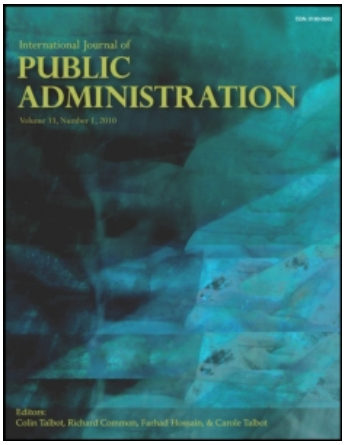

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Citizen Participation: Models and Methods

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Abstract: The belief that individuals should be given a voice in their governance appeals to our democratic ideals and in fact has long been identified internationally as one of the unique aspects of the United States. While there appears to be universal agreement that the involvement of citizens in the decision making process of government is a good idea, there is little agreement as to the best way to achieve meaningful involvement. There are many ways to consult with the public and get a sense of what they see as problems and opportunities; it is quite another thing to actively engage citizens in the decision-making process. This paper explores the challenges and dilemmas associated with direct citizen participation, reflects on the various models of citizen-government interactions and makes recommendations for moving beyond conventional participation. While the benefits of including citizens in the deliberative process are widely recognized, citizen participation is not routinely sought in the decision making process.

Keywords: citizen participation, decision making, performance

DEMOCRATIC THEORY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Citizen participation is a "contested concept"[1] and possibly one of the biggest questions surrounding civic engagement and public participation in government decision making is determining how much participation is enough. Some theories argue in favor of indirect involvement, while others favor direct and deliberative models of collaboration. Indirect involvement acknowledges that in a representative democracy elected officials and professional administrators should act on the behalf of citizens and in the best interest of the state. Direct democracy, on the other hand, suggests that citizens are the "owners" of government[2] and should therefore be involved in the decisions of the state.

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Some political science theorists[3] have argued that representative democracy is more appropriate and effective than direct democracy because direct participation is untenable in the modern bureaucratic state. Direct participation is idealistic. People are either too passionate and selfish or too passive and apathetic.[4] Indirect participation has its benefits. Citizens cannot be expected to be responsible for every public sector decision; they lack the time, knowledge, and personal motivation to do so. Given the size and complexity of the public sector, direct participation is not realistic. The technical, political and administrative skills needed to manage effectively in a global environment require a certain level of expertise that many citizens do not possess and a time commitment the average citizen is not willing to make.

Irving and Stansbury[5] assert that direct participation has social and economic costs that make it undesirable in certain situations and certain place-based characteristics, such as community size, wealth and homogeneity, may predict the success or failure of participation. Their research shows that ideal conditions for effective participation exist in some communities, but not in others. And Olson[6] argues that public participation is doomed because the broad and shallow interests of citizens will always be overruled by the narrow and deep interests of organized groups.

Those who favor direct democracy[7] believe the more one participates, and the more arenas one participates in, the more capable and involved one is likely to become. Beyond its educative and empowering role, direct democracy promotes a sense of community and common bonds that transcend individual interest. An involved and engaged community makes direct democracy and participatory decision-making possible.[8] Advocates of direct participation believe that citizens have the knowledge and expertise necessary to participate in public sector decisions that affect them.

Participatory theorists argue that meaningful citizen participation not only leads to better decision making, but also facilitates social stability by developing a sense of community, increasing collective decision making, and promoting acceptance and respect of the governance process.[9] Direct democracy depends, in part, on people being exposed to information and viewpoints they would not have chosen themselves. Surowiecki[10] asserts “under the right circumstances groups are remarkably intelligent and often smarter than the smartest people in them. The diversity of experience, opinion, and knowledge can render the whole greater than the sum of its parts.”

The debate of direct versus indirect participation is an ongoing one that requires public administrators to make decisions on how and when to include citizens in the deliberative process. Some researchers assert that the current debate has moved beyond the question of whether direct democracy is more desirable than indirect democracy to the question of what type of participation process works best.[11] It is no longer a matter of electing representatives to act on the citizens’ behalf, but rather a question of what type of participation works best?

Or put more broadly, how should citizens and public administrators view their roles within the citizen government relationship so that citizens feel empowered and administrators do not feel threatened? Direct citizen participation is no longer a normative ideal; it is a reality and public administrators, through their actions, are central to the success or failure of participatory efforts. Public administrators can invite open and direct participation or they can discourage, and even prevent it from happening.[12]

The purpose of this article is to explore the challenges and dilemmas associated with direct citizen participation, reflect on the various models of citizen-government interactions that have been proposed in the literature and make recommendations for future research and future administrative action.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

For the purpose of this article citizen participation is defined as participation in the planning and administrative processes of government. It is the interaction between citizens and administrators that focuses on policy issues and service delivery. As such, it differs from political participation, which encompasses voting or contacting elected officials. It also differs from the broader concept of civic engagement where individuals support their community through volunteer efforts and civic activism. In this context, citizen participation is considered to have a direct impact on policy formulation and implementation. Citizens are viewed as an integral part of the governance process and their active involvement is considered essential to the critical decisions facing a community.[13]

The public administration literature clearly reflects a renewed interest in civic engagement and the responsibilities that public administrators have to their constituency to be responsive and results-oriented.[14] A public sector centered on efficiency, economy, and effectiveness often overlooks the values of a democratic society. The challenge for public administrators is to balance the traditional values of equity, fairness, and participation with responsiveness and efficiency. A government that balances efficient and rational service provision with open and democratic process is an ideal, and possibly one of the most challenging, exciting and important tasks for public administrators.[15]

Recent reform efforts reflect the desire for a more democratic or collaborative form of governance and a more active administration, where public administrators actively seek input from various stakeholders prior to making policy decisions or implementing new programs. The Denhardts[16] propose a "new public service" that is built on the democratic values of fairness and equity, but also promotes a sense of community and civil society. They believe public administrators should "focus on their responsibility to *serve and empower citizens* as they manage public organizations and implement public policy."[17] Accordingly, public servants should help citizens articulate

their needs; help build a collective and shared notion of public interest; help build relationships of trust with and among citizens; and be attentive to community values and citizen interests. The public service they envision is based on collaboration, communication and the public interest.

As Nalbandian[18] describes it, public administration is transitioning from "professional elitism" to a "community paradigm" where public managers are seen as community builders and enablers of democracy. Participation mechanisms that promote this community paradigm are ones that foster dialogue—an honest, open exchange of ideas where the intent is to listen to and understand one another and deliberation—critical thinking and reasoned argument as a way to make decisions.[19] Public administrators, many who were once comfortable making decisions behind closed doors and away from public pressure and scrutiny, are now expected to facilitate dialogue among stakeholders, negotiate agreement among disparate interests, use participatory decision making strategies, communicate effectively, build teams, and foster partnerships.

In exploring this renewed interest in direct participation Moynihan[20] identifies three closely related theoretical arguments that support this growing interest in citizen participation: postmodern discourse theory, disillusionment with bureaucracy, and the search for a democratic ideal. He cites evidence of a worldwide shift to "postmodern values" that include a lack of trust of formal institutions, such as government and political parties, increased mobility, the weakening of traditional family structures and the values associated with those traditional structures, as well as the overall desire for more participatory democracies. The disillusionment with bureaucracy has risen along side the growing frustration with traditional governance models that promote hierarchy and insulate public servants from the public. As such, the values of bureaucratic governance are in conflict with the values of democratic participation. The search for the democratic ideal reflects the democratic wish and yearning for a direct, communal democracy combined with a fear of bureaucratic power that is perceived as a threat to liberty.

CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS

Theorists are asking public administrators to make significant changes in their relationship with citizens and the model of interaction they adopt. They are also asking public administrators to accept the democratic ideals for including citizens in the deliberative process as sufficient rationale for modifying their behavior and the processes that are in place. Public managers are encouraged to adopt a participatory style that actively involves citizens because it is the right thing to do; because it builds on democratic ideals, builds trust and fosters civil society.[21] Compared with the literature on political participation and civic engagement,[22] few systematic empirical studies have examined

citizen participation and administrative action. Advocates of direct participation have never been able to quiet their critics, who question the feasibility, desirability, or legitimacy of direct participation.[23] Empirical evidence is needed to demonstrate the tangible value of including citizens in the deliberative process and to successfully make the argument to do so. Normative values are persuasive, but empirical evidence is compelling.

The lack of empirical evidence should come as no surprise given the complexity and ambiguity of the topic. Although there is a great deal of speculation about the advantages, and disadvantages, of direct participation few definitive statements can be made about when and how to include the public in the deliberative process. Those who advocate greater citizen participation do so for a variety of reasons: to promote democracy, build trust, increase transparency, enhance accountability, build social capital, reduce conflict, ascertain priorities, promote legitimacy, cultivate mutual understanding, and advance fairness and justice.[24]

Those who express caution and concern about direct citizen participation raise the following concerns: it is inefficient, time-consuming, costly, politically naïve, unrealistic, and disruptive, and it lacks broad representation.[25] In addition, critics argue that citizens lack expertise and knowledge; are motivated by their personal interest, not the public good; and citizens can be passive, selfish, and apathetic, as well as cynical.[26] These differences reflect the competing perspectives on democratic and administrative theory, as well as some of the contradictions inherent in contemporary society.[27]

MODELS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

In an effort to sort out the different perspectives on citizen and government interactions, several models of citizen participation have been put forth over the years to explain the relationship and the dynamic of the exchange that takes between the governed and those who do the governing. It is worthy to highlight these models as they help us envision the participatory process and better understand the interaction and dynamic between citizens and public administrators. While the paradigms differ, a pattern does evolve. What we consistently see in these models are two extremes: completely uninvolved and passive citizens at one end and active and engaged citizens at the other. It is the middleground, in between these two extremes, where most forms of citizen participation take place. We understand the extremes, yet there is little empirical evidence or theory about what takes place in between these two extremes.

One of the earliest and best known models of citizen participation is Shelley Arnstein's[28] ladder of participation where she equates the level of citizen participation with the steps on a ladder. The bottom rung represents no involvement on the part of citizens and the top rung reflects an active and engaged role for citizens, where they enter into partnership with public

administrators. In between are various levels of participation that Arnstein admits could number over 150, yet she defines as 8.

Thomas[29] developed a similar typology of participation from an administrative perspective. He describes five decision-making approaches that public administrators can adopt that are parallel to Arnstein's ladder of participation. At one extreme the public administrator makes autonomous decisions, without public involvement, and at the other extreme the public administrator makes the decision after full and broad consultation with the public. In between, the public administrator chooses to adopt different levels of citizen participation, from the input of a select group of advisors to a more inclusive process. In both models the public administrator is in control and makes the determination of how and when to bring the public into the process.

Box[30] depicts citizens along a continuum with freeriders (clients) at one end and activists (owners) at the other end. In the middle are watchdogs who get involved only when the issues affect them personally. The freeriders prefer the comfort of their easy chair and entrust public administrators to act in their best interest.[31] The watchdogs get involved if, and only if, public issues impact them directly. The activists are involved on a continuous basis as they feel it is their responsibility to be informed, engaged and hold government accountable. Timney[32] presents three models of citizen participation: active, passive and transitional. Active participation requires that citizens be in control. In this paradigm, citizens own the process and articulate policy and public agencies serve as consultants. Passive participation is at the other end of the spectrum, where the agency is in control and participation is merely a formality. With the transitional model, power and control are shared between citizens and agencies and the citizens' role, for the most part, is advisory.

Vigoda[33] envisions an evolutionary continuum of public administrator and citizen interaction. At one end of the continuum citizens are portrayed as subjects where government holds coercive power over them and citizens must do as government dictates. At the other end of the continuum, citizens are owners of the state and have coercive power over government and government must do as citizens dictate. Along the way from total government control to total citizen control are interactions with varying degrees of reciprocity, responsiveness and collaboration.

A value-centered model that focuses on the worth of government to its citizens is presented as an alternative to the customer and owner models which have been widely discussed in the public administration literature.[34] In the customer model, citizens are perceived as passive consumers of government services. Their interaction with government is primarily through transactions or complaints and it is very much a one way relationship, with citizens looking to see what government has to offer them. The owner model views citizens as the owners of government, and as such, they have a duty to assume an active role in improving government services, making decisions, challenging government actions and holding government accountable.[35]

With the value-centered model, both citizens and government are active, engaged and focused on creating value for citizens. Citizens are perceived as investors and shareholders in the public trust and common wealth of the community. The shareholder metaphor implies a participative and communal form of wealth creation that involves partnership, co-investment, common interest, cooperation and sharing among citizens as co-owners of government.

The Table summarizes the various models presented in the public administration literature; specifically focusing on the roles for citizens and administrators, the managerial approach to citizens, the inherent dynamic in this approach and the method of interaction that results because of the relationship and dynamics. The roles are not mutually exclusive. A citizen can be a subject, voter, customer, and co-producer simultaneously, yet his or her interaction with a specific agency or administrator at any given point in time will be dominated by one of the roles he or she plays and thus the dynamic of the interaction and the method of interacting is a reflection of the role he or she plays. For example, when a citizen pays taxes or the fine associated with a traffic violation, he or she is essentially a subject of government. When that same individual goes to the post office to purchase stamps he or she is obviously a customer. The role of the administrator in these scenarios changes as well from an authoritative figure to a professional provider of customer service.

Another dilemma with the simplification of the citizen-government interaction in this, and other models, is that their can be role conflict. A citizen may perceive him or herself as a co-producer, but the administrator sees him or herself as a client. Likewise an administrator can see him or herself as a public servant, but the citizen sees him or her as a ruler.

As Roberts cautions, "Deeply ingrained beliefs and role expectations are not transformed overnight nor do they move in parallel. Administrators can be caught in a vortex of competing theories, each with a different claim about administrative and citizen behavior."[36]

It is also important to recognize that these models overlap, indicating that the progress from one stage to another is gradual and that the coexistence of characteristics reflects the natural progression of change. These models and frameworks help us visualize the citizen-government interaction, yet questions still remain. The overall integration of the various models, depicted in Table 1, has its limitations, yet it assists in conceptualizing the citizen-administrator interactions and dynamics.

CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS

The roles, relationships, and dynamics between citizens and administrators have changed over the years and these changes typically reflect the values embodied in reform movements and public opinion about the appropriate role of government. Public sector reform efforts typically reflect public confidence

Table 1. Administrator—Citizen Interactions

Administrator Role	Citizen Role	Managerial Approach	Dynamic	Method of Interaction
Ruler	Subject	Coercive	Authority	Government Control
Implementer	Voter	Representative	Trust	Voting
Expert	Client	Neutral Competence	Control	Compliance
Professional	Customer	Responsive	Passive	Consultive
Public Servant	Citizen	Facilitative	Engaged	Deliberative
Co-producer	Co-producer	Collaborative	Active	Partnership
Broker	Investor	Communal	Cooperative	Co-investing
Employee	Owner	Compliance	Conflict	Citizen Control

in the private sector during times of economic growth and stability and confidence in the public sector during times of social unrest and economic uncertainty. In other words, citizens look to government for the answers when the private sector falters and look to the private sector for solutions when trust in the public sector is low. Kelly[37] refers to this as public-regarding and private-regarding, and while she specifically discusses these reforms in relationship to performance measurement, this inward-outward perspective applies to citizen participation as well.

The alternative theories about the appropriate relationship between citizens and public administrators reflect the changing external environment. When citizens are satisfied with the public sector and the overall implementation of policy initiatives they seek less active involvement in the deliberative process and are likely to be content as customers and clients of government. When there is greater dissatisfaction, or frustration, with government's ability to effectively design and implement public programs there is greater interest in active citizen participation.[38]

The roles that citizens and administrators play, as highlighted in Table 1, are closely intertwined and reflect various reform movements and public opinion about the appropriate role of government.

Citizen as subject/Administrator as ruler: reflects the authority system where the administrator, acting on the behalf of an authority figure, gives the command, and the citizen obeys. Government is in control and administrators hold almost absolute power over the people. This form of governance is based on rigid bureaucratic structures and a nondemocratic culture.[39]

Citizen as voter/ Administrator as implementer: reflects a representative democracy where administrators are held accountable to elected officials and citizens vote for the person they feel best represents their interests. The administrators are the implementers of public policy. Citizens voice their opinion through the ballot box and rely on the experience and civic responsibility of elected officials and administrators to act on their behalf.

Citizen as client/ Administrator as expert: reflects traditional public administration where the administrator as the expert, makes rational, value-free decisions. Citizens are clients who defer to the expertise of the professional bureaucrat. As clients, citizens are dependent on the bureaucracy. With this model citizens are thought to lack the knowledge and expertise to be involved in decision making so they provide input, when asked, but otherwise quietly accept the actions and decisions of the administrative experts.[40]

Citizen as customer/ Administrator as professional/entrepreneur: reflects the new public management where the administrator adopts a private sector, customer-centered approach. The emphasis is on responsiveness and customer service. The citizen, as the customer, adopts a passive, self-serving relationship with government. The entrepreneurial emphasis encourages other modes of service delivery, through partnerships and contracts, so government is no longer the direct, sole provider of services and citizens have choices.[41]

Citizen as citizen/Administrator as public servant: reflects the new public service where the administrators serve and empower citizens as they manage public organizations and implement public policy. Public servants act as facilitators and partners rather than experts and entrepreneurs. Citizens look beyond their own self-interest and act as engaged participants who enter into meaningful, reciprocal relationships with government.[42]

Citizen as co-producer/Administrator co-producer: reflects the ideal of co-production and collaboration where citizens and administrators collaborate with one another to solve problems and get things done. The relationship reflects an active partnership with shared responsibility for maintaining strong and healthy communities. Co-production is seen as an attractive alternative as governments confront the competing demands for increased services and reductions in expenditures.[43]

Citizen as investor/Administrator as broker: reflects a value-centered management where citizens are perceived as investors and shareholders in the public trust and public administrators act as the broker, responsibly investing, on behalf of the shareholders, to maximize the return for the community and individual investors. The relationship is cooperative and communal wealth creation promotes a common interest, cooperation, and sharing among citizens.[44]

Citizen as owner/Administrator as employee: reflects the ownership model where citizens are in control and public administrators comply and abide by the owners' decisions. As owners, citizens have the obligation to assume an active role in delivering government services. The relationship can be conflictual because citizens are in control and administrators are expected to comply.[45]

As this continuum unfolds, from citizen as a subject to citizen as investor, and from administrator as ruler to administrator as public servant and co-producer, we see that the role of the public administrator is central in determining the level of citizen participation. It is only when the citizen becomes

the owner that they have control over the process and outcomes. This model of citizen ownership is impractical as every citizen cannot be equally responsible for the decisions of the state. While much has been written on the roles and relationships between citizens and administrators, few studies have been conducted that explore why and how citizens are included in the deliberative process. Why do some public administrators embrace the idea of including citizens? What prompts one community, or agency, to be open, inclusive, and deliberative in their interactions with the public, while other communities, and agencies, opt to exclude citizens as much as possible? What characteristics are present in the open and deliberative environments that are not present in the closed environments?

VALUE OF DIRECT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Direct citizen participation has been emphasized by more and more administrative theorists.[46] However, many observations are based upon normative reasoning, personal experiences, interviews, or case studies. Compared with the literature on political participation and civic engagement[47] few systematic studies have examined citizen participation in terms of decision making and service delivery functions.

One potential reason is that advocates for direct participation have never been able to quiet their critics, who question the feasibility, desirability, or legitimacy of direct participation.[48] If direct participation is not always feasible or desirable, why should we be interested in promoting its utilization? It is because of the theoretical controversy that systematic studies are necessary. Future theory building should be based on an understanding of when and how to involve citizens, and to what extent.

The following research, much of it qualitative, provides some examples of recent studies conducted on citizen participation. A variety of methods from comparative case studies to survey research have been utilized. These researchers are contributing to our knowledge of direct citizen participation, which, as we know, is complex and contested, and are attempting to build theory by identifying the conditions under which direct participation flourishes, or fails.

King, Felty, and Susel[49] conducted interviews with subject matter experts, followed by focus group discussions with public administrators, activists, and average citizens, as they sought to understand citizen participation from the perspective of both public administrators and citizens. Through their research they identify the obstacles that prevent “authentic” participation from taking place as well as the strategies necessary to engender effective and satisfying participation. Their findings indicate that authentic participation requires dialogue and deliberation, where citizens play an active and central role in the process. They attribute the failure of many participation efforts to

the conventional model of participation that is most commonly utilized. In this model, citizens are alienated from the process and public administrators, in their role as experts, dominate and control the ability of citizens to participate.

The researchers also identify the barriers to authentic participation as the nature of contemporary life, administrative processes that are in place, and the techniques utilized for participation. To overcome these barriers the authors recommend education and re-education for citizens and administrators, as well as the redesign of administrative processes and structures in an effort to change the way citizens and administrators communicate and interact.

In an analysis of four large-scale trials of deliberative democracy, Weeks concludes that it is possible to convene large, public deliberation processes that enable local governments to take effective action on previously intractable issues. He defines deliberative democracy as "informed participation by citizens in the deliberative process of community decision making"[50] and identifies the major challenge to such deliberation as the design of a participatory process that allows for broad, representative participation, informed public participation, deliberative participation, and credible results.

Nalbandian[51] conducted interviews with city management professionals over a ten year span of time to determine the changes in the context of the manager's roles, responsibilities, and values. The professionals in his sample were first interviewed in 1989 and then again in 1999. The biggest changes surrounded the managers' relationship with the community. Administrators stated that community building had become a large part of their responsibilities and they were expected to facilitate community building and enable democracy through open communication and direct participation with citizens.

Callahan and Yang, through survey research and in-depth interviews with public administrators, explored the question of how much training and professional development is provided to public sector employees and citizens to promote citizen participation and deliberative democracy. The survey indicated that only 7% of the 428 counties and cities responding provide "a lot" of training for their employees on ways to facilitate citizen participation, such as how to convene public meetings, lead focus group discussions and communicate effectively. Through interviews, the researchers found that the training provided for public sector employees is haphazard, especially when compared to the training and education provided to citizens, which they found was much more systematic. Citizens had the opportunity to take part in formalized training through citizen academies and leadership development seminars.

The researchers concluded:

> Our concern is that the informal and haphazard approach to training public managers on civic engagement techniques, both in the field and in the classroom, puts meaningful engagement endeavors at risk . . . If we expect administrators to be facilitators, partners, and collaborators who encourage dialogue, build teams, foster partnerships and utilize

participatory decision making strategies then we need to provide the appropriate training to equip these public administrators with the skills they need to do their jobs effectively.[52]

Wang[53] surveyed local government administrators about citizen input in various management and service functions in local communities with populations greater than 50,000. He also explored the participation mechanisms utilized, such as public hearings, citizen advisory committees and the Internet. He found that public hearings were the most frequently utilized (97%) followed by citizen advisory committees (80%). Interestingly, Wang noted that jurisdictions using surveys and focus group discussions were more optimistic about their effectiveness and their ability to ensure citizen satisfaction. He found that citizens are involved in a variety of functional areas, such as parks and recreation or zoning and planning, but only to provide advice on programs and policies. Citizens had limited involvement in terms of priority setting and decision making. Wang indicated that citizen participation in decision making was "very limited." In addition, only 23% of the chief administrative officers indicated they involve citizens in the monitoring of performance and 25% in the evaluation of program objectives.

These findings are similar to the findings of Poister and Streib's[54] survey on the utilization of performance measurement in local governments. In their study they sought to examine the extent to which performance measurement had been integrated into contemporary local government management in US cities with populations greater than 25,000. Interestingly, when the city managers were asked why they were adopting performance measurement strategies 42% indicated they measured performance to increase accountability to citizens, yet only 3% of the respondents indicated they involved citizens in the development of performance measures.

Experimental research in social psychology has found that face to face communication is the single greatest factor in increasing the likelihood of cooperation.[55] Talking, face to face, allows group members to demonstrate their willingness to cooperate and they can assess the willingness of other group members. It also helps them see the connection between their self-interest and that of the group. The consensus that emerges from group dialogue leads to actual cooperative behavior, with more talking leading to more cooperation.[56]

CONCLUSION

Although limited, this body of research indicates that while many people see the value of direct citizen participation, it is still not widely adopted by public administrators who control the process and the opportunities to participate. There is evidence that when done right, direct participation, and deliberative democracy produce positive outcomes. Public administrators recognize their

roles are changing, they acknowledge that they are expected to be more open and facilitative, yet little training is being provided, on a systematic basis, to equip them with the skills they need to effectively perform in their new role.

The gap between the ideal of citizen participation in the deliberative process and the practice is quite significant according to the results cited here. For those who favor direct and authentic citizen participation this should not be a source of discouragement. Significant strides are being made to introduce and sustain more open and collaborative forms of governance that are not reflected in these findings.

However, it is evident that what is discussed in the public administration literature pertaining to collaboration and direct citizen participation has yet to take hold in practice. It is understandable. There is inherent tension in the expectations that pull public administrators in different directions. The undertaking of finding the right balance between rational, responsive, and efficient administration with open, deliberate, and collaborative decision making is complex and challenging. More guidance is needed for public administrators who are conflicted by this essentially contested concept.

And, as Moynihan states,

> Even as participation advocates decry bureaucracy in general and current bureaucratic modes of participation in particular, public managers remain a necessary part of the governing framework and ultimately bear responsibility for structuring public participation and for channeling public input into public decisions.[57]

The realization of direct citizen participation rests, for now, in the hands of the public administrator. In addition to the normative ideals that support the inclusion of citizens in the deliberative process, tangible evidence is needed to compel public administrators to open the deliberative process to a variety of stakeholders if we are to make the inclusion of citizens part of the natural order of the way the governing govern.

Future research should more closely examine the practices of deliberative democracy and identify the ones that are particularly successful so that lessons may be learned from these practices and replicated in other communities. Future research should also more carefully explore the different citizen-administrator models to determine if certain participatory mechanisms work best in certain models. If a public administrator wants to achieve an environment where the method of interaction with citizens is deliberative, the dynamic engaged and the managerial approach facilitative, is there evidence that certain mechanisms of engagement work best under these conditions?

Previous research has consistently shown that conventional forms of participation, such as public hearings, do little more than inform the public. Public hearings, while they have a purpose, do nothing to facilitate communication and build trust. Future studies should be conducted to assess the level and quality of citizen participation from the perspective of citizens and elected

officials. The level of participation would explore questions of how frequently citizens are included in the decision making process. Are citizens invited to participate early in the process or are they brought into the process after preliminary decisions have been made?

The question of quality can be explored by assessing the outcomes of participatory processes to determine if the decisions made reflect the input of all the stakeholders or if they reflect the priorities of the administration. Qualitative inquiry could assess whether citizens, elected officials, and administrators feel the process is worthwhile. Does the time, energy and resources invested in a deliberative process result in outcomes everyone feels comfortable with and sees the value in? Does the decision reflect the investment made by all of the stakeholders?

In addition, the reflections of citizens and elected officials on what can be done to enhance the participatory process and minimize the obstacles that prevent meaningful citizen participation from taking place would be valuable. If administrative structures and processes are to be changed to encourage broader and more satisfying participation then the variables that promote and inhibit participation need to be identified. In particular, researchers should explore the institutional characteristics that promote, or discourage, citizen participation in the deliberative process of government to overcome the limitations of conventional participation.

Those who favor indirect participation may express doubt over the viability of collaborative participation. It is an ideal, but incremental steps can be taken to make government more open, accessible and responsive to the public it serves. As Fox and Miller state, the critics should have little concern about the future of the public sector as "government will continue to govern. . .but the more authentic the encounters with citizens will be, the less will government be 'they' and the more it will be 'we'."[58] If we can move beyond the conventional participation toward direct citizen participation and deliberative democracy we can build trust, respect for different viewpoints and institutional capacity in our neighborhoods and communities. As this capital grows and spreads through communication, collaboration, and networks, the civic capacity of society grows, participation becomes more knowledgeable, and government more responsive.

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