Collective Impact methodology. The Local Democracy Index is part of the effort to diagnose the problem. It allows us to grasp the reality of democratic culture in Curitiba through interviews, discussion groups, co-creation workshops and other collective activities. Using a **systemic approach** to improving democratic culture means mapping all the influential factors using globally relevant theories and context-specific metrics. By combining these principles, we will

develop a Theory of Change in order to create a roadmap for the promotion of democratic culture in Curitiba. Lastly, **Collective Impact** is the means through which the main leaders, social actors, and organizations in the city will collaboratively develop strategies, action plans, and progress metrics, supported by Instituto Atuação.

Collective Impact



Isolated Impact

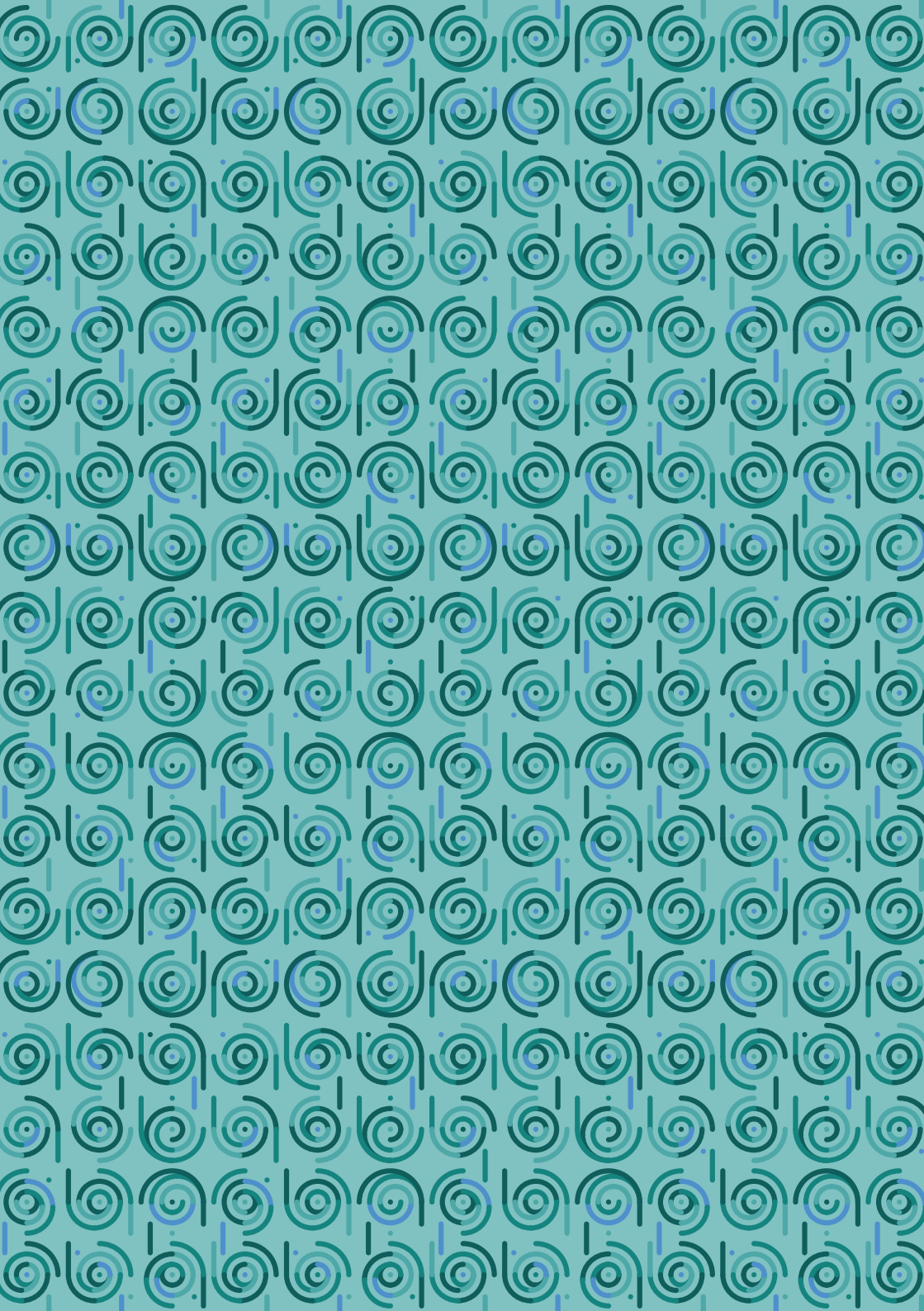


Collective Impact

Collective Impact is a methodology created by FSG Consulting to address complex, large-scale social problems, such as public safety, edu-

cation and health. The methodology of collective impact seeks to unite important actors of different sectors around a common agenda, while ensuring constant communication among them, and guaranteeing that all activities complement each other. As the backbone organization, Instituto Atuação will guarantee the efficacy of the collaboration and the directing of all efforts of the *Cidade Modelo* Program towards its goal.

The application of the Local Democracy Index and of the *Cidade Modelo* Program in Curitiba is only the first step in an undertaking of national and global importance. Starting work at the local level is based upon the premise that the world depends on the democracies of Curitiba, of Rio de Janeiro, of New Delhi, of San Francisco, of Luanda, of Berlin. A democratic world demands democratic cities.



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