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ARTICLES

Editorial Introduction PAN SUK KIM and ROGER WETTENHALL .....	1
Transformation of Nepalese Administration: Challenges and Prospects DWARIKA N. DHUNGEL .....	5
Citizen Participation and Public Sector Reform: Is Collaborative Governance the Answer? DANILO R. REYES .....	17
Civic Engagement, Decentralization, and Local Democracy: Some Questions and Issues ROGER WETTENHALL .....	32
Emerging from the Chrysalis: Participatory Governance in Australian Local Government CHRIS AULICH and SARAH ARTIST .....	48
Citizen Participation, Trust in Local Governments, and the Dynamics In-between: A Quantitative Analysis YU NODA .....	64
<i>Review Article: A Kindred Organization Celebrates its 50th Anniversary</i> GUIDO BERTUCCI .....	82

## **Editorial Introduction**

PAN SUK KIM, Editor-in-Chief

and

ROGER WETTENHALL, Associate Editor

### **Explanation**

We are pleased to present the second issue of the “New Look” *Asian Review of Public Administration*. The circumstances which led to the move to the “new look” were explained in our Introduction to Volume 21 Nos 1-2, which was released at the annual EROPA Conference (Seminar on Public Administration and Disaster Management) in Kathmandu, Nepal, in November 2010 (Kim & Wettenhall 2010).

After noting the noble ideals which had accompanied the launch of the original *ARPA* in 1989, we observed that *ARPA* “did much towards satisfying these ideals by attracting good articles from academics and practitioners from all over the EROPA region and sometimes more broadly”, but that difficulties had developed which led amongst other things to the journal sometimes being very late appearing (Kim & Wettenhall 2010: 3). Part of our mission in moving to the “new look” journal was to overcome this particular problem and ensure that *ARPA* would in future appear regularly, with two numbers each year.

The immediate problem we faced was that the last of the pre-new-look series, Vol. 20 Nos 1-2, had appeared in 2008. As will be obvious to readers, we maintained continuity with the existing numbering system, so that our first issue simply moved to Vol. 21 (it also repeated the often-used earlier practice of combining what would ideally have been two separate issues—no. 1 and no. 2—in a single issue). In the hope that we could “catch up” in an orderly fashion, with least disruption to library recording practices etc., we also maintained sequential continuity with the year shown in the issue: thus the issue that appeared in 2010 showed 2009 as year of publication. It has been drawn to our notice, however, that that has created various recording difficulties; also we have found that the initial intention to date this present issue as a 2010 issue, and to regard the two issues planned for 2012 as the 2011 and 2012 issues, was likely to create anomalies as we have sought to report on events actually occurring in 2011. Under these circumstances, we have decided that we should pass over 2010 and “call a spade a spade” – this issue appearing in 2011 thus shows the publication year also as 2011, and readers are advised that, while the existing sequence of volume numbers has been maintained, there is no 2010 issue.

### **Contents of this issue**

In recognition that the 2010 EROPA conference was held in Kathmandu and excellently hosted by our Nepalese colleagues, this issue begins appropriately with a report and

commentary on the major transition from a unitary to a federal state that Nepal is currently passing through, written by Nepalese scholar and long-time EROPA supporter Dwarika Dhungel. The issues involved are complex and not capable of quick or easy resolution, and this reporting of them demonstrates to the full how political transformation may force major administrative transformation where planning for that part of the transformation has received little serious attention. Awareness of the Nepalese experience may help inform and improve planning for major administrative change when other countries are passing through comparable transformations.

The articles that follow form a set that began life at the World Civic Forum at Seoul, South Korea, in 2009. As a contribution to that Forum, EROPA organized a panel on “Civic Engagement in Public and Global Governance”, and the articles by Reyes and Wettenhall have been developed from presentations originally made in that panel. The articles by Aulich and Artist and by Yu Noda were written subsequently, but they inquire into connected issues relating to public participation in government and public trust in government.

The argument in Danilo Reyes’s article takes off from a consideration of what he describes as “the unending agenda of reform in public administration”, and involves a serious investigation of reform events to see to what extent the reformers have concerned themselves with the matter of citizen participation and involvement in policy-making and governance generally. “Not much” is the sad finding. The article then looks at challenges and problems in the way of improving this situation, and advances a model of “collaborative governance” which might hopefully enhance citizen participation and ensure that citizen “inputs and voices” will become influential in the course of public policy-making.

In his article Roger Wettenhall emphasises the notion of “community”, and explores the roles of decentralization and local democracy as avenues for community participation. The significance of rising interest in the notion of governance—broader than just government—is an underlying theme. Examples of effective community involvement are noted, as are the immense difficulties in the way of securing more such involvement. Wettenhall also offers criticism of the huge interest in reform—he sees it as an obsession—obviously believing that its pursuit so often results in the loss of organizational stability and that more in the way of community participation—and other benefits—might be achieved if we turned towards a better appreciation of slower but steady organizational development.

Chris Aulich and Sarah Artist report on a survey of recent Australian efforts to engage local citizens more in local government activity. Sadly the results point to slow movement: there is not much evidence that citizen participation has developed sufficiently to indicate that a level of participatory governance has been achieved. Given the current constraints on the autonomy and resources of the Australian local government sector, Aulich and Artist suggest that, for that to happen, intervention and leadership from outside that sector may be necessary.

Yu Noda's article moves us to a discussion of the factors that determine the degree of citizen trust in Japanese local government. There is extensive consideration of the international literature that reviews issues of community satisfaction with government, and description of a Japanese survey testing the extent to which community perceptions are affected by views about quality of service, attitude of bureaucrats, physical closeness of service centres to population served, and so on. The connection between trust and civic engagement is considered, with complex relationships revealed. The author seems confident enough to suggest from the survey results that, though civic engagement has scarcely any impact on trust, trust when it does exist stimulates civic engagement.

### **Best wishes to a kindred organization.**

We are very happy that the final article by Guido Bertucci, now an international consultant and previously Director of the UN Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM), celebrates the 50th anniversary of the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA), a kindred international public administration network body, and the related commemorative book that has just been published. IASIA is one of the subentities of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS). Many past and present members of EROPA have participated actively in its work program as well as in EROPA's (conferences, training courses, publishing, etc.), and they will join with Bertucci and the ARPA editorial team in wishing IASIA well for its healthy development over the next 50 years. Closer collaboration between EROPA and IASIA could strengthen both networks, and we express the hope that both will work towards that goal.

### **Reference**

Kim, Pan Suk & Wettenhall, Roger 2010. "Editorial Introduction: A 'New Look' ARPA", *Asian Review of Public Administration*, 21 (1 & 2): 1-5. [Note that this issue carried the year 2009.]

### **Biosketch**

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## **Transformation of Nepalese Administration: Challenges and Prospects<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

*The government in Nepal is currently in a state of transition as the country moves, after a period of civil war, from a unitary system to a federal system. Although the intention to become a federal state has already been determined, the actual governing system to be introduced is still in the design phase. This article outlines some of the issues involved and discusses the design process currently under way. The Nepalese experience may have valuable lessons for other systems undergoing fundamental change.*

### **Introduction**

Nepal was a unitary state ever since the unification process started in 1769. She has, however, now been declared to be a federal state, with the exact shape of the federal polity to become clear after a new constitution is drafted and adopted by the Constituent Assembly (CA). The drafting process is now under way. The administrative system still operating is thus the unitary one that was subjected to some reshaping since Nepal entered the modern era, after the fall of the century-old Rana Oligarchy in 1951 and the formation of the Administrative Reorganization Planning Commission (ARPC) in 1956.

So there is now just one government, with a central secretariat located at *Singh Durbar* in the capital, Kathmandu, and the field units of that government spread across the country. There are several “services” within the Nepalese public service, of which the civil service is only one, but they form part of an integrated personnel system (see Table 1). The Nepalese administration thus remains unified.

The CA is yet to discuss and decide upon the nature of administration for a federal Nepal. However, one can get some idea of the likely arrangements from the recommendations of its various thematic committees. What is clear is that, once the new constitution comes into force, the governmental system, including the administrative system, will undergo a sea change. Transforming the present administrative set-up and present personnel system in a smooth manner will be a huge challenge for the policymakers of the day. But it will also provide an opportunity to make the administration people-oriented, accountable, and inclusive.

These matters are discussed in this article in the light of recommendations of the thematic committees of the CA. But it is necessary first to explain how and why the decision to move to a federal system was made, how it is to be implemented, and how the CA is constituted.

**Table 1. Nepal Public Service: Personnel Positions Available, July 2008**

<i>No.</i>	<i>Services</i>	<i>Positions (approx.)</i>
1	Civil Service*	100,560
2	Nepal Army	90,000
3	Nepal Police	56,000
4	Armed Police Force	25,000
5	Teachers/Professors/Employees	
	School Level	107,000
	University Level	15,625
6	Public Enterprises	65,000
7	Local Bodies	20,000
	<b>Total Public Service</b>	<b>479,785</b>

\*Civil service comprises altogether 12 specific services. They are: (1) Administrative Service, (2) Agriculture Service, (3) Audit Service, (4) Economic Planning and Statistics Service, (5) Education Service, (6) Engineering Service, (7) Forestry, (8) Foreign Service, (9) Health Service, (10) Judicial Service, (11) Miscellany Service, and (12) Parliament Secretariat Service.

Source: Dhungel et al., 2009.

### **Why a Federal Structure and How to Implement It**

As is well known, Nepal was ravaged by a civil war which erupted in 1996 and lasted for ten years. The Nepal Army fought this war against the People's Liberation Army of the then Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), which saw itself as the leader in a struggle to emancipate people from extreme poverty and exploitation by feudal landlords (Pyakuryal & Ghimire 2010: 2-3). Overcentralization of power in Kathmandu, the seat of the government, was considered to be the main reason for the existence of differences in the socio-economic condition of different sections of the people and geographical regions of the country. It was to address this issue that the agenda of state restructuring emerged in national politics. This was pushed during the "people's movement" that lasted for 19 days in 2006, as a result of which a number of major developments took place in the political landscape of the country.

First, total power was transferred from the King to the Prime Minister. Then the 1990 constitution got amended and was replaced by a new constitution in 2007. The new constitution was promulgated on 15 January 2007 and quickly subjected to several amendments. The first amendment of 14 March 2007 committed the constitution to "progressive restructuring of the state with inclusive, democratic federal system of governance by doing away with the centralized and unitary structure of the state so as to end discrimination based on class, caste, language, gender, culture religion and region." The fourth amendment of 29 May 2008 formally abolished the monarchy and declared

Nepal to be a “federal democratic republican state.” The CA is working on the exact shape of the federal polity by drafting a new constitution for the country, with a two-year deadline for finalization and adoption, to replace the 2007 constitution.<sup>2</sup>

The Constituent Assembly is obviously central to this process. As elected on 10 April 2008, it is a unicameral body with three sets of members: 240 directly elected on the basis of the first-past-the-post system; 335 nominated by the political parties participating in the election (the parties were selected on the basis of the number of votes secured under the proportional representation (PR) system from among those who were included in the list submitted to the election commission before the election); and 26 members nominated by the government on the basis of the recommendations of the nine political parties to whom the seats were allocated for nomination. There are 601 members in all, 191 of them female; 25 political parties are represented, but only five of them have more than ten members each in the CA.

The present administrative structure is now outlined to provide the context in which to consider the challenges and prospects for the transformation to come. The discussion is based upon published documents and upon personal knowledge of the system.

### **Present Administrative Structure**

To manage state affairs, run the administration, and provide services to the people, the Government of Nepal (GoN) has established an administrative structure headed by the *Singh Durbar* (or Central Secretariat) and containing numerous field units operating in 3,915 villages and 58 urban areas, 75 districts, 14 zones (not as important now as they were before 1990), and five development regions. The total number of government offices is around 8,406 (Table 2), of which more than 26 percent are located in the capital. In addition, a host of public entities (such as corporations, boards, and authorities) and public educational institutions (schools and universities) are involved in managing the state’s affairs and providing services.

To run these organizations, about 500,000 positions have been created, all paid from the state coffers. The civil service, the largest group, is a nationwide service of about 100,000 positions, with about 15 percent vacant at any time. The other large groups belong to the security-related organizations (Nepal Army, Nepal Police, and Armed Police Force) with about 200,000 positions in all. There are a little more than 100,000 positions in public schools. The remaining 100,000 positions are in the public entities or enterprises and the universities, mainly the Tribhuvan University and the Sanskrit University. All these services collectively make up “the public service” (see Table 1).

In an effort to make this public service reflect society in terms of its composition, some positions in the different constituent services have been reserved for various sections of the society and special areas. In the civil service, 45 percent of vacant positions at the entry level have been reserved for women, indigenous nationalities, *Madhesies*, *Dalit*, disabled persons, and residents of the backward areas. In addition, the government could issue a notice in the Nepal Gazette for the reservation of some positions of a specific



**Table 2. Number of Offices of Nepal Government and Constitutional Bodies**

<i>No.</i>	<i>Office</i>	<i>Number</i>
<b>A</b>	<b>Central Offices</b>	
1	Office of the President	1
2	Office of the Vice President	136
3	Ministries	25
4	Departments	59
	<b>Total</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Office of the Constitutional Bodies*</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Field Offices</b>	
1	Regional	
2	Zonal (including divisional)	306
3	District	1,622
4	Ilaka	5,317
5	Municipal Offices	61
6	Provisional	549
	<b>Total of A, B, and C</b>	<b>8,406</b>

Note: This record does not include the number of offices under the Nepal Police, the Armed Police Force and the Nepal Army. According to other data provided by the *Nijamati Katabkhana*, the number of such offices is 8,764.

\*The constitutional bodies other than the Public Service Commission are: Commission for the Investigation of Abuse Authority, Auditor General, Election Commission, National Human Rights Commission, and Attorney General.

Source: Dhungel et al., 2009.

nature for competition from among the women candidates only (Civil Service Act 1992, Sections 7, 13).

The public services are regulated under a variety of laws, with management by the appropriate agencies on the basis of these laws (see Table 3). For example, the civil service is managed by the Ministry of General Administration (MoGA), one of the line ministries, in consultation with the Nepal Public Service Commission (PSC), a constitutional body whose advice the government is obliged to seek on matters related to the personnel management of the civil service (Article 127 [3] of the Constitution of Nepal 2007).<sup>3</sup>

**Table 3. Agencies and Laws Related to the Management and Operation of Public Services**

<i>Service</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Law</i>
1. Civil Service	Ministry of General Administration Ministry of Finance	Civil Service Act 1992 and Regulations
2. Health Service	Ministry of Health	Health Services Act 1997 and Regulations
3. Parliament Secretariat	Parliament Secretariat	Parliamentary Secretariat Related Act 2001
4. Teaching (Secondary)	Ministry of Education and Sports	Concerned law
5. University Level Teachers	Concerned Universities	Tribhuvan University Act 1992 and Nepal Sanskrit University Act 1986
6. The Nepal Police	Ministry of Home Affairs	The Nepal Police Act 1955
7. The Armed Police	Ministry of Home Affairs	Armed Police Force Act 2001
8. The Nepal Army	Ministry of Defense	Army Act 2006
9. Public Enterprises	Concerned Agencies	Concerned Laws

### **Recommendations of the Thematic Committees of the Constituent Assembly**

For the purpose of working out the details of all elements that should be included in the new constitution, the CA has established 10 thematic committees, along with a Constitutional Committee that is responsible for coordinating the recommendations of the other committees in order to prepare the draft of the new constitution. The CA has assigned members to these committees, and they have already submitted their reports. Four committees particularly relevant here for their work is directly related to the future administrative set-up of the country: Committee on Restructuring of the State and Distribution of State Powers, Committee on Determination of Forms of Governance of the State, Committee on the Structure of Constitutional Bodies, and Committee on Division of Natural Resources, Financial Powers and Revenue (Constituent Assembly of Nepal 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d). The CA is yet to discuss the recommendations of these committees, which point to likely changes to existing provisions about administration, services of the government and public organizations, and the role of the PSC. Some of the main features of these recommendations are summarized below. Prominent among them are proposals for the division of the country's existing administrative system among the tiers of government to come under the new federal arrangement, but they also run to statements of desirable "guiding principles" to govern the working of the administrative system at all levels.

***Different levels of government:*** Three of the thematic committees have suggested that the federal polity should be marked by the establishment of three levels of government—federal or central level, provincial/state level, and local level—the functions of each level to be prescribed by the constitution. In addition to these levels, one committee has suggested the establishment of special structures (units) at the local level to give recognition to language, ethnicity, and geographical areas; to protect minority ethnic groups, culture, and marginalized sections of the society; and to expedite the process of development of backward areas. Effectively, these structures would constitute a fourth level of government.

Two of these committees have furnished more or less similar lists of identified rights (functions) at each level. There are some differences so that the CA itself will have to come out with an integrated list of functions for the different levels of government and also decide whether the new system should be regarded as having three or four levels.

***Multiple public services:*** Under the new political structure, Nepal will have a multiple public service system with each level of government having its own personnel and service system. In other words, government services will be provided separately at all three main levels with federal, provincial and local governments forming and operating their own services within their established functional areas. As per the recommendation of the Committee on Determination of Forms of Governance of the State, the GoN (the federal government) will continue to run some services similar to those now operating: (a) Civil Service, (b) Judicial Service, (c) Parliament Service, (d) Health Service, (e) Education Service, (f) Nepal Army, (g) Nepal Police and Armed Police Force, and (h) Public Corporation Service.

***Government service commission (or public service commission):*** There have been contrasting recommendations here. One committee has suggested the establishment of public service commissions (PSCs) at both federal and provincial or state levels. The provincial-level commissions, according to this committee, should also provide service to the local governments falling within their territorial boundaries. Also according to this committee, a provincial PSC could provide services to more than one province. However, another committee, with a special remit to consider constitutional bodies, has recommended a single PSC for recommending candidates to the central civil service and advising the government on matters related to the personnel management of this service. For the provinces, it has been less clear, seeming to suggest either that there could be a single PSC with regional offices relating to the sub-national governments, or that the provincial governments could have their own PSCs. So there is no unanimity on this matter, and it will have to be arbitrated by the CA.

***Guiding principles of public service:*** A number of guiding principles have also been recommended by the Committee on Determination of Forms of Governance of the State on the basis of which the administrative systems would have to be designed and developed by the respective levels of government. The recommended principles are to: (a) show high professional morality; (b) mobilize the resources in a transparent and effective manner for public interest; (c) conduct development-oriented administration; (d) provide service fairly, independently, equally, and without bias and political interference; (e) conduct

accountable and responsible administration; (f) enable the participation of common people in the decision making process; (g) provide people with easy access to administrative mechanisms and services; (h) appropriately manage the resources and opportunities for continuing development; (i) appoint staffs on the basis of basic qualification and efficiency, and allow special consideration to disadvantaged groups based on the human development index; (j) guarantee political interference-free administration and security-based work performance; and (k) provide the opportunity for dignified labour practices through authorized trade unions in the government services.

The several constitutions under which Nepal has been governed since 1951 have mentioned only that government will enact laws for the purpose of the composition and management of the civil service. This is the first time that guiding principles have been spelt out. If the CA decides in favor of including an article on guiding principles in the new constitution, it would help to establish certain norms in running and managing the public service. But there may be resistance to following the norms from both politicians and public servants. Sustained effort and constant oversight from the concerned committee of the parliament under the new constitution would be required to limit this resistance from both these important stakeholder groups.

***Re-allocating existing civil servants:*** The Committee on the Determination of Forms of Governance of the State has further suggested that, of the incumbent civil servants, only those required for the organizational needs and workload of the central government (*Sanstha ko Abasyakta ra Karyabojha*) should be maintained at the federal level, and that the rest should be re-allocated to the provincial and local levels of government on the recommendation of a commission, although the Committee does not say anything about the nature and composition of that commission.

### **Implications of the Recommendations and Challenges**

Once the CA decides on the new administrative arrangements, there will be change in most of the existing government organizations and the public services. The present administrative structure will have to be entirely reorganized and divided between the different tiers of government. Similarly, the existing positions will have to be distributed among those tiers, and incumbent public servants reassigned among them. All these changes involve a huge task to be handled with care and professional skill. The Nepalese administrative system is thus now in transition, and in the process of transformation it may face a number of challenges. A few major challenges are identified below; many more will no doubt emerge as the transformation proceeds.

***Acknowledging new players:*** In the post-1951 period, especially at the time of the launching of the First Five Year Periodic Plan 1956-61, the private sector was almost non-existent. Also people had hardly ever heard of non-governmental organizations, and a country-wide network of local governance bodies did not exist. Consequently the central government had to be involved in all spheres of life, maintaining law and order, undertaking development activities and commercial and business activities, and providing services of various kinds. The government's organizational structure and the positions in the public

service, especially in the civil service, were designed and created accordingly. But the situation has dramatically changed as the country has developed, and all the new players now involved in service delivery and in the commerce and business sectors have to be taken into account in the re-organization and re-adjustment exercise.

***Need to arrest public sector growth:*** After the restoration of the multi-party system in 1990, the *Girija Prasad Koirala (GP Koirala)*-led government of 1991 took some administrative reform measures including a reorganization of the structures and positions of the sectoral ministries, designed with a view to divesting some government functions to the non-governmental organizations, the private sector and local governance bodies so that they could also participate in the development process. This exercise was undertaken under the supervision and monitoring of the Administrative Reforms Monitoring Committee (ARMC) established in the office of the Prime Minister. But it was observed that the main concern of each agency involved was to use the opportunity to secure more new positions at a higher level. In normal times such “empire building” was not easy, for the Ministry of Finance (MoF) had to approve each new position and did not like this agglomeration—it preferred eliminating positions through hiving off departmental functions to non-governmental organizations (Dhungel 1997). The challenge now is to prevent such agglomeration in the new context.

***Dealing with uncertainty:*** As explained above, the Nepalese public service (i.e., the civil service and other services) has long functioned as an integrated, unified service under a single line of command. With the establishment of the federal system, however, the structure would have to undergo vast change, with most public servants affected. The knowledge that this change is to come has already created a sense of uncertainty among the members of almost all the services. They have become concerned about their future, including career development opportunities. This was clearly expressed on behalf of members of the whole public service by senior-level civil servants interacting with a study on an Administrative Structure for Federal Nepal in 2009 (Dhungel et al. 2009).

***Perceptions of stakeholders:*** An equally important factor is the need to take account of the views of stakeholders when decisions are being made about the distribution of organizations and readjustment of positions among the different tiers of government. Needing especially to be considered have been the views of the service recipients, of the political parties that are active in the constitution-making process at both national and local levels of politics, and of incumbent public servants, especially the civil servants.

Intended as an input to the CA in its constitution-making process, a study team interacted with stakeholders at both central and field levels to discover their views on the shape, nature and structure of the administration to come under the federal polity (Dhungel et al. 2009). The stakeholders were both government service providers (members of the public service from the central secretariat and the field organizations) and service recipients (representatives of the field-level units of political parties and representatives of different professional groups and sections of the society). As to the shape of the future administration, there was no difference of opinion between the groups; both agreed there was a need for a multi-level administration (as to both organizations and public personnel)

according to the requirements of the federal polity. Also, there was unanimity as to the nature of the public service, i.e., it was to be inclusive, responsive, and accountable.<sup>4</sup>

They further mentioned that the working procedures should be transparent and participatory in nature. But a difference of opinion was observed with regard to the adjustment and division of existing working personnel. Both at the level of CA members and field-level service recipients, most of the political parties and representatives of the different sections of the society and groups mentioned that they would like to hire fresh people in the new administrative structures to be established at the different levels. Some of the CA members went to the extent of saying that the current civil servants are nothing but *Buddhocrats* (“old haggards”) not useful for the new system. Some of them wanted to give preference to the daughters or sons of the soil in the jobs of the local and provincial levels.

Presenting the opposite view, the public servants (including the senior civil servants) argued that today’s public service was not built in a day, that there is knowledge, skill, and experience within the public service that needs to be used in the federal polity too. They wanted these factors to be given serious attention in the reallocation and readjustment process to come. Their overriding feeling was that “personnel (must) be given every opportunity to come to terms with the changing context of the administration;” not surprisingly, they wanted as little change as possible (Dhungel et al. 2009).

These divergent opinions are going to provide major challenges for those who will be making the adjustments and dividing up the existing organizations and personnel. How the policy makers of tomorrow handle this issue will have a great impact on the administration of a federal Nepal when it becomes a reality.

### **Government Efforts to Prepare for Restructuring of Administration**

On 19 November 2008 the GoN constituted a 12-member *Prashashanik Punarsarchana Ayoga* (Administrative Restructuring Commission or ARC) to facilitate the transformation process. Its mission was, among other things, to suggest measures for the transition from the existing administrative system (other than the Nepal Army and the Armed Police, both of which will remain with the center) to a new one according to the requirements of the federal polity.

ARC officials inform that the Commission has approved an Administration Reorganization Working Procedure (Administrative Restructuring Commission 2010) to initiate the preliminary work by the departments concerned with the distribution of the current businesses, existing positions and physical facilities to different levels of government as envisaged by the thematic committees. The Commission also has a plan to prepare a model of a provincial government set-up and has prepared a report containing the principles that should be followed by the government in restructuring the existing administration in the proposed federal structure.

The Commission has been working for more than two years; its term was set to expire on 13 April 2011 and is unlikely to be extended.<sup>5</sup> Regarding its performance, according to knowledgeable professionals it has so far been unable to produce any tangible results. The reason mentioned is that the sitting government has taken this body as a means for providing jobs for its supporters rather than for getting the serious professional jobs done. The evidence is that political patronage has indeed held sway, with appointees of one government removed by the succeeding government and replaced by its own supporters.<sup>6</sup>

Such behaviour of the sitting government towards a body which is supposed to be comprised of professionals known for their contributions in the field does not contribute to the serious work that the country needs in preparing a strategy for transforming the present administration as required for the federal polity. What is needed is the realization on the part of the government (any government) that it must allow professional work to be done professionally by professionals—and that has not been happening.

## **Conclusion**

When the shape of the federal structure, transitional arrangements and mechanisms for transformation are decided by the CA, a whole new governmental structure and personnel system will have to be established. Serious professional work is needed, including the creation, design, and management of a new set of legal frameworks to govern the requirements of the new set-up. There are doubts, on the basis of the behaviour of the government towards the ARC, whether it (government) is devoting sufficient attention and energy to undertaking the necessary groundwork to prepare for the needed smooth transformation. If the government does not pay serious attention in this regard, the country will not only be missing the opportunity to make the administration more efficient in the delivery of services and in building an accountable, responsible, and inclusive institution but also be losing much that has been gained during the slow progress of administrative modernization over the last half-century. There may therefore be great chaos in the administrative sector when the new constitution comes into force.

This Nepalese experience may have valuable lessons for other systems undergoing fundamental change. But unless the required degree of professionalism is shown in all the planning and implementation stages, they will be negative rather than positive lessons.

## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Revised and developed version of the paper presented to the EROPA Seminar, Kathmandu, Nepal, 21-25 November 2010. Dr. Dhungel wishes to thank Achyut Bahadur Rajbhdari, Tirtha Prasad Dhakal, Arjun Mani Dixit and Mahendra Raj Sapkota for assistance in the preparation of this article. Also thanks to Emeritus Prof. Roger Wettenhall of the ANZSOG Institute for Governance, The University of Canberra, Australia, for his valuable comments and inputs.

<sup>2</sup> Under Part 13 of the Constitution of Nepal 2007, the Government of Nepal is obliged to consult the Public Service Commission on a range of matters concerning the law relating to the conditions of service of the Civil Service. Also, the Public Service Commission is to be consulted for the general principles to be

followed in the course of appointment to and promotion within the Military Service, Armed Police Service, or Police Service. Thus, in the exercise of these powers, the PSC is also involved in the personnel administration of almost all the public services of the country. In respect of the Judicial Service, there is also a separate Judicial Service Commission.

<sup>3</sup> The CA is now, i.e. by September 2011, working in its fourth year, as it could not complete the constitution making work within a two-year deadline and its period was extended by itself (the CA) through constitutional amendment.

<sup>4</sup> Some of the perceptions of the stakeholders are: (a) governmental administration is not friendly to service recipients; (b) discipline is sporadic and impunity within the administration exists; (c) administrative leadership has questionable character; (d) administrative machinery is not people-controlled and people-oriented, and is primarily based on a traditional command system and feudalism; (e) the behavior, working style and conduct of public servants are obsolete; (f) women are not adequately represented in the civil service; (g) one person in the private sector provides the same amount of service as is provided by many civil servants in the public sector; (h) the present bureaucracy should be totally destroyed; (i) a job in government is not results-oriented and process-oriented; and (j) the present public service is not inclusive and does not reflect the social mosaic.

The stakeholders had also a clear perspective on the future structure of government and its personnel system. They were of the opinion that the personnel system should be: (a) people-oriented, accountable, and honest; (b) capable, efficient, and results-oriented, (c) neutral, impartial, professionally competent, and non-political; (d) free of nepotism and political interference; (e) free of corruption and financial crimes; and (f) that an early retirement plan for the existing civil servants should be initiated so that a new generation can take charge of the bureaucracy. In addition, they also wanted the administration to be inclusive, with the different sections of the society represented in it as per their population size. Also, they feel that locals should be given preference in the services of the provincial or state and local governments (Dhungel et al. 2009).

<sup>5</sup> The term of the Administrative Restructuring Commission has already expired and it does not exist.

<sup>6</sup> The ARC was originally formed on 19 November 2008 by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)-led government and placed under the chairmanship of the Minister of General Administration with a mission to suggest means to make the Public Administration system accountable, efficient, neutral, and transparent, and to transform the administration according to the needs of the federal polity. For the first year there were six full-time members, along with the chief secretary and secretary of the Ministry of General Administration as ex-officio members. The government changed in September 2009 and the new government first terminated four of the six full-time members. It then brought in five new full-time members drawn mainly from its own supporters and sympathizers, and extended the term of the commission. There has since been another change of government, leading to fears that the term of the commission, about to expire, may not be extended at all.

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### **Biosketch**

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## **Citizen Participation and Public Sector Reform: Is Collaborative Governance the Answer?<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

*The reform of public sector institutions has been an enduring and repeated agenda in the study and practice of public administration. Over the years, several reform movements have offered various propositions and prescriptions to reform the public sector. Unfortunately, the ideal of active citizens' participation in the conduct and management of public affairs has not been institutionalized and remains missing in public administration practices and processes. This article looks at the problems and challenges impinging on authentic citizens' participation in policy-making and offers the model of collaborative governance as a promising strategy to fully operationalize citizen participation. The article discusses the components of collaborative governance and suggests that citizens' participation can be legislated to ensure that the inputs and voices of the general public will not only be heard, but will be incorporated in policies that will be shaped by bureaucrats and policy-makers.*

### **Introduction**

Public sector reform has persisted as an enduring and recurring agenda in the study and practice of public administration. Over the years, propositions and approaches to reform the practices and processes of public sector institutions in both developed and developing countries have ebbed and flowed, as reform movements waxed and waned, generally marked by alternating fragments of exuberance and disappointments (Lee & Samonte 1970; Ro & Reforma 1985; Zhang et al. 1992; Wamsley et al. 1992; Ocampo & Alfonso 1995; Reyes 1995, 1997; Cheung 1996; Ingraham 1997; Romzek 2000; Lee 2000; De Vera 2000; Kim 2000; Liou 2001; King & Stivers 2001; Ingraham & Romzek 2005; Domingo 2006; Legaspi 2006).<sup>2</sup>

For the most part, reform philosophies, prescriptions, and critiques towards engendering better performance of the public sector have become staple discussion points and issues that have preoccupied the discipline and the profession. The labels vary—public sector reform (Cheung 1996; de Vera 2000; Lee 2000; Kim 2000), administrative reform (Lee & Samonte 1970; Ro & Reforma 1985; Zhang et al. 1992; Ingraham 1997), civil service reform (Legaspi 2006) or bureaucratic reform (Reyes 1997).<sup>3</sup> But they all convey common and spirited efforts to uphold traditional and standard public values such as efficiency, effectiveness, and economy. Belatedly, they have included the pursuit and championing of current ideals of good governance such as transparency, the rule of law, and the emphasis on greater democratic pluralism founded on the aspiration of more pronounced citizens' participation and involvement.

No doubt, citizens are the principal stakeholders in the conduct and management of public affairs. While they are generally allowed some measure of consultation in public hearings, substantive participation among citizen stakeholders is wanting in the conduct of policymaking in most bureaucracies today. Unfortunately, the ideal of more active citizens' involvement in public sector processes has not been institutionalized; in some cases, it has only merited token and passing attention in the discourse of reform prescriptions.

Why is active and more pronounced citizens' participation in the conduct of government affairs not given much attention today in the reform agenda of the public sector? How can active citizens' participation be institutionalized? What initiatives or models can be put in place or adopted to broaden citizens' involvement in government?

This article seeks to contribute to this lively and continuing discourse on the promise of enlisting and substantively incorporating citizens' participation and involvement as part of the durable but sometimes frustrating agenda of public sector reform. The discussion aspires to re-examine a new point of view towards operationalizing citizens' participation in the agenda of public sector reform, suggesting in the process the mechanics and mechanisms that must govern it, and the potentials by which they could be institutionalized within a legal framework. It uses the philosophies and prescriptions of *collaborative governance* as a framework by which citizens' participation in public sector reform can be institutionalized.

As a fresh strategy towards bringing multiple stakeholders towards generating consensus-oriented decision-making, collaborative governance offers a promising direction in engendering not only active citizen involvement in public sector reform, but one vested with some modicum of legality insofar as appreciation of citizen inputs is concerned.

### **The Unending Agenda of Reform in Public Administration, and Citizens' Participation**

The development and foundations of the study and practice of public administration have been anchored on the moorings of reforming public sector processes and activities. Whether the objective is to improve efficiency and effectiveness, contain corrupt practices or professionalize performance, reform movements have practically become the trademark of the discipline and its profession.

From the medieval periods that witnessed the evolution of civil service systems in Europe, continuing reforms of administrative policies, practices and processes have practically characterized the growth of modern bureaucracy. Civil servants emerged from being personal servants of monarchs to become professional and career bureaucrats following centuries of reform efforts marked by the decline of absolute rule (Raadschelders & Rutgers 1996; Gladden 1953).<sup>4</sup>

In the United States, the excesses and abuses of the Jacksonian era, marked by the spoils system, patronage, partisan politicking in the bureaucracy, and corruption, led to

the enactment of the landmark law, the Pendleton Act of 1883. The law established a civil service system based on merit and fitness, competitive entrance examinations, security of tenure, careerism, and political neutrality.

This defining event served as the impetus to the establishment of the formal study of the discipline of Public Administration<sup>5</sup> in America, separate and independent from what was hitherto considered as its putative mother discipline, Political Science (Reyes 2003).

The contemporary period has witnessed alternating reform movements in the public sector and in the discipline of Public Administration, offering and prescribing aspirant paradigms that enshrine the improvement of systems, structures, practices, processes, values and even habits in the bureaucracy.

Public sector reform efforts have practically dominated the mindset of scholars and policy-makers alike, from the administrative principles of the Brownlow Commission in the depression era in the United States to the normative-setting new public administration movement (Frederickson 1980; Marini 1971) in the turbulent decades of the sixties and the seventies. Wide-ranging reform in public administration has persisted as a recurring agenda.

Late 20th century propositions did depart radically from this tradition. They are articulated in such recipes as reinventing government (Osborne & Gaebler 1992; National Performance Review 1993; Reyes 1994; Kim et al. 2005), re-engineering (Hammer & Champy 1993; Halachmi 1995; Reyes, 1998), new public management (McLaughlin et al. 2002; Pollitt 2002), or managerialism (Pollit 1990).

Such propositions virtually “required new flexibility and discretion” (Ingraham et al., 1994: 8). In almost all cases, the message was the same: “[a]dministrative reform is an important policy tool in improved governmental performance; it is a subset of all policy performance, not a separable set of technical efforts” (Ingraham 1997: 326).

Public administration reformers in the latter half of the 20th century did, however, extend and broaden the aspirations of public sector reform efforts in an effort to match expectations pervasive in a milieu of increasing activism. From the scientific-rational “technic-ism” of the seemingly impersonal and bureaucracy-oriented values of efficiency, effectiveness and economy—the so-called 3Es of public administration—their reform propositions gave attention to what can be believed as a more people-oriented set, that of representativeness, responsiveness and responsibility.

Putting the “public” back in public administration has become a banner theme, resonating with the ideal that the purpose of public service is just that—service—and that citizen-taxpayers are not just clients dependent on government services, but also consumers, customers, or participants in the dispensing and the management of public goods and services.

The ingredient that has remained missing in many of the contemporary reform measures, however, is the substantive and institutionalized contribution of citizens in the

decision process, in the shaping of relevant policies and procedures, and in the dynamics of how bureaucracy operates, how it dispenses services, or how it enforces policies. This is so even if, time and again, there are general statements espousing citizens' involvement not only in public sector reform but also in the making of policy and the management of public affairs.

### **The Challenges and Problematic of Citizens' Participation**

To begin with, the call for active citizens' participation in government reform and in public sector processes is not new. King and Stivers, for instance, maintain that many major reform initiatives in recent years have sought to "address the fact that the citizen seems to be missing in public administration" (King & Stivers 2001: 473).

It is an ideal that has percolated in Public Administration and certainly other fields of study as well. Fox and Miller view citizens' activism in governmental affairs as the alternative to the prevailing orthodoxy in Public Administration, pointing out that "bureaucratic discretion is tantamount to the theft of popular sovereignty" (Fox & Miller 1995: 18).

In outlining their proposal for discourse under conditions of what they call "post modernity." Fox and Miller insist that "citizen activation, *civism*, and similar tendencies in public administration literature represent a serious contender to replace the orthodox model" (Fox & Miller 1995: 8, emphasis added). "Civism" is an intriguing term employed by Fox and Miller that suggests citizen activation and "citizen-administration solidarity [that] harkens back to the direct democracy of the Athenian polis, the Swiss canton, and the New England town" (Fox & Miller 1995: 32-33).

Reform propositions such as those vigorously espoused or critically examined by Stivers (1990), Fox and Miller (1995), Ilago (2001), Alfiler (2003), and Domingo (2006) have likewise expressed the need for active participation of citizens, as it appears that cause has not been prominently advocated nor been given attention by contemporary reform movements.<sup>6</sup> At best, these advocacies have remained embryonic, almost an uncharted frontier tucked in the nook and cranny of reform plans and agenda without any explicit operational components.

Stivers maintains that the idea of citizen participation began its ascent as a serious area of concern in Public Administration in the 1960s and the 1970s. She said that the literature of the discipline today "reflects a continuing sense that various relationships between bureaucrats and citizens are instrumental to the effective formation and implementation of public policy" (Stivers 1990: 248). She identifies several important roles for citizens:

citizens as consumers, as sources of needed information and support for particular programs, as the putative ground of basic values underlying public decisions and as cooperators in the production of public services ("coproducers")—all are roles well established in bureaucratic thinking (Stivers 1990: 248).

But, by the same token, Stivers laments that “[c]itizen participation is still, however, more typically treated as a cost both to citizen and bureaucrat than as a benefit” (Stivers 1990: 248).

All too often, citizen participation has been interpreted as happening in such activities as advisory committees, citizen boards, and other similar arrangements in terms of community action programs (Rosenbloom & Kravchuk 2005). Citizens’ involvement is also deemed to be present in customary public hearings, township meetings and assemblies, public opinion expressed by citizens in the media, and similar citizen-government interactions.

These exchanges tend to lapse, however, and end in talk therapies where citizens’ views, needs, demands, complaints, suggestions, proposals and concerns are heard, noted, and consequently filed. While the practices brought about by past reform proposals have indeed opened a venue for greater citizen participation, they remain at the level of consultative and pseudo-participative practices, or what King and Stivers (2001), citing Arnstein (1969), describe as reforms that engender a low or passive type of change. This type considers improving management practices, but does not consider the relationship between the citizenry and their governments. This is in contrast to reinvention and TQM propositions which King and Stivers categorize as quasi-passive, but which fall short, in their view, of active citizenship and active administration.

Direct citizen involvement in public sector reform has been acknowledged as not easy, for it must commit to pluralist values. Inputs of citizens focused on the minutest details may unsettle or cause discomfort to bureaucrats accustomed to Weberian values of confidentiality, or of limiting or restricting information that may be opened to and shared with the public. Citizen involvement in the shaping of policy can be time-consuming, tedious, and cumbersome. In cases of extreme conflicts between bureaucrats and citizens, or even between citizens and citizens, the result may be anarchic.

Pluralist democracy can impair administrative efficiency and can be subject to abuse, to the extent that some form of *hyperpluralism* can result. As Wamsley et al. assert, the pluralist-democratic and the administrative efficiency models are “antithetical and exist in a state of tension” (Wamsley et al. 1992: 61). This represents the long-standing conflict between what has been termed the bureaucratic ethos and democratic values.

Woller, in a reflective critique, puts the issue quite succinctly: “Can democratic governance be reconciled with bureaucratic values?” (Woller 1998: 85). He answers his own question by citing Thompson:

The problem is that “many of the values we associate with democracy—equality, participation, and individuality—stand sharply opposed to the hierarchy, specialization, and impersonality we ascribe to bureaucracy” (Woller 1998: 87, citing Thompson 1983).

Active and pronounced citizen participation and involvement in reforming the public sector impinges on age-old bureaucratic values to the extent that conflict and dysfunctions can result. In a study of attempts to institutionalize citizens’ participation in the Community Employment and Development Program in a Philippine province following the 1986

People Power Revolution, Domingo observed that “government field personnel felt threatened because this was never done before—citizens monitoring and asking questions about their work was odd and unwelcome,” [while adding that] “this effort received positive feedback from the people who initially had no idea that there were such projects for their welfare” (Domingo 2006: 25).

At the other end of the spectrum, citizens may find interactions and exchanges with bureaucracy to be frustrating. Citing a Kettering Foundation report in 1991, King and Stivers say that invariably “[c]itizens are not apathetic, as many claim, but rather feel ‘impotent.’” The downside is that distrust may result among citizens when bureaucrats determine the protocols and procedures that will govern the exchange. They point out that

citizens believe that the information they receive from agencies is managed, controlled, and manipulated in order to limit their capacity to participate. Citizens see the techniques of participation (public hearings, surveys, focus groups) as designed, at best, to generate input and, at worst, to keep citizens on the outside of the governance process (King & Stivers 2001: 480).

Citizens’ participation can, however, bring salutary benefits for government. Among other things, it provides a venue for interaction where the points of view of citizens can be expressed to give bureaucrats, and policymakers for that matter, the perspectives from the ground, from the grassroots, or from the field, which are often taken for granted in the shaping of policies and procedures. The informing grace of these interactions for bureaucrats and implementers is that they can be exposed to realities that can sometimes be blurred by bureaucrats fixated with the desired consequences of the policies or procedures that they envision or propose. But certainly the more important impact is that the forums create exchanges that can diminish distrust, alienation, or enmities among the parties.

It is also important to stress here that the lack of continuing and institutionalized citizens’ participation can bring about dysfunctions in governance. Citizen apathy and indifference, if not downright alienation, can result. This disenchantment can be expressed in different ways, from civil disobedience (non-compliance with laws or non-payment of taxes) to protest actions that may result in violent confrontation between protestors and police authorities, and even to the rise of vigilante groups in cases of weak government response and action on criminality.

The scattered experiences have posed a problematic on how to operationalize substantive citizens’ participation, on what parameters can be adopted, and on how specific approaches can be adapted to specific cases on a country-to-country basis. The specifics of institutionalizing citizens’ participation pose today a challenge to reformers, policymakers, bureaucrats, civil society, and even citizens themselves.

Reforms can always be proposed and introduced incorporating therein a general advocacy of citizen involvement in the policy process and broad areas of managing public affairs. How this is to be done and put into operation without resulting in internecine conflict and dysfunctions can be a major challenge.

### **Collaborative Governance and Public Sector Reform**

In an era increasingly preoccupied by demands for greater democratic pluralism (Fox & Miller 1995; Wamsley et al. 1992), and reinforced by the powerful theme of good governance, active citizens' participation in public sector processes and practices has become an important concern that needs to be addressed with viable policies and approaches.

Governance has been a widely and intensely discussed subject in recent years. The advocacy for governance—good governance in particular—has become the standard and rallying theme of academics, reformers, civil society organizations, international agencies, policymakers, and even politicians who ride on the bandwagon of reforming government through the ideals associated with governance. Such principles as openness and transparency, people empowerment and participation, rule of law, accountability, gender-mainstreaming, rights-based policies, and similar advocacies have become the parameters by which government leadership and performance are measured.<sup>7</sup>

Undoubtedly, the advocacy and ideals of citizen involvement are clear, but the challenge, as pointed out earlier, is how to put this into practice. How can authentic citizen involvement be mobilized and given meaning? How can its practices be made legal and legitimate? How can we make bureaucracy accept a process that would somehow add to the layers of procedures that it must observe? How can we make civism functional? How can discourse between citizens and public officials be institutionalized where citizen inputs are taken as contributions and not simply as commentaries, observations, or complaints? There are no easy answers and the path is certainly thorny.

The realization of governance principles has been generally accepted as being fulfilled when policy is shaped from a consensus derived from the participation of the sectors that represent society: the government, business or the market, and civil society. Each of these sectors can be seen as exercising powers in relation to the others. Thus, government enjoys political power because it assumes the exercise of legitimate and coercive power in the shaping and enforcement of laws. The business or the market is vested with economic power, with all the resources of capital at its disposal. Civil society can, on the other hand, because it represents the citizens, claim to exercise the power most difficult of all to mobilize—people power. The interplay and interaction of these sectors determine the success or failure of governance.

In this article, governance can be said to occur under a process that we simplify, for the sake of conceptual economy, by a division into five critical stages: (a) *stakeholdership*, where the sectors express their respective interests, perspectives and positions on a policy issue; (b) *discourse*, which is characterized by the active, open and untrammelled exchange of viewpoints in formal and informal venues (i.e., public hearings, the mass media, or opinion surveys) by representatives of each sector where their interests are expressed and challenged; (c) *consensus-building*, where the various sectors submit to compromises and come to an agreement on a policy question; (d) *enactment of laws or statutes*, where the policy derived from the consensus is formalized; and (e) *execution or implementation*, where the law founded on consensus is implemented or enforced. A sixth stage may involve initiatives for amendments or revision, which repeat the process.



The process is, of course, complicated, tedious, and complex. This involves the dynamics and interplay of interest and pressure groups, opinion makers and commentators, political parties and partisan leaders, religious and civic groups, ideologues, and other concerned parties. It is stakeholderism and the ensuing dialogues that challenge in determining how authentic citizen participation can be obtained.

In recent years, the focus of governance has been sharpened to what is now referred to as collaborative governance. As it is understood, collaborative governance “brings public and private stakeholders together in collective forums with public agencies to engage in consensus-oriented decision making” (Ansell & Gash 2008: 543). Ansell and Gash offer the following definition of collaborative governance.

A governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets (Ansell and Gash 2008: 544).

The criteria that define collaborative governance involve the following factors: (a) the forum is initiated by public agencies; (b) participants in the forum include non-state actors; (c) participants engage directly in decision-making and are not merely “consulted” by public agencies; (d) the forum is formally organized and meets collectively; (e) the forum seeks to make decisions by consensus even if it may not be achieved; and (f) the focus of collaboration is on public policy or public management (Ansell & Gash 2008: 544-545). Another criterion that must be added here is the institutionalization of the forum that serves as a venue for citizens’ participation. As Kim et al. (2005: 650) point out, “the institutionalization of participation by *all people* is a cornerstone of governance.”

Stivers (1990: 26) suggests that relationships between public administrators and citizens “can be fostered by laws, regulations, policies, procedures and ongoing actions that share responsibility with citizens in [conducting] agency affairs.” These can be done within the framework of legislated mandates so that not just bureaucrats, clients, and interest groups but also the general public can legitimately participate in policymaking and implementation.

Adversarial relationships generally occur prominently in the stakeholderism stage, and perhaps even more intensely at the level of dialogue or discourse. The goal is, however, to provide the venue where these adversarial positions can be developed into cooperative ones with the objective of forging workable consensus. Institutional arrangements can be established so as to provide basic protocols and ground rules for collaboration. The dialogue can be built up on face-to-face interaction and expanded or sustained through such facilities as e-governance.

Ansell and Gash (2008: 559) emphasize that, in collaborative governance, a fundamental protocol is the “commitment and up-front willingness to abide by the results of the deliberation even if they should go into the direction that stakeholders may not support.” The process must be collective, that state and non-state stakeholders will have real responsibility for policy outcomes with the contributions of the citizens adopted and incorporated in the end results. The stakeholders must be directly engaged in the decision

process, which is to be based upon some form of agreed-upon organization and structure. The focus must generally be on public policies and issues, and must be deliberative, multilateral, and vested with a mandate to adopt inputs from non-state actors. This must enhance the sense of ownership of the process and the resulting output from among non-state actors.

In their study of collaborative governance practices involving some 137 cases, Ansell and Gash conclude rather optimistically that the process, with its techniques, “promises a sweet reward.”

It seems to promise that if we govern collaboratively, we may avoid the high costs of adversarial policy making, expand democratic participation, and even restore rationality to public management. A number of the studies reviewed here have pointed toward the value of collaborative strategies: bitter adversaries have sometimes learned to engage in productive discussions; public managers have developed more fruitful relationships with stakeholders; and sophisticated forms of collective learning and problem solving have been developed (Ansell and Gash 2008: 561).

Collaborative governance is, therefore, an attempt to provide a more focused and institutionalized process of citizens’ participation. Its strategies and techniques are still evolving, and much more can be added incrementally from what has been described in this passing discussion. The point, however, is that initiatives must be pursued to refine and redefine the mechanics of citizen involvement in improving the public sector. Government and state actors cannot be left alone in the tyranny of their own viewpoints and perceptions of how public policies should be shaped or public affairs managed. The initiative for citizens’ participation must not be allowed to flicker away, and instead must be strengthened with the power of new techniques, new procedures, and new modes of activities that can be tested and retested. The strategies prescribed in collaborative governance can improve citizen-bureaucrat interaction, although, admittedly, refinements can be made and there will still be room for improvement.

Collaborative governance practices and advocacies of multi-stakeholdership, consensus building, non-adversarial confrontations, and institutionalized involvement of non-state actors will have to be developed and improved under the laboratory of experience and empirical evidence. Critical questions such as who will participate, how often consultation will take place, who will determine what, whose inputs will be adopted, and a host of others will have to be resolved.

Collaborative governance practices can be introduced gradually from where lessons can be learned, problems and gaps addressed, and more viable techniques and methods developed. The process may not necessarily work in all cases of policymaking, although it may be useful in such critical areas as peace and order issues, environmental concerns, health care, and the like. Obviously, practices can vary from community to community, from sector to sector, from country to country, and from culture to culture. The important point here is that citizen participation in public affairs can no longer be constantly ignored as an issue, and new modes to improve present ones must be adopted to institutionalize it.

As it is, the case for heightened and pronounced involvement of the citizenry in the affairs of government cannot be continuously encased in vague and ambiguous generalizations, expressed as advocacies without the fiat of legality that would require

compliance. Reforms toward citizens' participation can no longer be continuously ignored or trapped in vague or abstract generalizations. They need to be operationalized, structured, and constructed on a platform of doable, concise, and workable policies and procedures where the contributions and voices of citizens in the shaping of public sector reforms will be given real meaning, will be institutionalized and incorporated into ongoing systems, and will be put in place as a matter of legal requirement.

## Conclusion

The legitimacy of bureaucracy in democratic governance can only be assured with the meaningful participation of citizens, instead of consultations as evoked in the now familiar and customary public hearings. Many initiatives in as many reform movements have been advocated, and have attempted to institutionalize the ideals of citizens' participation in the shaping of policy and in the management of public affairs, but without much success. Certainly, the troublesome cleft between bureaucrats and citizens must be resolved by establishing parameters and so-called rules of engagement in citizen—bureaucrat interaction.

This article has looked into the direction of collaborative governance as an emerging model of building citizen—public sector interaction. No doubt, more empirical evidence may be needed to further improve and fine-tune the strategy. But the principles and philosophies that will govern the interaction are already being put in place. As a strategy, collaborative governance can be said to be still a work-in-progress or a theory in the making. But there is something to start with, and it can be improved with time and experience.

Is collaborative governance a passing fad or a viable approach that will build the foundations of institutionalizing authentic citizens' participation in the conduct of public affairs? Whatever it maybe, the challenge remains, and must be addressed if the promise of authentic democracy is to be fulfilled.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Revised version of a paper prepared for the World Civic Forum 2009, COEX, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 5-8 May 2009.

<sup>2</sup> The list is by no means comprehensive. But these examples, more or less, represent a sampling of the literature that has proliferated in the discipline in both developed and developing countries. Some of these materials are edited collections, such as Lee & Samonte (1970), Ro & Reforma (1985), and Zhang et al. (1992), which are publications of the Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA). These are collections of papers that discuss experiences in administrative reform in EROPA member countries presented at the periodic conferences of EROPA. Ingraham & Romzek (1994) and Liou (2001) are edited collections of reform initiatives in the United States.

<sup>3</sup> For the sake of conceptual economy, this article uses the terms public sector reform, administrative reform, bureaucratic reform, and civil service reform interchangeably.

<sup>4</sup> Raadschelders & Rutgers (1996) provide an excellent account of the evolution of the modern civil service from the high middle ages sometime in the 13th century to its present form. They describe the shaping

of the modern civil service characterized by incremental reforms. Gladden's remarkable work (1953) can be considered as a comprehensive history of public administration from ancient times.

<sup>5</sup> The article adopts the standard convention started by Dwight Waldo in 1968 where the discipline or the field of study is denoted with capital letters to distinguish it from the processes, practices and the profession, which is indicated in lower case. Thus "Public Administration" refers to the discipline while "public administration" to the processes and the profession. See Waldo 1975: 181n and also Stillman 2000: 17n.

<sup>6</sup> Citing Pretty et al. (1995), Ilago provides a typology of participation, from passive participation where citizens are informed of the activities, to self-mobilization where people participate by taking initiatives to involve themselves in government affairs. This paper proposes the latter, in which citizens take the initiatives and their participation is not only accepted but mandated. See Ilago 2001: 2.

<sup>7</sup> The literature on governance and Public Administration is legion. Examples are Bevir et al. 2003; Peters 2001; Reyes 2001; Hirst 2000, Rhodes 2000, Pierre 2000; Thynne 2000; Kim et al. 2005; and UNDP 1997a; 1997b.

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### **Biosketch**

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## **Civic Engagement, Decentralization, and Local Democracy: Some Questions and Issues**

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### **Abstract**

*This article explores the roles of decentralization and local democracy as avenues for community participation. It considers their place in the broad structures of governance (i.e., government, market, civil society) and in the reform agendas of the recent period (with some attention to functional as well as territorial forms of decentralization), looks at some existing efforts to strengthen civic engagement, and speculates more generally about prospects for advancing towards a system that does effectively promote such engagement in governing. The significance of rising interest in the notion of governance, which is broader than just government, is an underlying theme.*

### **Introduction: Concept and Objectives**

Concern for “public participation” or “civic engagement” in public administration and governance is as old as the concept of democracy itself. This concern has been expressed in a great variety of ways since, in the 4th century BC, Aristotle proclaimed his preference for a constitutional republic as the best attainable form of government, based on a large middle class of citizens capable of furnishing the stability needed for maintenance of the good life. For Aristotle and many other political theorists who have followed him, pure democracy was much worse because it introduced discordant elements inimical to such stability. In the 1700s Thomas Hobbes wanted an all-powerful “Leviathan” to govern in an implied social contract with the people. And when the democracy of the masses came, as with the French Revolution in the late 1700s, the results were often anything but pretty.

Against all that, in more recent times we have seen “peoples’ movements” triumph and topple brutal, immoral and/or corrupt dictatorships in places like the Philippines, Indonesia, and very recently Tunisia and Egypt. At such times we praise the spirit of democracy and want to spread it much more widely.

This article is developed from a paper originally presented to a panel on “Civic Engagement in Public and Global Governance” organized by EROPA as a contribution to the World Civic Forum (WCF) in Seoul, South Korea in 2009. The concept note prepared by EROPA for that panel took the rosy view.

The rise of democracy in many countries ... gives rise to freedom of expression and this freedom is perhaps among the most basic mechanisms to involve the people in the management of public affairs. When people get involved in government processes, they tend to understand how these processes happen. They become more familiar with their government and the government in turn becomes more transparent to its people. They learn to express their respective views and even hope that the government listens to what they say, and realize that participation in government affairs is one of their rights.

Civic engagement in public governance involves dynamic interplays between and among the public or the people themselves, the civil society, business sector and the media, and this happens in various levels—local, national, regional and international or global levels. Civil society influences the government in decision-making, while making sure that the voices of the poor, often marginalized, are also heard. . . . The business sector remains to be a partner of the state in terms of economic productions, while the media provides the mechanisms to share information to the public, which enhance transparency and accountability (Eropa 2008).

The main thrust of discussion at the WCF panel was about moving power from central government through decentralizing processes, particularly in the direction of local governments. Thus it was believed that participation of constituents—from the “grassroots”—was promoted. How does this work? Is it effective in helping citizens articulate their views and suggestions? Indeed, does it facilitate actual community participation in decision-making and public service delivery, and so contribute to the establishment of a transparent and accountable government system?

To advance consideration of these questions, this article

- considers the place of decentralization and local democracy in the broad structures of governance (i.e., government, market, civil society) and in the reform agendas of the recent period (with some attention to functional as well as territorial forms of decentralization);
- surveys some of the existing debates about engagement, participation, and consultation, and about some of the related practices; and
- speculates briefly about prospects for advancing towards a system that does effectively promote such engagement, including a role in actual governing/managing.

Several of the basic terms encountered in these discussions are used in a variety of ways, and some introductory clarification of the way in which they will be used in this article will be helpful. Indeed, the terms “governance,” “community,” “decentralization,” and “local government,” and how the realities they represent interact and sometimes overlap, are part of the main story. This clarification comes in the next section, which also contains a brief note on what I regard as overuse of the term “reform,” something which I believe often prejudices sensible consideration of these matters.

### **Clarifications: “Governance,” “Community,” “Decentralization,” “Local Government”—and Overuse of “Reform”**

*Governance* is a key term within political theorizing and debating today, but for most of the 20th century it was a marginal term. For some, it was simply a synonym for government. Towards the end of the century, however, it rose to centrality whenever the nature and structure of governing—more than just government—came under consideration. There are many subtleties in this process (Kooiman 1993; Rhodes 1996a, 1996b; Jose 2007); here I want simply to indicate how the emergence of the term has affected my own work and that of the people I associate with most closely.

A very clear application came with the 1992 report of the Committee on Corporate Governance in the UK (Cadbury 1992; Rhodes 1996a: 654-656). The Committee was appointed after some spectacular management failures in private corporations, and its report stimulated much effort to improve the working of company boards, with particular attention to how they related to stakeholders while observing legal and regulatory requirements. “Corporate governance” was firmly launched as an essentially private-sector concern for the way legally incorporated enterprises were managed. Public-sector carry-over was inevitable, but that should strictly have been limited to similarly incorporated public or state-owned enterprises, a field of much interest to me. But it was not. Some applied the idea of corporate governance to non-corporate as well as corporate organizations, even to the public service itself, and much slipperiness emerged.

More significantly for present purposes and probably better known to the readership of a public administration journal, social science scholarship has over the last couple of decades been developing a tripartite conception of the ways societies and economies are governed, with state, market and civil society as essential components of the governance system and intimately linked through a mass of networking mechanisms (e.g., Rhodes 1996b; Goldsmith & Eggers 2004). The civil society component has often been thought of as the “third sector,” and there has always been a question about how it organizes itself to play its governance role. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide a part of the answer, but only a part. As for the state: as marketizing forces gained ever more political power towards the end of the 20th century, it was even possible to speculate that there could be governance without government (explored by Rosenau & Czempiel, 1992; Rhodes 1996a; Peters & Pierre 1998). With experience of the financial meltdown of 2008-2010 in such recent memory, however, I suggest that those who always believed that was impossible are having the last laugh!

The EROPA concept note for the WCF panel took the more all-embracing view:

The concept of governance comes from the idea that government should not work alone by itself if it wants to achieve genuine and sustained development. Governance suggests that the government should not assume the sole responsibility of achieving development; rather, it has to keep ties with other institutions towards this end. This makes partnership a key component of governance (EROPA 2008).

*Partnership*—as in public-private partnership (PPP)—is another contentious governance term in much use today, but it is relevant here only in so far as it affects issues relating to civic engagement.<sup>1</sup>

So I turn to *community*. At the broadest level, the state is seen as an organized political community, the market as an organized economic community, and civil society as an organized social community, the last obviously connecting with civil society in governance discourse (Giddens 2000; Sorenson 2006; Wettenhall 2003; Wettenhall & Thynne 2010). However, the most widely used application is probably that which refers to a group of people within a larger society living together in a particular locality with a shared ethnic or cultural background (e.g., Head 2007).

Much advocacy of decentralization sees virtue in moving as much governance action as possible towards such smaller units of population in the belief that this will be the best way to mobilize citizens to participate in the management of their collective affairs. In a globalizing world, it is inevitable that Schumacher's (1973) "small is beautiful" axiom will have much appeal, and community in this sense serves it well. But there are negatives as well as positives. As Giddens (2000: 63-64) spells them out, "communities are the source of the ethical values that make a wholesome civic life possible," but "if they become too strong, (they) breed identity politics, and with it the potential for social division, or even disintegration". Similarly, Werlin (1989: 448) acknowledges the "almost mythical image of the benign, united, knowledgeable community," but cautions also that communities are sometimes beset by "ignorance, disunity, ethnocentricity, authoritarianism, corruption, and ineptitude." We clearly do want to decentralize to communities and make them effective governance units, but we also need to take care to arm them to accentuate the positives and avoid the negatives revealed in these commentaries.

The various uses of *decentralization* also require comment. In the sense reflected in the last paragraph, it envisages movement from governmental centres towards smaller local communities. That is the territorial (geographical) use, and it commands much of the relevant literature. But, as political scientists like Macmahon and Hanson were pointing out in the 1960s, there is an equally important functional use, with decentralizing movement, again away from governmental centres, towards public organizations constitutionally or statutorily separated from the state itself (i.e., central government) and with the degree of independence or autonomy deemed necessary to enable them to perform tasks that are better done away from close political and/or public-service control (Macmahon 1961; Hanson 1964; see also Wettenhall 1996). Federalism, with its separate strata of sub-national units with their own central governments (provinces, states, lander, cantons), furnishes particularly strong areal decentralization, often operating at two levels because the sub-national units then decentralize further within their own territories. And functional decentralization can produce hybrid forms, for some centrally-owned, autonomous organizations may operate over areas smaller than the whole nation, either regional or local, pointing to another issue of importance here.<sup>2</sup>

As generally used, *local government* refers only to multi-functional units of government in some way elected by local communities. This local government sector is highly self-conscious and well organized at the international level—it behaves like a virtual community itself—and it is capable of presenting the collective case of its multitude of constituent members so strongly that it often seems to be the centrepiece of decentralizing activity. It is, of course, a major player in territorial decentralization, but it is only part of the story.

For most countries, any serious exploration of arrangements for governing regional or local communities will demonstrate that there is a panoply of local governing arrangements including, as well as those elected local governments, field offices of central departments (representing deconcentration rather than devolution—see Smith 1967), and statutory creations of the central legislatures (often called statutory authorities and representing functional decentralization). The latter are dedicated to serve particular regional or local areas but stand apart from the mainstream locally elected councils, and may themselves have boards that give substantial representation to local interests.

And that is only the governmental side of the governance universe. If local government is reconceived as *local governance*, a much wider range of institutions and actors—from within and beyond government—can be seen to be involved, with boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic activities becoming blurred. A dynamic “new localism” is possible, but it requires the active input of these multiple actors (Stoker 1998, 2004; Geddes 2005; Aulich 2009: 45, 52). The message is: Local government should not try to “go it alone;” it will be at its best when it is able to coordinate all these forces.

We hear much about *administrative reform*, with “governance,” “community,” “decentralization,” and “local government” all emerging as significant reform themes. It is appropriate to consider the helpfulness of that association.

Administrative reform has been going on since the dawn of organized government, with the more far-sighted leaders seeking always to improve the ways of maintaining law and order, delivering social services, fighting wars, and collecting taxes. Some of the Egyptian pharaohs, and Chinese, Persian, Roman and Prussian emperors, Napoleon in France, several US presidents, and many others exercised themselves mightily in this way. But the effort was seen for centuries as part of a natural and necessary progression in the affairs of states that were usually in flux, with their governments being pushed by a variety of forces demanding new policies and new governing methods. It was not until the 1960s that “reform” was identified as a subject deserving special study, special policies, and special practices in its own right. Caiden, who has chronicled this development, argues that the world was becoming more turbulent, so that the older, more relaxed ways were no longer sufficient (Caiden 1969; 1991).

The huge, post-World War II increase in the study of the social sciences was also influential. It introduced many newcomers to the study of administrative activity, and in large numbers they glorified in the excitement of continual change. Increasingly, the word reform became a seemingly essential part of any description of governmental activity. It was as though there could be no government activity not dominated by this reform lens, and the implication—indeed, often the practical effect—was that change was pervasive and a virtually permanent condition of organizational life. Too often it was forgotten that organizations need a measure of stability if they are to function well.

The downside of the constant reform/constant change mentality was well illustrated in Pollitt’s study of the UK National Health Service. Each new British government instituted its own review of the service, each inquiry and report was marked by recommendations for major change, and, to a considerable extent, those recommendations were followed. So the reformative action was frequent, and none of the changed systems was given time to settle down, gain experience, and possibly achieve the intended benefits. Long before that could happen, another review and another set of reforms were on the way (Pollitt 2007).

This may be a dramatic case, but the message is clear. We should seek very seriously to move away from a style of thinking about government that glorifies the use of the word “reform”. Instead, we should substitute one that shows some recognition of

the need for organizational stability—not, of course, to the extent of allowing organizational arteries to harden, but certainly sufficient to allow the last set of changes to settle in and be lubricated by a reasonable measure of developmental experience. Let's demote "reform" so that it is seen as just one of many issues of concern as we consider government activity, not as arguably the main issue as so often seems to be the case today.

### **Decentralization and Local Democracy**

As indicated in a recent major publication by the United Cities and Local Governments organization (UCLG 2008), an exercise for which EROPA organized the Asia-Pacific component, decentralization and local government represent a huge area of interest in modern public administration. The concerns of the sponsors were to collect information about the world's tens of thousands of standard-type local governments, their elected councils and their administrative services, their considerable range of functions, their (usually limited) tax base, how their communities engaged with them, and the complicated arrangements linking them with supervisory parts of central governments. It was undoubtedly a valuable exercise: as well as assembling all this information, it made important analytical advances identifying the main framework issues needing attention if countries are to decentralize successfully, and mounting "a call for initiatives that (would) develop and deepen local democracy" (Campbell 2008: esp. 51, 70).

The operative concept for this project was decentralized democracy (Campbell 2008: 49). While plenty of variations across countries were noted, the focus was always local government in the conventional sense. Given the organizational base of the sponsoring group, this was not surprising, but it meant that there was little or no concern with other forms of territorial-governmental decentralization. Turning to those forms, it needs to be pointed out that, in many countries, a large part of the national civil service works away from the capital, in regional or local offices of a variety of central departments engaged in service delivery and revenue-collecting activity. Many working in those offices will live in the region or locality and have other close associations with it—they are an important part of the proverbial "street-level bureaucracy" (Lipsky 1980)—but ultimately they must report to their departmental principals in the capital and look to them for their orders, salaries, promotions, etc. There have been many attempts to link these field offices with local governments, but they so often fail because of the control mentality of central supervisors and the perceived weakness of the local governments. This weakness prompts movement towards a smaller number of larger, better-resourced local governments, but the effort is sometimes nullified by the strength of local (community) opposition. There may be good participation here, but to what effect?

The smallness and weakness of some of the individual units of the elected local government system may then lead to further central government intervention, now to establish statutory authorities to assume control of services over larger (regional) areas in the interests of better coordination and greater efficiency, as, for example, in urban transport. These authorities may recruit local people to their administrations and their boards so that there is some participation. But they are separate from the elected general-

purpose councils, and coordination problems remain. Often enough, further reformative action sees much of this activity returned unambiguously to central departments—unless there are unusually spirited and creative leaders within the local government sector capable of establishing councils strong enough and sufficiently resource-rich to be able to operate major services efficiently on a community basis.<sup>3</sup>

It is not relevant here to spend time on units of functional decentralization that do not have a regional or local focus. But some clearly do have this focus. Here I want to offer one Australian illustration that shows that, even in statutory authorities, citizen participation may both be facilitated and effective. The State of Victoria had made much use of autonomous statutory bodies through its developmental period from the later 1800s to the mid-1900s, but this usage was challenged when the administrative reform imperatives built up in the 1970s. Victoria's particular reviewer, a board of inquiry under Sir Henry Bland, recommended very strongly that the State's heavy reliance on autonomous agencies, i.e., functional decentralization, should cease, and that all areas of state administration should be brought within ministerial departments in the interests of better coordination and effective accountability to ministers and parliament. Modest resulting change gradually built up to a phase of high centralization and then privatization in the 1990s. But before that happened there was argument that agency autonomy from the central state apparatus produced a democratic virtue in its own right, one likely to be superior to that notionally provided by conventional ministerial responsibility. Each of the non-departmental bodies faced its own client group in a fairly direct manner, with that group often represented on its board. It was argued that that system facilitated a greater degree of public participation in management than the by-now standard form of the ministerial department could ever provide (Bland 1974; Holmes 1976: 40-43).

Seating representatives of consumer groups or of communities served on agency boards of whatever kind is a practice much disliked in the orthodoxy of modern management. Of course it is likely to provoke argument and debate and so frustrate the desire for quick, decisive decision-making. That will not make today's managers very happy. But, looking to the longer term, it is also likely that it will facilitate a broader consideration of issues relevant to the matters under discussion and so contribute to better and safer policies and actions. It will contribute positively to the community's sense of ownership of its own governance institutions. It is also likely that it will place the citizenry in a position where it is better able to check on the effectiveness and morality of government actions, and so make government itself more accountable.

### **Engagement, Consultation, Participation?**

When political scientist Held (1987) organized his excellent survey of the evolution of democratic ideals and practices around the notions of protective, developmental, and direct democracy, he was not only tracing several millennia of thought about the issues discussed here but also pointing to a mass of hurdles that stand in the way of dramatic advancement. More citizen involvement in government has been a popular cause over this whole long period. Sometimes, involvement has operated in fair measure; at other times, efforts to achieve it have been stamped out with great brutality, with the cause itself being seen as subversive.

So there is nothing new about the cause. At least 40 years ago exhortatory “ladders” of citizen participation were circulating, progressing in steps from “being manipulated” through “tokenism” to “citizen control” (Arnstein 1969, 1971). But it is likely that the cause has been pushed with more-than-usual vigour in the recent period as globalizing forces have confronted governments with complex issues in uncertain environments (sometimes called “wicked problems”) often associated with shocks and crises that demonstrate the fallibility of so much policy leadership and contribute to declining civic trust in governments and public institutions. Not surprisingly, increasingly better-informed and better-educated citizens demand more in the way of accountability from governments, and indeed more in the way of active participation in the way policies are worked out, executive decisions made, and services delivered (based in part on Bourgon 2007; 2009). The term participatory democracy has emerged to describe such active involvement of citizens (e.g., Stewart 2003).

Just before the turn of the century, another political scientist, writing for a fairly theoretical American public administration journal, pointed to another factor contributing to the rise of pro-community sentiment. For Richard Box, it has been the rise of the “technical-professional model” of public administration that has so alienated the community. That may have been a necessary reform instrument to help overcome old governmental evils, but now “people want to reclaim their communities by institutionalizing citizen involvement in decision making, weakening the role of city managers, emphasizing neighborhood quality over grand city-wide visions”, and so on. To return thus to earlier governance values, Box argued, “should be viewed with optimism as an opportunity for renewal rather than as reason for concern or anxiety” (Box 1995: 87).

In his fairly recent comprehensive review of the literature on community engagement, Australian political scientist Head contrasts such “grass roots or community-based” orientations in democratic theory with the “managerial or realist orientation” that comes from professional bureaucracies and representative government (Head 2007: 442). He notes the frequency with which international organs like the OECD, UNDP and UNDESA have commented on the inadequacies of the narrowly managerial approach in industrialized and developing countries alike (Head 2007: 442), and seeks to evaluate the new approaches they propose for securing greater citizen engagement. These approaches connect with the five main processes within a spectrum of public participation proposed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAPP): informing, consulting, involving, collaborating (with), and involving citizens (Head 2007: 444). Head’s evaluation looks at levels of action (e.g., federal, state, local), policy arenas (it is probably easier in some arenas than in others), initiators and their motives (state or citizens?; to empower or capture, assist or embarrass?), pay-offs (short-term and long-term), and capacity-building opportunities. Clearly there are some good possibilities, but, for Head, governments are forever reluctant and the capacity and motivation of citizens remain weak. So “there is little evidence that the widespread advocacy and adoption of ‘community engagement’ and ‘partnership’ approaches have yet involved substantial power-sharing” (Head 2007: 452).

The issues canvassed in the last few paragraphs apply equally to local governments and to other parts of the public sector. Citizen engagement may take passive forms, such as receiving information provided by government bodies, or voting for council or parliamentary elections. Voting may or may not be compulsory, but the local council



will be closer to the individual citizen so that, mostly, more intimate connections between citizen and representative may be possible. So more active forms of engagement may be encountered at this level: it will be easier for citizens to attend meetings of a council and its committees than to attend sessions of the legislature—indeed, citizens are sometimes co-opted in non-official roles as members of council committees.

For what are usually, from the community viewpoint, the more distant parts of the public sector—such as departments and agencies of central governments—engagement can be aided by the establishment of structured opportunities, either by the departments and agencies themselves, or by citizen groups created by more direct forms of action. Specific governmental proposals may be referred for consideration, or considered despite governmental reluctance. At all levels, sometimes citizen viewpoints may be influential in affecting outcomes, sometimes not. So here we are really talking about degrees of consultation and participation (see Head 2007: 444-446).<sup>4</sup>

Can more be expected? To what extent has participatory governance arrived? Is there anything positive to be said about direct community involvement in the actual management of public services? Here the various senses of “public” come into play. It seems that “state-as-public” is the highest sense, but, for most people and most purposes, it is pretty remote. “Government-as-public” may be a hierarchical rung lower, but how public is it when ministers clearly act in the interests of a particular party or particular group rather than of the electorate as a whole? And, of course, they often do this. Thus, it has recently been argued that, when the Hong Kong government enters into “partnership” deals with private interests without meaningful consultation with the various stakeholders involved, what results is government-private partnership (or GPP), not public-private partnership (or PPP). The particular case concerns the protection of cultural heritage, and it is argued further, I think persuasively, that it is a community, not a state or a government, that creates such heritage. So here, emphatically, it is community that deserves to be seen as the manifestation of public, again not state or government (Hayllar 2010).

My University of Canberra colleague, Chris Aulich, has surveyed recent relevant Australian developments with emphasis mostly on the established local government system. In his view, there has not been much progress: “despite reforms intended to engage local citizens more in local government activity, citizen participation has yet to develop significantly into arrangements that reach the level of participatory governance,” and, “(g)iven current constraints on local government’s autonomy and resources, in many cases effective moves towards participatory governance may need leadership and support from outside” (Aulich 2009: 44, 57).

The big question remains. How does a community organize itself, within the governance trinity of state, market and civil society, to take decisive actions or manage affairs in its own right? So often it is just too difficult, and we retreat to the easy, familiar position of accepting the process of upwards delegation whereby we leave actual decision-making and management to representative institutions with varying degrees of remoteness such as local councils or governments and the administrative institutions they create. Then we have to wrestle again with the issues of engagement, consultation, and participation. We are likely never to be very happy with the answers we get. Is more possible?

**Challenge: Is Community Management Possible?**

At this stage of governance development, comment here can be no more than speculative. However, my colleague Ian Thynne and I have had occasion to review some evidence about organizational manifestations of the resurrection of interest in community, and the outcome gives at least some slight cause for optimism. We believe this is a governance issue deserving of much more attention than it has hitherto received, and earnestly suggest the mounting of a major international research program to track relevant developments and explore possibilities for further progress (Wettenhall and Thynne 2009).

This reviving interest in the resurrection of community probably represents a consistent trend. But it is hard to see consistency in the organizational manifestations—it is too early for any one of them to have developed model value that might lead to adaptation or development in multiple contexts. And, as noted, the notion of including community (or other stakeholder) representatives on managing boards, once very popular, has taken a back seat—the managerialist view that it is too disruptive has yet to be seriously dented. Also there does not seem to be much interest today in two forms of small-group organizing activity popular through much of the last century—mutuals and cooperatives—that focused on collegiality and trust rather than on following the hard commercial disciplines of private company formation. Mutuals have largely disappeared in the privatizing period of the later 20th century, with the word “demutualization” being used virtually synonymously with privatization. Many cooperatives still exist, particularly in developing countries, but they do not command much attention in mainstream governance discourse.<sup>5</sup>

As the numbers of public (or state-owned) enterprises have dwindled as a consequence of that same privatizing movement, however, there has been something of a reverse movement that has considerable public or community significance. A conference on “Community Development” at Australia’s Deakin University a few years ago highlighted this development (Alice et al., 2006). There is evidence in many countries of a new movement to establish community enterprises or social enterprises with a more human face than possessed by the old state-owned enterprises that had been subjected to marketizing pressures for a generation or more before privatization arrived. This movement appears to be centred in Europe (Borzaga & Defourney 2004), but there are applications elsewhere. In the Australian case

in an environment where “community” is often seen as the site of policy intervention in which failures of the market and the state may be resolved, the role of locally-driven solutions to economic, social, environmental and cultural problems has gained increasing traction. Community enterprise—that is, collectively owned and democratically controlled not-for-profit business activities, which directly serve communities of place or characteristic—is one such set of activities... [Examples include] collective buyouts of petrol stations, pubs and hospitals, and collective purchasing of telecommunications services in rural and metropolitan fringe communities... Case study research suggests that, beyond basic service provision, effective community enterprise provides opportunities for civic engagement, personal and skills development, and development of social networks and collective identity (Barraket 2006: 1).<sup>6</sup>

Any search for other, more genuinely communitarian arrangements brings us quickly to the world of trusts, foundations, and community councils that develop

occasionally in spaces not otherwise inhabited between the public and private sectors. Thus, in New Zealand, trusts emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s as alternatives to the outright privatization of some government enterprises, particularly in savings banks, electric power utilities, and ports. There were several possible ways of acting. Acting on behalf of communities, the trusts could either manage themselves, contract out the management, or invest in the enterprises concerned (McKinley 1999).

Again, in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) where I live and where there is a single sub-national government performing both state-type and municipal-type functions, community councils have developed outside the formal government structure to represent identity-conscious population areas. While these councils are sometimes strong in influence, they lack executive power (Halligan et al. 2002).<sup>7</sup> But there exists in the ACT another group of service-providing agencies boldly displaying the word “community” in their titles: they are active especially in the housing and welfare sectors, they operate with a mix of salaried and volunteer staff, and they stand apart from the territorial government though, of course, they relate to it and are to a degree assisted by it. They can be thought of as small, local NGOs. There must be legions of such bodies around the world, and they facilitate community engagement to a much greater extent than do the often highly constrained arrangements offered by agencies within the public sector proper, whether local governments or arms of state or federal governments.

*For local governments:* In many countries they stand as the weakest tier of government, and it is understandable that they often seem to behave defensively in the way they project themselves, both nationally and globally, through the self-conscious collective “communities” they establish. The international analytical literature concerned with issues such as consultation and participation seems to be talking increasingly about *local governance* rather than *local government*.<sup>8</sup> There is important symbolism here, and the implication is that local governments are likely to be at their best, to contribute most to the cause of better citizen engagement, when they view themselves not as often-beleaguered parts of the government system but as entrepreneurial coordinators of the efforts of all parts of the broader governance universe of state, market and civil society within their localities. Local government people will retort correctly that many of them already do this. But I suggest that their “sector” is not widely viewed in this way, and that a lot more could be done to project this new image and make it effective. Governance as a whole would be the clear beneficiary.

## **Conclusion**

This article is entirely sympathetic to the cause of enhancing citizen participation in government, which was one of the main themes of the World Civic Forum, and it sees local democracy and local government as being vital instruments in promoting that cause. There can be negatives as well as positives in such participation, and it is important that all promotional activity seeks to accentuate the positives. More importantly, the article argues that local government as generally understood is not the only endpoint of decentralizing action. It identifies others that are affected by many of the same considerations and that can also contribute to this agreed cause.

Some clarifying definitions are offered, after which the article surveys some of the existing discourse about the several instruments of decentralizing action, of course including the world's very large population of local governments, and about the effectiveness of these instruments in promoting community engagement, consultation and participation. Though the issue has been with us for as long as we have had civilized societies, there is considerable evidence of increasing interest and increasing effort in the recent period. Clearly much has been achieved. Equally clearly, however, there is still much to be done.

The article then moves on to consider to what extent there has been an extension of community/citizen involvement into actual decision-making and management of public affairs. Managerialists will not like it, but for those committed to greater community participation it too is a desired outcome. There are a few positive indicators here, and there may be many more examples that have so far received little attention from governance researchers. All such community-enriching arrangements deserve much greater systematic study than they have hitherto received.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For an exploration of the varying senses of this idea in current governance discourse, see Wettenhall 2008.

<sup>2</sup> In my own public administration education I was greatly assisted by the classification of decentralizing activity developed by Macmahon (1961):

- weak/administrative deconcentration – represented e.g. by those departmental field offices,
- stronger/statutory devolution – represented by local councils (local governments) and functional statutory bodies, all established by and with missions defined by legislation,
- strongest/constitutional devolution – represented by states in federations, and constitutionally entrenched.

It is unfortunate that, in the mass of publishing activity over the last few decades, we have often lost sight of such significant conceptual contributions by scholars of past generations like Macmahon and his contemporaries. For discussion, see Thynne and Wettenhall 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Thus relevant Australian research projects undertaken over the last several decades have shown variously:

- how serious attempts to create a better coordinated governance system for the Riverina region, a part of the State of New South Wales to the west of the Australian Capital Territory, have failed, at least in part because of the lack of effective local leadership (Power & Nelson 1976);
- how, unusually, forces seeking to bring many separate local governments together to form an integrated “greater city” council succeeded in Brisbane, the Queensland capital, in the 1920s (Greenwood & Lavery 1959);
- how a coordinated works authority representative of all local governments in the Melbourne metropolitan region eventually proved unequal to its task and was replaced by a central authority in which managerial power was emphasized at the expense of community representation (Gardner 1987).

<sup>4</sup> Another body of research has developed the “CLEAR tool” which proposes that participation is most effective where citizens CAN participate (have the necessary resources and knowledge), LIKE TO participate (have the necessary sense of attachment), are ENABLED and ASKED to participate (are provided with opportunities), and are RESPONDED to (in seeing evidence that their views have been considered). See Lowndes et al., 2006.

<sup>5</sup> On these forms, see particularly Wettenhall & Thynne 2005: 266-273. There is an International Co-operative Alliance that claims to have 222 member organizations from 85 countries active in all sectors of the economy and representing more than 800 million individuals world-wide, according to its website at <<http://www.ica.coop/al-ica/>>

<sup>6</sup> The author might have added community banks as another field for such enterprise. There is a now-considerable body of literature devoted to the development of social enterprises.

<sup>7</sup> Weak community councils have sometimes surfaced as subsidiary parts of regular local government systems, as sops to local communities when central government action has forced mergers of old small municipal units into much larger ones. Their rationale is different from that of the ACT's community councils.

<sup>8</sup> Thus, a fairly new journal titles itself *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*. This would have been unthinkable a generation ago. However, its co-sponsors, the UK-based Commonwealth Forum for Local Government and the Centre for Local Government at the University of Technology Sydney, have not made that change in their own titles.

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## Biosketch

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## **Emerging from the Chrysalis: Participatory Governance in Australian Local Government**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper identifies types of citizen participation in local government in Australia, in particular focusing on the past two decades when local government systems have been the focus of intense reform. The paper considers the extent to which contemporary views of participatory governance have taken root at local level and concludes that despite reforms intended to engage local citizens more in local government activity, citizen participation is only beginning to emerge into arrangements that might be described as “participatory governance.” It also argues that for participatory governance to be further developed, both the internal and external constraints for local government will need to be recognized and addressed. Unless this occurs, leadership may often have to come from organizations outside institutional local government.*

### **Introduction**

While there is almost universal acceptance of the principle of citizen participation in democratic societies, the means and extent of this participation are frequently contested. Citizen participation in *government* has traditionally centred on measures to facilitate greater public access to information about government, enhance the rights of citizens to be “consulted” on matters that directly affect them, and ensure that all voices can be heard equally through fair systems of representative democracy. Such measures typically include standardized rules, protocols, and enabling legislation and regulation (Bridgman and Davis 2000). However, there is a growing appreciation that participation in *governance*, or participatory governance, involves different principles and methods for engagement. These might include developing transformative partnerships; establishing system-wide information exchanges and knowledge transfers; decentralizing decision-making and inter-institutional dialogue; and embracing relationships based more on reciprocity and trust (Reddel and Woolcock 2003: 93).

The shift from government to governance involves the provision of means to engage individuals and organizations outside government through “structures and arrangements which support effective relationships across the public, private and community sectors as they collaborate in decision-making” (Edwards 2005: 12). This has been described by Putnam as “social connectedness,” a critical element in the formation of social capital (Putnam 2000). It involves an active role for government in enabling or capacity building in local communities, rather than the more passive role implied in traditional notions of

citizen participation. However, both the traditional notion of citizen participation and this emerging idea of capacity and relationship building have roots in the view that citizen participation is a “basic building block for contemporary democratic society and sustainable communities” (Cuthill and Fien 2005: 64). Citizen participation in governance also aims to devolve power and resources away from central control and towards front-line managers, local democratic structures, and local consumers and communities in what Stoker terms “new localism” (Stoker 2004). This has implications for traditional ideas of representative government with communities moving away from vicarious engagement in democracy towards more direct involvement in decision-making processes.

Not only are new means of participation evolving with governance, so too are its goals. For example, an earlier classification developed by Arnstein (1971) has been immensely popular in describing traditional notions of consultation and participation. At the apex of Arnstein’s “ladder of participation” she describes “citizen control,” which contrasts with current approaches to governance that focus on setting and achieving goals through partnerships and collaborations amongst a broad range of stakeholders.

This paper aims to map citizen participation at the local level in Australia, in particular focusing on the past two decades when local government systems have been a focus of intense public sector reform with such strong influences from New Public Management (NPM). This period has seen a new emphasis on measures to streamline administration; improve financial management; and focus on performance measurement, benchmarking, and competition. Achieving participatory governance in this environment has proved particularly challenging with some local governments trying to find a balance between it and management efficiency. Earlier focuses of reform in Australia included a move away from “ratepayer democracy” with the introduction of provisions to strengthen universal suffrage in local government and remove or reduce property franchises—reforms designed to enhance *citizen participation in government*. However, more recently, reform has included a greater focus on partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders. This paper tries to identify the extent to which these contemporary approaches to participatory governance have taken root at the local level, as well as consider the capacity of local government to promote this agenda. The authors argue that *citizen participation in governance* is very much a work-in-progress, and further research is required to map and evaluate the range of programs aimed at stimulating participatory governance.

### **Local Government Reform: Legislating Citizen Participation**

Citizen involvement in Australian local government from the 1960s fell largely within the ambit of “indirect participation,” that is, attempting to reform “those legal activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of [their representatives] and/or the actions they take” (Richardson 1983: 11). The reform agendas included moves to widen the franchise, eliminate multiple voting, and redraw boundaries to ensure greater adherence to principles of one-person, one-vote, one-value. This represented a shift away from the earlier notion of ratepayer democracy in which the dominant considerations had been the “protection of one’s own interests and those of one’s own kind” (Chapman and Wood 1984: 27).

Other activities emerging from this earlier period of reform included more overt political activity with campaigning on behalf of candidates or issues, and engagement in political parties or interest groups. While citizens were seen as capable of exerting important influence, however, this influence was typically focused on policy delivery rather than design (Sharp 1980). This form of citizen participation is much more congruent with Bridgman and Davis' (2000) articulation noted above, in that it focused on enabling protocols, regulation, and legislation more than on those forms of participatory governance that actively engage communities in the formulation of policy. "This was typically in the context of citizens participating in pre-determined policy debates rather than agenda-setting or active two-way deliberation" (Curtain 2003: 127).

With this form of citizen participation, the role of government is a relatively passive one, simply offering a degree of access to those participants who choose to become involved. It is aimed broadly at developing greater transparency and engagement within a context of representative democracy, where primary decisions are made through the representative process. It may also include structural changes that enhance effective local autonomy. These measures reflect traditional political values of equity (for example, through encouraging voting systems that promote universal franchise and principles of one vote, one value), responsiveness (for example, in introducing provisions for referenda or protocols for community planning), accountability (for example, through ensuring access to information about decisions, programs, and policies), and devolution of some minor functions to local communities.

All three spheres of government in Australia have undergone continuous reform during the past two decades, representing the most significant set of changes since federation in 1901. In the local government sphere, reforms have been comprehensive at the management, legislative, and structural levels, and have focused on two primary agendas: first, the improved management of resources and second, governance issues – especially the redefinition of roles and responsibilities of the various actors in the local sphere (Aulich 2005; Marshall 1998). It is the second agenda that is of particular interest in this paper.

This second agenda aimed at strengthening the accountability of local governments through increased transparency provisions, establishing greater opportunities for community referenda, and mandating reporting provisions to communities. In all states<sup>1</sup> provisions were enacted for councils to develop strategic or management plans (especially to be more responsive to community wishes); for stricter reporting regimes, both to the community and to the state government; for making key documentation more transparent and available; and for continuing the electoral reforms begun in the 1960s. These provisions were designed to strengthen accountability both to the local community and to the state government, improve management capacity, and make local government more democratic. In this context, however, being more democratic was understood in terms of enhancing representative democracy and improving both transparency and accountability of local government management activity, rather than considering options for stronger, more direct community engagement. Legislative initiatives in most jurisdictions involved amendments to state local government Acts, or the introduction of new legislation, to strengthen public consultation requirements in relation to councils' proposed activities, forecast expenditure,

required total rate (property tax) revenue, and the anticipated level and distributive effects in broad terms of various components of the rating structure.

The centrepiece of local government reform was the reformation of state government legislation: between 1989 and 1999, the local government Acts in each state jurisdiction were reviewed and wholly or largely rewritten, with the Northern Territory following in 2008. Common to all changes was the shift away from prescriptive provisions reinforced by the doctrine of *ultra vires*, which restricted councils to performing only those activities specifically nominated under the legislation. In the new Acts, forms of general competence powers were granted to enable councils to undertake almost any activities necessary for them to fulfill the functions and powers delegated to them (subject to other state and federal laws).

However, whilst these legislative changes widened the scope of local government *activities*, the nature and extent of the delegated *powers* did not change significantly in any state jurisdiction. Despite the modernization of local government Acts, there is no evidence of significant changes to the state-local power nexus. Reserved powers remain with the state governments, typical of which is the provision in the New South Wales 1993 legislation that gives the Minister for Local Government “the power to issue any order that a council may issue;” and in Queensland, where the state government is empowered to refuse approval to by-laws, overturn existing gazetted by-laws, and overturn council resolutions. Thus, even under the reformed local government Acts, local government remains a creature of state and territory governments, all of which retain strong over-rule powers (Aulich 1999; 2005).

Any commitment to local autonomy was particularly tested in those states then collectively known as the “rust belt” (Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania), in which the financial problems of state governments drove approaches to reform. In these states, reforms focused attention more on cost reduction rather than on enhancing local governance (Aulich 2005). In justifying this reform effort, states claimed they had brought about lower local taxes, debt retirement, and improved quality of services to residents—few mentioned the impacts on traditional local governance issues and values.

Nevertheless, the reform processes themselves suggested a strong preference for consultative and participative mechanisms: discussion papers, exposure drafts of legislation, inquiries, seminars, community consultations, training programs for newly elected local members, and the like were typical of the tools used. These reform processes could be described as pluralist and participative, utilizing activities designed to lift the level of awareness of participants.

However, a report by the House of Representatives Economics, Finance and Public Administration Committee (national government level) found that local government has been short-changed, particularly by the actions of state governments in maintaining revenue denial. There are increasing expectations of local government to provide services, but the lack of adequate revenues of their own and the insufficiency of funds granted to them make it difficult to undertake the additional functions delegated or prescribed by state governments. The report, completed in 2004, recommended a series of follow up activities

to establish a blueprint for future intergovernmental arrangements (House of Representatives Economics, Finance and Public Administration Committee 2004), but at the time of writing, there have yet to be put in place any substantive changes to the current nexus between local and state spheres of government.

Martin (2006: 1) argues that this resource deficit is precisely the reason why local governments have been unable to become further engaged in community building, and that leadership in this area has “been usurped by the State government.” He asserts that this use of community development opportunities for state political purposes detracts from the effective public management of “what is regarded in other parts of the western world as important social processes at the core of effective local governance” (Martin 2006:1).

Thus, at the end of nearly two decades of reform, there has been some devolution of functions to the local sphere, but the historic reality of administrative subordination of local government continues to be a central feature of central-local relationships in Australia (Gerritsen and Whyard 1998). While its counterparts in many overseas jurisdictions enjoy the fruits of growing acceptance of new governance principles such as subsidiarity and joined-up government, Australian local government continues to wrestle with a nineteenth century legislative stranglehold imposed on it by state governments.

What is clear is that there remain some structural impediments to full and unencumbered access to the local government system, which include following:

1. A highly complex local government electoral system with variations in the length of council terms, the size of the elected council, who can vote, whether or not voting is compulsory<sup>2</sup>, and the voting system itself. While variations in electoral arrangements *may* reflect local preferences, what is significant is the limited capacity of local governments themselves to change these arrangements. Only in the state of New South Wales can individual local governments change some aspects of electoral arrangements unilaterally, subject to citizen referenda. In all others, state government or electoral commission approval is required, and in some cases, changes may require amendments to local government legislation.
2. Formal participation in local government elections is generally weak, with voter turnout averaging between 12 and 65 percent in those states where voting is not compulsory (Aulich 2009). In most rural local governments, only a minority (about 30 percent) of all seats are contested at elections, although this figure is higher in urban elections (about 60 percent) (Gerritsen and Whyard 1998: 42). This suggests that the enfranchised are not overly enthusiastic about exercising their right to vote in local government elections. Perhaps there is still some remnant of the poor reputation of elected councils revealed in research conducted in the 1980s, which found that many Australians considered their local councillors “at best incompetent and, at worst, corrupt” (Bowman 1983: 180). It may also reflect a view that local government is not treated seriously by governments in other spheres, especially in relation to the allocation of functions and resources; in which case it is hardly surprising that local communities also may not be inclined to treat the sector seriously.

3. The levels of allowance or remuneration paid to councillors also vary across states, and in some instances, between councils in the same state. For example, in Queensland the allowance system has resulted in “large variations in allowance levels” to the extent that, in some councils, mayors and elected members can be employed full-time (Department of Transport and Regional Services 2005: 14). While these variations again reflect local or state preferences, serving as an elected member remains largely a part-time occupation, and this tends to restrict the opportunity to become a councillor to those with other sources of income. Given that payment for members of parliament has been a basic feature of democratic societies for more than a century, precisely to give all citizens the opportunity to represent their communities on a full-time basis, the failure to extend a similar provision to local governments appears somewhat anachronistic.

Despite these formal impediments, it also clear that the last decade has brought some significant developments in participatory governance. The language of partnership between state and local governments and their communities is beginning to emerge, as participatory governance and community building become the new strategic focus of some state governments and numerous local governments. By contrast with previous iterations of citizen participation, this emerging form of community engagement seeks a more active relationship between government and citizens by enabling citizens to play a significant and more direct role in shaping the nature and priorities of their communities. The next section of the paper outlines some of these activities.

### **Participatory Governance: Active Partnership with Local Communities**

This recent interest in more engaged, collaborative, and community-focused public policy and service delivery finds its sources in the United Kingdom (UK), the European Union, and to some extent the United States. In particular, “Third Way” politics has popularized a number of reforms centred on ideas of devolution, stakeholders, inclusion, partnerships, and community (Reddel and Woolcock 2003: 81), ideas which are generally related to community participation. Paradoxically, this is occurring at a time when globalization and supranational interests have also become focal points of national activity. These two apparently contradictory trends are complementary to the extent that participation models appear to enable governments to better deal with the consequences of globalization, especially those regional inequalities that arise from it. Communities are being challenged to develop their local capacities or social capital to cope more effectively with issues like social exclusion and disadvantage, which have often accompanied economic restructuring in response to global issues.

This signals a shift from local government to local governance—the involvement of a wide range of institutions and actors drawn from within but also beyond government, and the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues (Geddes 2005). As Stoker (1998) argues, governance implies that the capacity to get things done does not rest only on the power of government to command or use its authority. There is a growing enthusiasm for new forms of “distributed local governance that draws

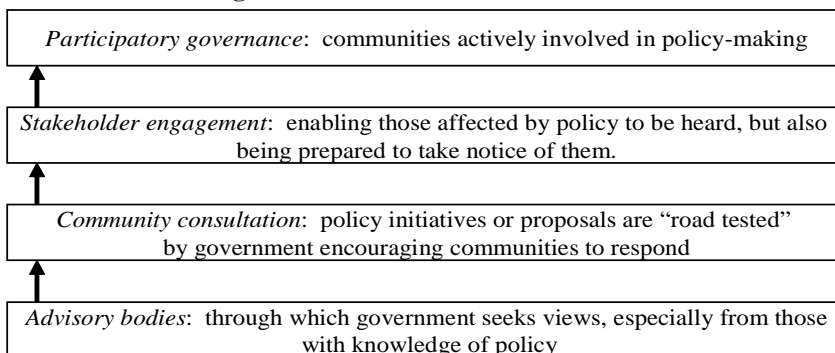
on the skills and resources of public, private, and civil society sectors” (Reddel and Woolcock 2003: 81).

Paradoxically, while NPM has focused on management reform, perhaps to the detriment of governance reform, it has added impetus to the need for greater participation by communities, especially through policy-making processes. Many governments are now more likely to search for alternative sources of advice to that traditionally monopolized by its public services, and many of those actually providing public services are outside government. To be effective, policy makers require more information about service delivery and what works, and participatory processes can provide essential feedback for policy making (Edwards 2003; Curtain 2003).

Governments are also responding to demands for participation from a better educated, more articulate, and more demanding citizenry, many of whom express a declining level of trust in political institutions and a belief that purely representative democracy often results in a “democratic deficit” (Pharr and Putnam 2000; Edwards 2005). This belief is expressed in demands for supplementary engagement of citizens beyond the traditional democratic processes of three or four year elections, with calls for more meaningful exchanges with government (Curtain 2003). Further, there is recognition that today many more policy problems are cross-cutting and highly complex, or “wicked,” and seem to defy resolution by government alone (Stoker 2004; Geddes 2005).

Stewart (2003) distinguishes different forms of governance and the associated institutional arrangements that governments use to gather information and opinion. These are presented as a continuum (Figure 1) in which interests external to government are progressively more able to influence and shape policy and its implementation: in this continuum, power moves both downwards and outwards. Participatory governance is at the apex of citizen engagement both as a form of participatory and deliberative democracy (Caddy and Vergez 2001) and as a form of governance that seeks active partnerships and collaboration between civil society, the private sector, and governments (Reddel and Woolcock 2003). Shifts through the continuum reflect increased acceptance of ideas of community, social capital, and localism as the foundations of political activity and policy making.

**Figure 1: The Governance Continuum**



Source: based on Stewart (2003).

Australian local governments have (perhaps intermittently) long provided forums and organizing capacity to facilitate arrangements that engage and build local capacity. A generation ago, local government's more singular focus on physical infrastructure, reflected in the label "roads, rates and rubbish," was supplanted by increasing concerns for the provision of community and human services, and for stronger community participation in matters such as land-use planning and community development.

At state and federal government level there is a long history of facilitation of area improvement programs, regional initiatives, and local capacity-building projects. However, these have rarely been sustained and too often their effectiveness has not been evaluated. Federal governments have asserted an interest in social capital formation, but appear unwilling to invest directly in such programs. While believing "in the ability of people to generate their own solutions to their own problems" and that "social participation helps people to grow and flourish as human beings and be full members of Australian society" (Reddel and Woolcock 2003: 82), federal governments appear to have decided that this is best achieved if handled largely without government or bureaucratic support. Recent events however may give some cause for optimism with the Labor government including in their election manifesto a commitment to citizen-centred policy-making, one element of participatory governance (Marsh et al. 2010).

By contrast, almost all state governments have taken a more direct role in facilitating community capacity building. Typically, this is formalized through establishing agencies or administrative units tasked to encourage "joined-up" and community-building initiatives. This activity carries an implicit view that traditional notions of consultation and centrally managed community input into the policy process are no longer sufficient to manage community expectations and the complexity of modern political life (Davis 2001: 230).

In Victoria, for example, the government has commenced work on community capacity building, on measures for developing social capital, service integration and community well-being, and on local learning and employment networks. It has also formally adopted a set of principles to underpin its engagement policy, and has encouraged local governments to develop four-year community plans that include processes of community participation (Martin 2006).

However, Wiseman concludes that while the Victorian government has energetically explored an extensive program of consultative and community-building strategies, it has been more cautious about opening up debate about participatory and deliberative decision making processes. He observes that in Victoria "there is mounting concern within local government and non-government organisations about the extent of state government commitment to back the language of partnership with real changes to decision-making and resource allocation processes" (Wiseman 2005: 69).

At the same time, there is evidence that due to resource constraints, some local councils are actually withdrawing from community engagement at this time when state level governments are enhancing their involvement (Martin 2006). For example, the local government practice of establishing and supporting "precinct committees" throughout the



1980s and 90s seems to have ceased, removing what used to be an avenue for community participation in council affairs and local politics.

In Western Australia, the state's Citizenship Strategy aims to actively promote the concepts of democracy, citizenship, and sustainability (Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Western Australia 2004), and the Queensland, Tasmanian, and New South Wales governments have all initiated engagement strategies (Reddel and Woolcock 2003). These state programs have tended to emphasize locality and local disadvantage, and "place management" has emerged as a new term in spatial policy language to signal a holistic approach to the needs of localities (Smyth et al 2005: 39).

In Queensland, the intention to utilize multi-sector partnerships was signalled by the Premier who declared that

there is ... an emerging service delivery model involving governments working in partnership with communities to determine needs, devise strategies for meeting these needs, implementing activities consistent with these strategies and ultimately monitoring results. The emphasis is on community empowerment and not on traditional functional program delivery (Queensland Government 2001: 10).

The government of Queensland has issued a package of policies and programs aimed at greater participation in policy development and service delivery, although it should be noted that these represent strategic intentions which have yet to be fully implemented or evaluated (Reddel and Woolcock 2003). Reddel and Woolcock argue that these strategic intentions are overdue, in that past practices have failed to appreciate the critical role of local government, community associations, and other forms of civil society; and even when they were recognized, their diversity and complexity were not always easy to accommodate because of the dominance of managerial policies that foster largely passive notions of consultation and agency coordination. More recent reports on the Queensland programs indicate some positive gains, notably the community renewal program focusing on fifteen disadvantaged areas in the state, and the Cape York initiative to address long-standing social problems in indigenous communities in that region. In both cases, the authors claim that these early successes may be due to the use of techniques of associational governance, whereby integrated policy responses involve a movement beyond the traditional social welfare constituency to engage communities more broadly (Smyth et al. 2005; Genoff 2005; Dawkins 2003).

There is also growing interest in and practice of alternative means of enhancing community engagement. For example, deliberative democratic processes are being employed by governments at all spheres of the Australian federation (Carson 2007). These are robust consultation methods that add value to policy-making processes, especially in enabling governments to deal more effectively with complex policy issues such as stem cell research, Aboriginal reconciliation, asylum seeking, and climate change. Techniques used also include innovative collaborative planning methods, such as those being used to mediate water and land-use conflicts in British Columbia (see, for example, Frame et al. 2004); citizen panels, now established by more than three quarters of UK local authorities; citizens' juries; and community dialogues, which are becoming more common in Canada (Curtain 2003).

A significant number of Australian local governments are following suit and indicate that a new style of public value management is being employed that values community outcomes, relationship-building, systems of shared communication, and collaboration. Some practices that encourage this kind of approach include the adoption of engagement policies and strategies, new use of social media technologies for both organization and community use, cultural change programs, and management systems for communication and coordination.

The Just Communities project involved 19 local governments and aimed to enhance public participation and more holistic approaches to community development. Evaluation of the project revealed some tension between representative democracy and participative governance, with some elected members concerned that their roles are being challenged if communities are more engaged in governance matters. However, results of the project also give some confidence that these issues can be ameliorated with appropriate professional development (Centre for Local Government and the Local Government Community Development and Services Association of Australia 2010). The focus on professional development in this project has led to the development of leadership and cultural change programs in participating councils that aim to entrench commitment to community governance and engagement. Given that the participating councils represent leader organizations in most states, there is a strong likelihood that the programs will be disseminated widely.

However, reports from this project indicate that the communication needs and preferences of diverse communities present a significant barrier to participatory governance—factors such as locality, age, life stage, language, literacy levels, and cultural backgrounds can influence the capacity of individuals to participate in decision-making processes. Typically, local governments are experienced in understanding the unique needs of their communities; however, skills and resources at any time can influence their capacity to engage people (Centre for Local Government and the Local Government Community Development and Services Association of Australia 2010).

It is also clear from examining a number of projects that there may need to be a range of approaches implemented to provide stronger participatory governance. The review of practice at Moreland City Council in Melbourne in 2008 demonstrates that they have a multitude of projects, initiatives, systems, and practices in place to facilitate participatory governance; the council believes that a singular approach is unlikely to effect the cultural change required. Among a range of strategies, Moreland has adopted a *Community Consultation and Engagement Strategy* and a *Statement of Commitment to Women*. It supports several community advisory forums such as a *Health, Safety and Wellbeing Leadership Group*. It runs a number of community education programs on community leadership and management, and provides community grants. It has introduced an organization cultural change project to encourage a collaborative management style. A *centralized policy and research register* enables the sharing of intelligence on the unique community character of Moreland. The council has also introduced a major neighbourhood renewal project, the *Coburg Initiative*, which is a place management approach involving collaboration amongst all levels of government (Centre for Local Government and the Local Government Community Development and Services Association of Australia 2010).

### Some Key Issues

A number of important issues emerge from these examples. First, we recognize that the data is incomplete and anecdotal about the extent of any shift towards more participative forms of local governance, but nevertheless we see the emergence of participatory governance in many Australian councils, to one degree or other. Further research is required to map the diversity of state and local government policy interventions and to evaluate their effectiveness. For example, there are profound differences of perspective in relation to recent “community strengthening” initiatives. Some report positively on early trends and anecdotal feedback on the results of some of these initiatives, especially in Victoria, whilst others suggest that

many claims about the benefits of strengthening social bonds and increasing civic participation are overblown, and that attempts to present local self-help, volunteering and social entrepreneurship as panaceas for deeply rooted structural inequalities and injustices are naïve and misleading (Wiseman 2006: 103).

A second issue relates to the endemic weaknesses of local government in Australia, and the burden imposed by the increasing tasks mandated for it by other spheres of government. In the UK, Geddes (2000) questions the capacity of local partnerships to create structural change and resolve complex economic and social problems; so given the stronger role of local government in that jurisdiction, it is likely to be even more difficult for Australian local governments. In particular, concerns have been expressed about local government’s capacity to assume broader roles in developing leadership in regional participatory governance arrangements. As Beer et al. conclude:

It is not surprising that most economic development agencies [at local level] were small with very few staff and limited budgets, that they have been unstable, and that in many cases they did not have community and political support and in the perceptions of practitioners had little impact on their locality (quoted in Rainnie 2005: 132).

With 560 Australian local governments, or 78 percent of the total number, classified as rural or regional (Department of Transport and Regional Services 2005: 3), the urban-rural divide represents a critical dimension of uneven resourcing that tends to generate a “lowest common denominator” effect and restrict the potential of the sector as a whole. This has been recognized by the provision of relatively large national government grants to those councils most in need. However, despite efforts at horizontal equalization, many of these local governments appear poorly placed to assume the type of leadership required to advance participatory governance, and it is more likely that leadership in these resource-challenged environments has to be assumed by regional bodies such as voluntary regional organizations of councils or regional development networks in concert with state and not-for-profit agencies—provided that these regional bodies are themselves able to marshal sufficient resources and leadership expertise for the purpose.

A third issue is the challenge of finding models of governance and management that harmonize the roles of professional staff and elected representatives, especially in policy development and implementation. There has been a strong professionalization within most local governments, with policy development shifting from the elected representatives more into the sphere of managers and professionals. This has often led to a coordination deficit

where traditional professionals such as engineering, town planning, and community service provision working in “silos,” with community consultation being conducted on a range of topics by a number of professionals within the council. The Just Communities project has revealed varying levels of expertise coupled with poorly managed coordination. Participants in the project were commonly challenged to ensure that individual community consultation initiatives were coordinated and considered formally and informally in decisions by elected representatives. Genuine efforts from councils to introduce participatory governance could stall from “consultation fatigue.”

Fourth, and on the other hand, there are doubts that state governments would ever be able to effectively manage local initiatives for participatory governance. As Martin comments, there is a “question [of] how far state governments can go in brokering community engagement strategies across small rural towns and communities” (Martin 2006: 2).

By contrast, it has often been acknowledged that many local governments in Australia have satisfactorily met their intended functions of service delivery, adequate representation and participation, and advocacy of constituent needs to higher levels of government (Marshall 1998). Self (1997: 298) argues that the Australian local sector “remains genuinely local and grass roots in a way that is no longer true of most overseas systems.” This provides some confidence that local government has a significant place and skill set to be a valued partner in participatory governance, even if there are questions about the capacity of many councils to lead this process.

## **Conclusions**

For there to be real benefits from citizen engagement, consultation about public policy needs to move beyond the piecemeal and haphazard process that is evident in Australia today (Curtain 2003). At state and local government levels, in contrast with their federal counterpart, there is considerable evidence of a willingness to engage with citizens rather than merely consult people as users of public services or as “customers.” However, while most states and many local governments have developed policies or protocols to facilitate this higher level of consultation, as well as signalling to their communities that such consultations are valued, there are only a few examples where effective engagement has been established and accepted as a citizen’s right. The concept of engagement appears to be valued, perhaps even seen as necessary, but in few instances has the practice yet been accepted as a fundamental right of communities to enable them to assume a formal place in governance.

State governments are being challenged to surrender their legislative power over local government in order to facilitate real partnerships with local communities and embrace notions of participatory governance. At this stage, it is unclear whether Australian local governments will be able to meet this challenge in ways seen in some other countries, such as the United Kingdom or Canada, where principles of subsidiarity, citizen empowerment, and community engagement are more established features of the political landscape. Given current constraints on local government’s autonomy and resources, in

many cases effective moves towards participatory governance may need leadership and support from outside, unless governments can enhance their capacity and undertake programs of cultural change in which citizen engagement becomes a “normalized” activity for all local governments.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The term “states” is used in this paper to refer to the six states and the Northern Territory governments at the intermediate level of the Australian federation, all of which have local government systems with similar arrangements.

<sup>2</sup> By contrast, voting at both state and national level is compulsory.

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### **Biosketch**

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## **Citizen Participation, Trust in Local Governments, and the Dynamics In-between: A Quantitative Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

*What are the main factors that determine citizens' trust in local governments? The present research draws its hypothesis from the various factors that influence citizen confidence in Japanese local governments. The analysis reveals significant and exigent results, and suggests that the attitudes of public servants, quality of public services, and citizen interest and trust in national government are influential factors that can lead to the improvement of trust in local governments. More importantly, this research posits that although civic engagement does not promote trust, trust does stimulate civic engagement, that is, while trust produces security, the latter does not produce trust.*

### **Introduction**

In Japan, as in several other countries, mass media often reports on corruption and fraud committed by government officials, and the resulting impression that the government is malfunctioning erodes citizen trust in it. The need to improve public confidence is not confined to the national government but rather applies to local governments as well. In fact, it can be said that confidence is more important for local governments because its basic existence relies on the trust of its citizens due to their proximity to and familiarity with the government itself. In fact, public confidence is more important for local governments, which rely on the trust of their citizens for their basic existence, a trust that is built on close proximity and familiarity with local officials. Nevertheless, previous research has not taken a systematic approach to investigating and verifying the various factors that build that trust. This is so despite the fact that participation and civic engagement have been considered useful for improving public programs, and that there is a mutual relationship between democratic education and public trust. The present research aims to derive the factors of trust in Japanese local governments while taking into consideration the relationship between trust and civic engagement that influences the structure of the various elements of trust in key ways.

### **Approach to the Determinants of Trust**

Trust is the expectation that one can rely on the presence and actions of others (Luhmann 1979; Barber 1983). Because people who hold that expectation are on the side of trust, it follows that this expectation depends on what the trust holders do to meet it. The trusting side has to decide whether or not to trust based on the receipt of certain basic information from the side to be trusted, information that shows the characteristics of the organization of the side to be trusted and the type of input it is capable of presenting. Such basic

information, including all its imperfections, influences the factors of trust. Given this power to influence factors from the side to be trusted, it is fair to say that research on trust factors may be better approached by an examination of both sides.

### **Trust and Civic Engagement**

When an entity A decides to trust B, it does so on the basis of basic information provided by B. However, that information, as far as A is concerned, might not always be the most suitable information to confirm B's liability regarding the expectation of A. In this case, B may be unable to fully perform an essential function as A would expect, and if A were positioned as a principal and B as an agent, an agency slack might occur between them. With information about B being incomplete, A will try to obtain as much information about B as possible so as to keep the agency slack to a minimum. A is thus able to reduce the uncertainty of B's ability to function while it (A) tries to gain more information required to fulfill its needs. As a result, A gains a sense of security, but at a huge cost that leads to a decrease in efficiency (Yamagishi 1998). Seen from another perspective, promoting citizen participation is considered a means for residents to gain a sense of security. However, another question regarding the relationship between trust and a sense of security arises when the counterpart of trust is discussed; to be more precise, whether a sense of security brings trust or whether trust comes from a sense of security.

Citizen participation in local government can enhance democratic education and improve public programs as well as offer a means to increase communication among citizens and between citizens and public servants (Landy 1993; Thomas 1995; King, Felty & Suse 1998, and Wichowsky & Moynihan 2008). Participation also deters the cynicism that can spread among citizens and create a combative populace (Berman 1997; Irvin & Stansbury 2004). Citizens become active in discussing administrative and financial management and local politics, resulting in the creation of a new public space (Marston 1993). Mizrahi and Vigoda-Gadot also point out that participation will positively affect trust only when there are channels available to influence policy outcomes and democratic participation (Mizrahi & Vigoda-Gadot 2009). The fundamental reason for encouraging participation is so that citizens can acquire various types of information about governmental policies and administration and about the local area, thereby gaining an understanding of the area's circumstances and needs and how to respond to those needs. Although participation is a concept that has been interpreted in various ways, this study targets civic engagement. Public participation can be roughly divided into two categories: one is political participation, an activity that aims to get people involved in the community and national politics; the other is public participation in local administration, aimed at providing people with a role in decision making (Wang & Van Wart 2007). Concrete examples of public participation in administration are public hearings, public meetings, public comments, citizen advisory boards, citizen focus groups, and citizen surveys. Also, as a premise for these activities, the cultural background as well as the character of the citizens, such as how they participate and interact with the community and its administration, determine whether the participation system operates smoothly. At the same time, political participation is embodied in voting and campaign activities. However, such involvement is not necessarily limited to political action and has traditionally also included cooperative

activity and citizen-initiated contacts (Verba & Nie 1972). Of these, cooperative activity is included under the activities of the community, and it strengthens the relationship between individuals and the social system. Cooperative activity is considered to be civic engagement that promotes development of a network among citizens as well as between citizens and their government. Such collaborative action is also a culture-forming factor that is a premise of public participation in administration and is a basic element of social capital.

Civic engagement leads to the dissemination of various types of information about policies, administration, and the local area itself to citizens, thus increasing the amount of basic information available to those who place trust in their local governments. The present research highlights civic engagement as an essential condition for maintaining citizen involvement in various activities, such as voting and attending public hearings and meetings that are a part of political and public participation in the local administration. If local residents better understand the community through their civic engagement, they will be more aware of the actual circumstances of the government and the reality of public services. Citizens will gain a sense of security as their uncertainty decreases, and this understanding of their community will contribute to shaping more reasonable demands.

In general, citizens hold local governments to a high standard, and this in turn stimulates high expectations, which can cause the quality of services that are actually delivered to appear low in comparison with the expectations. As a result, the level of citizen trust in governments may accordingly decrease. However, it is possible to raise that trust to a higher level if the demands of citizens settle to a certain level and if their evaluation of the quality of government services increases. It has been observed that self-help and citizen volunteers extend public services, and that the coproduction of services contributes to government responsiveness to citizens. Therefore, the complaints and misunderstanding that citizens have toward local governments will decrease (Brudney 1991). It is fair to say that the sense of security citizens gain after their uncertainty is reduced produces trust. If the local information provided to citizens about the delivery of services leads them to have high expectations and yet the reality turns out to be lower than the level of their expectations, the disappointment that citizens feel might lead to a lowering of trust in their governments. That is, even if civic engagement manages to improve transparency, encourage information distribution, and bring a sense of security, it does not necessarily produce trust.

On the other hand, trust in governments encourages people to be interested in governance, politics, and public services. Based on this assumption, researchers have theorized that trust in governments enhances citizen participation in local activities. However, as Bowler, Donovan, and Karp (2007) verified, there is a positive relationship between distrust and the expectation for "more participation." Distrust in the government may lead to a demand for public participation. We should nevertheless be aware of the difference between the expectation of participation and civic engagement. The expectation of participation is an attitude meant to show protest toward the government, while civic engagement is an actual action. It has been said that a high level of citizen trust is a basic premise for democratic governance, and that in order to obtain such trust, continuous learning is required of citizens (Yang & Holzer 2006). First and foremost, local

governments are closer to residents, and it is thought that their motive in promoting the participation of citizens is also stronger compared with that of the national government. Thus, trust produces a sense of security.

### **Factors That Determine People's Trust in an Entity**

The entity that receives trust is the local government, and there are roughly three different aspects related to this trust. The first is the quality and performance of services provided by local governments. The important factor affecting trust from citizens is the quality of services founded on democratic control that an administration may offer (Oyama 2010). A high quality of public services has a positive influence on citizen satisfaction; consequently, the level of trust in local governments rises and keeps citizens from turning away from their government. Van Ryzin structured the linkage of such variables using the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) and verified his survey by using questionnaire data (Van Ryzin et al. 2004). In this model, multiple services connect the overall service quality and affect the satisfaction index. People's expectations about quality and their satisfaction with services are in turn linked to their trust in the government and to the decision whether or not to reside in an area. If the quality is high, satisfaction will increase and, in turn, trust will increase, leading to a decrease in the decision to move out.

The second factor to consider is the size of the local government. Several discussions have already been posited regarding its relationship to democracy (Dahl & Tufte 1973). Smaller governments create familiarity and psychological closeness among citizens, enable citizens to keep their governments under close observation, and facilitate competition among small, local governing bodies because they can exercise and maintain efficient administrative and financial management. Citizen respect for the community may also generate an abundance of social capital. As a result of these factors, the level of trust in governments might increase. Public Choice Scholars have asserted the advantages of small governments (Ostrom, Tiebout & Warren 1961; Ostrom, Bish & Ostrom 1988). On the other hand, a larger government has the capability to execute programs that are difficult for smaller governments to handle, and this leads to the larger entity garnering more trust. A large government can efficiently supply services to a large population because the cost per capita to perform these services is comparatively low. Such services can be offered only when the region has a relatively large population and an economy of scale occurs. Traditional metropolitan reformers have asserted these advantages of a large government (Zimmerman 1970; Friesma 1966). Empirical research by Rahn and Rudolph (2005) has shown that the size of a population had a negative influence, although the actual degree of the influence was small.

The third factor related to citizen willingness to place trust in local governments is the attitude of public servants. Citizens encounter street-level bureaucrats, such as clerks, police officers, public school teachers and health department agents, most closely in their everyday life. If we follow Lipsky's theory (Lipsky 1980), the street-level bureaucrat who does not possess sufficient resources to serve passes the service seeker from one desk to another, forcing him or her (the service seeker) to experience difficulties and to think that

the service he or she is looking for is not worth all the trouble. The service seeker receives the impression that neither the bureaucrat's unfriendliness and arrogance nor the service seeker's relationship with the bureaucracy will ever change. If the attitude of public servants is poor, no matter how high the quality of public service may be, the result is dissatisfaction for citizens, leading to a decline in their trust in local governments. Wang and Van Wart (2007) have verified through path analysis how enhanced ethical behaviors and high-quality services offered by public officials affect trust in governments. Vigoda-Gadot (2007) has shown how ethics, morality and fairness of civil servants have a significantly positive influence on citizen satisfaction. Noda's (2009) analysis detailed influences on trust, including the promptness of public servants, accuracy in execution of their job, that is, whether it responded to the need, and the friendliness shown through expressions and gestures. To put things in perspective, conceptualizing public sector innovation as an intervening variable between the trust and the attitude of public servants is also possible considering the fact that attitude can be connected to an innovation in the context of customer orientation. Vigoda-Gadot and others (2008) have shown in their research how public sector innovation affects trust and satisfaction. However, governmental innovation or reform does not elevate the trust immediately, and the details and methods involved in such reforms are being questioned (Kikuchi 2010).

### **Factors Related To Those Who Extend Trust**

The first factor that needs to be considered is citizen expectation toward local governments. It has been verified that behavioral disconfirmation of the gap between service performance and expectation affects citizen satisfaction (Van Ryzin 2006). Although the quality of public services that the government offers may be at the highest level, citizen satisfaction will be low if people's expectations exceed what government can offer. In a project that investigated the background of lowering trust in the U.S. government, the illusion that citizens hold toward government capability was illustrated and the problem of overload was exposed (Mansbridge 1997). Research has revealed that although a high level of trust in a political leader reduces the expectation gap as citizens show satisfaction with their leadership, a high level of trust in government serves to expand the gap because there is an assumption of high reward (Jenkins-Smith, Silvia & Waterman 2005). The quality of services and expectations are categorized in a separate manner, and they are queried separately in several analyses. When a question concerning this factor is asked in two separate sections of a survey, the preference that citizens express in responding often differs depending on whether they are asked about expectation or quality. In response to this problem, it becomes vital to ask a direct question regarding the quality of services in comparison with expectations (Roch & Poister 2006).

The second factor related to trust is citizen satisfaction. If the quality of services is high, citizen satisfaction is also high. It has been proven that life satisfaction has a positive effect on satisfaction with a democracy and trust in politicians (Kumlin 2002), but when it comes to verifying trust in governments, satisfaction with public services will assume a more important role because such services influence life satisfaction. The ACSI (American Customer Satisfaction Index) model shows the flow of influence, with the quality of services categorized according to the different fields. The quality of overall service,

together with the expectations of citizens, influences citizen satisfaction, and this finally has an effect on trust (Van Ryzin et al. 2004). If the quality of services is higher than expectations, citizen satisfaction will naturally rise, and highly rated satisfaction will lead to greater trust.

The third factor is citizen knowledge of policies and their accompanying manifestations. This factor refers to whether citizens are familiar with the content of projects or with the actual organizations or individuals employed on projects, and this familiarity, in turn, is based on experience in using a particular service. It may be unexpectedly difficult for citizens to understand whether a higher or lower level of government is providing the service, and a certain percentage of people may incorrectly perceive the service and the agent that implements it (Lyons, Lowery & DeHoog 1992). Perception of a service is determined by whether an individual has experience using a service. Studies have shown that people with prior experience in using a service rate their level of satisfaction high, and that people who have no such experience tend to rate their level of satisfaction lower (Brown 2007). Recognition of a service is based on the passive knowledge of whether or not citizens are familiar with the service. The active intention to acquire this knowledge is also important, and thus interest in a service can also be set up as a variable. However, individuals holding a high level of interest might not always have higher trust because their insight into the quality of the service could also provoke criticism; whether it raises or lowers their trust cannot be immediately assessed.

The fourth factor is the effect that citizens' feelings about the political efficacy of government have on their trust. In general, political efficacy is discussed in the context of the feelings that citizens have toward their national government. However, when discussing trust of local governments, citizens' feelings concerning the efficacy of local politics and the community need to be verified. As an index showing local political efficacy, Lyons, Lowery, and DeHoog (1992) created data concerning citizens' attitudes toward inadequate services, public problems, and municipal assemblies. The data revealed clearly that local political efficacy improves citizen satisfaction. When the degree of satisfaction is high, trust in governments usually rises. Local political efficacy, therefore, positively influences trust.

The fifth factor is trust in the national government. Will trust in local governments increase when trust in the national government is low? It is possible that citizens may trust local governments more due to decentralization and autonomy, while they may have only low trust for the national government. However, both local and national governments are institutions that stand at a certain distance from their citizens. The question is whether trust in national government positively or negatively reinforces trust in local governments in the United States (Rahn & Rudolph 2005).

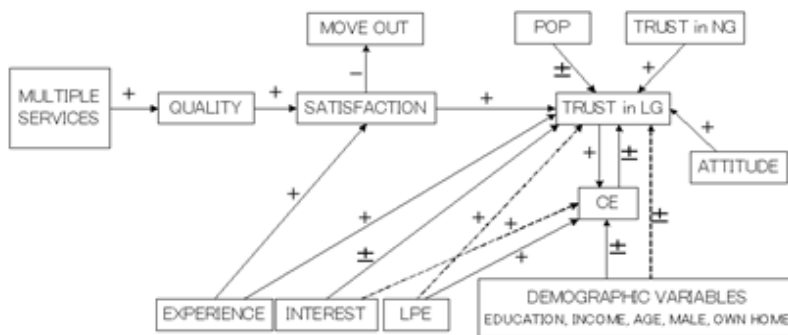
The sixth research focus is civic engagement, on which social capital is based. Brehm and Rahn (1997) have shown that some dimensions of social capital, such as civic engagement and interpersonal trust, have a positive influence on citizens' trust in governments. Rahn and Rudolph (2005), on the other hand, proved that there is no correlation between trust in local governments and civic engagement and participation in local organizations and groups. They concluded that the effect of civic engagement cannot

be understood in a simple proportional relation. In Japan, it has been reported that social participation and participation in politics do not necessarily enhance trust (Ikeda 2007). Activities that are supposed to offer a sense of security do not always affect trust in a direct, positive manner in Japan because civic engagement does not function effectively when the government is expected to provide various types of information regarding policies, administration, and the community. Even if civic engagement collects and stores a massive amount of information, it still may not build trust immediately, as the Japanese cultural attitude that expects the government to provide public services as a matter of course is deep-rooted. On the other hand, it is also conceivable that trust promotes participation. Masuyama (2008) studied the effect of the promotion of participation on trust in Japanese cities. The index of participation used in the study is the sum of the experiences collected through Internet research, such as voting, participating in self-governmental activities, making donations, signing petitions, volunteering for election campaigns, and playing a role in other citizen-related activities. The more trust there is in a city, the more participation is promoted. As citizens' trust rises in a city, mutual consent-participation with a familiar government increases. What is called for is a structural analysis of the effect of civic engagement on the aspect of trust, which was not verified in Masuyama (2008).

The last factor is demographics. In U.S. local governments, the average level of education and literacy indicates a positive influence on trust; on the other hand, being African American or Native American and owning a home indicate a negative influence on trust (Rahn and Rudolph 2005). Cole and Kincaid (2006) clearly demonstrated that, among people who had received up to a high school education, it is apparent that the percentage of those who do not trust local governments is large. An analysis of Japanese data reveals that the increasing age of citizens has a positive influence on trust in local governments (Ikeda 2007). With regard to race, Japan does not have people of several diverse races as do some other countries such as the United States; there is no significance in setting a variable for such differences. Likewise, in Japan education is supplied equally on a national level and there is no difference in literacy rates.

### **Theoretical Model**

Figure 1 is a theoretical model based on previous research. In this model, the error term and the bidirectional arrow that shows the covariance between variables are omitted. The model is based on the ACSI model along the lines of Van Ryzin and others (2004). The model draws structurally on the relation of multiple services, which affects the overall quality of the service, citizen satisfaction, and trust in a path figure. In this study, the quality of multiple services and overall service is understood as the quality of service in comparison with expectations. The hypothesis assumes that a rise in the quality of a plurality of services, which is referred to as MULTIPLE SERVICES, induces an improvement in the quality of overall service (QUALITY). In turn, the rise in QUALITY brings a rise in citizen satisfaction (SATISFACTION), leading to a positive influence on trust in local governments (TRUST in LG) and a negative impact on the intention to move out of a residential area (MOVE OUT).

**Figure 1. Theoretical Model for Trust and Civic Engagement**

In this model, variables are set up to influence trust from the outside. Those variables are Population (POP), which indicates the size of government, and the attitude of public servants (ATTITUDE). As POP increases, citizens observe a growing distance between themselves and government. The cause and effect of the trend resulting in a decrease in the level of trust, and the contrasting fact that larger governments tend to show an improvement in problem-solving capacities, which raises trust, are shown here. ATTITUDE has to do with the street-level bureaucrats who deal with residents directly. It is fair to say that a government's efforts towards taking excellent care of its citizens will make a positive impression on them and lead to an increase in trust.

Other variables that affect trust are experience in using services (EXPERIENCE), interest in local governments (INTEREST), local political efficacy (LPE), trust in the national government (TRUST in NG), civic engagement (CE), and demographic variables. INTEREST can have both a positive and negative influence on trust. This research hypothesis assumes that any of these other variables, except for INTEREST, will lead to a rise in TRUST in LG. It is assumed that EXPERIENCE induces a rise in SATISFACTION, and that INTEREST and LPE induce a rise in CE. It is assumed that, although CE receives a positive influence from TRUST in LG, CE may have both a positive and a negative influence on TRUST in LG. When setting up a bidirectional path in a structural model, setting a path to both the instrumental variable and the final dependent variable from the same variable poses a problem. This bidirectional path can be found between CE and TRUST, and the remaining broken lines show paths where influence is considered to be less pronounced. This will be discussed further in the procedure.

### Procedure and Data Collection

Apart from prior studies by Van Ryzin and others (2004), Vigoda Gadot (2007) and Brehm and Rahn (1997), some other studies adopted a regression model that could explain both independent variables and the dependent variable. Combining the independent variables into the regression formula is a problem because the relationship among each independent variable is not stand-alone. The relationship between civic engagement, examined by the present study, and other independent variables is not one in which each independent



variable influences trust in parallel. While there is a direct path from demographic variables influencing trust, there is also a path influencing civic engagement, which in turn influences trust. An even more important problem concerns the relationship between civic engagement and trust, as it can be argued that there is a mutual cause and effect, with one path from trust to civic engagement and another from civic engagement to trust. This study used the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique in order to create a structure between independent variables and specify the interdependence of trust and civic engagement. Unlike classical path analysis, SEM has an advantage because it provides a method wherein dissidence between a population covariance matrix and a sample covariance matrix can be minimized to estimate values. The present study used the AMOS (ver5) software program to test models.

Reliance factors are comprehensively verified in this research. The main aim is to verify the causal relationship between civic engagement and trust by assuming the three paths of civic engagement to trust, trust to civic engagement, and a combination of both. If the path coefficient is close to zero, the cause and effect between the variables will not be assumed. Signs may differ, as values may be accepted for any of the path coefficients of civic engagement to trust, trust to civic engagement, and both ways. Furthermore, when setting up bidirectional paths between those variables in SEM, instrumental variables of civic engagement are required, and a direct path from instrumental variables to trust cannot be established. Instrumental variables specify civic engagement, demographic variables and local political efficacy as they relate to this research. In order to evaluate which variables have a strong influence on trust, the present study computed the standardized path coefficient and fixed the error variance at 1.

The sample was collected by means of Internet research through a Japanese private research company called Rakuten Research, Inc. The investigation targeted monitors that Rakuten owns and took the form of collecting random samples of attributes set up beforehand. We targeted Osaka Prefecture as an area in which citizens are comparatively alike, in that their criticism of local governments is strong. A total of 1,000 samples were collected from the residents of Osaka Prefecture, which has a population of 8,820,000 that includes Osaka City, Sakai City, Higashiosaka City, Hirakata City, Takatsuki City, Ibaraki City, Minoh City, Katano City, Shijonawate City, and Shimamoto Town. The numerical value in the parenthesis is the population of the national census in 2005, which is carried out in Japan once every five years. The male-female ratio was set at 5:5, with 20 percent of people in their 20s, 40 percent in their 30s-40s, and 40 percent in their 50s or over. Unlike mail-in surveys, Internet research is confined to respondents who possess information technology skills, thereby introducing a certain bias with regard to the sample. Internet research allowed this study to collect data from a precise target sample. The investigation was conducted on 27 February 2009, and responses were collected on 2 March 2009.

## **Results**

Table 1 shows measures and descriptive statistics. The CT model that connects the path from CE to TRUST, the TC model that connects the path from TRUST to CE, and the

Table 1. Measures and Descriptive Statistics

	Measures N=1,000	average	Descriptive Statistics		
			standard	min	max
TRUST in LG	Respondents were asked about how much trust they had in the municipality where they live now (1 = do not trust, 2 = somewhat distrust, 3 = somewhat trust, 4 = trust).	2.58	0.75	1	4
QUALITY	These are the variables showing the quality of public services in comparison with expectations in local government. Respondents indicated what they thought of the actual quality of public services provided by the municipality where they live now in comparison with expectations that they had (1 = worse than expected, 2 = somewhat worse than expected, 3 = somewhat better than expected, 4 = better than expected). Residents were asked about overall service (QUALITY) and multiple services. Multiple services are (1) school services (SCHOOL); (2) disaster prevention (DISASTER PREVENTION); (3) elderly welfare services (WELFARE); (4) medical services (MEDICAL); (5) child support services (CHILD SUPPORT); (6) crime prevention (CRIME PREVENTION); (7) maintenance of parks and green spaces (PARKS); (8) road maintenance and improvement (ROADS); (9) public sanitation (SANITATION); and (10) expanded employment (EMPLOYMENT).	2.07	0.71	1	4
SCHOOLS		2.15	0.72	1	4
DISASTER PREVENTION		2.21	0.66	1	4
WELFARE		2.18	0.71	1	4
MEDICAL		2.11	0.77	1	4
CHILD SUPPORT		2.16	0.72	1	4
CRIME PREVENTION		2.17	0.70	1	4
PARKS		2.26	0.81	1	4
ROADS		2.17	0.78	1	4
SANITATION		2.34	0.68	1	4
EMPLOYMENT	2.09	0.67	1	4	
SATISFACTION	This variable is the degree of the citizen satisfaction with the public services provided by the municipality in which they live (1 = dissatisfied, 2 = somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = satisfied). Also in this question, respondents were asked about overall service.	2.37	0.78	1	4
POP	This research adopted the logarithm of the population of each municipality.	12.39	1.27	10.29	14.74
TRUST in NG	Respondents were asked about how much trust they had in Japan (1 = do not trust, 2 = somewhat distrust, 3 = somewhat trust, 4 = trust).	1.69	0.77	1	4
MOVE OUT	Respondents were asked about how much they would like to continue to live in the municipality where they currently lived (1 = would like to continue to live there forever, 2 = would like to continue living there if possible, 3 = would like to move in the future, 4 = would like to move as soon as possible). This variable is the reverse index.	2.12	0.71	1	4
ATTITUDE	This variable is the total index for the following four items where public servants of the municipality in which the respondent lives (1) act promptly, (2) act kindly, (3) act appropriately, and (4) act with a generally high sense of ethics. The respondents were asked whether they would agree with the four items (1 = agree, 2 = somewhat agree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4. disagree). This variable is the reverse index (Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.9).	9.19	2.49	4	16
CE	This variable is the total index for the following 11 items: (1) participation in neighborhood community associations, (2) participation in labor unions, (3) participation in political organizations, (4) participation in hobby groups or clubs, (5) participation in PTA, (6) participation in women's institute and youth organization, (7) participation in volunteer with fire fighters, (8) participation in neighborhood watch and road safety activities, (9) participation in volunteer activities, (10) participation in NPO activities, (11) participation in festivals and local events ( $\alpha = 0.67$ ).	2.09	1.82	0	11
EXPERIENCE	This variable refers to experience in using services. The respondents were asked how the above-mentioned 10 services in which they lived were received, and if they had no experience, whether they had heard of the service (1 = experienced, 2 = aware but without experience, 3 = unaware and without experience). EXPERIENCE totals the value which made the index of services reverse ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ).	19.22	5.00	10	30
INTEREST	This research asked whether respondents would be interested in the municipality and public policy of where they live (INTEREST), and made the variable the value that answered in reverse (1 = agree, 2 = somewhat agree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = disagree).	2.92	0.72	1	4
LPE	According to Lyons, Lowery, and DeHoog (1992, pp.195-196), the total index of the following four questions was created as an index for the local political efficacy. (1) When there are problems like garbage on the streets or potholes on the roads, it is not useless to complain to officials of the local government. (2) I do not care what happens in the local government as long as things are OK for me and my family. (3) The local government does not care about people like me. (4) It is not worth paying attention to issues facing the local government because all the local politicians care about is serving their own interests. The respondents were asked whether they would agree with the four questions (1 = agree, 2 = somewhat agree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = disagree). LPE is an inverse variation index ( $\alpha = 0.70$ ).	10.20	2.38	4	16
INCOME	EDUCATION, MALE and OWN HOME are default variables (1 = graduated from university or National Technical College, male and a home owner). INCOME is annual income of the household. It was created by the income level of the following 16 classifications (1 = under 1 million yen, 2 = Over 1 million yen and under 2 million yen, 3 = Over 2 million yen and under 3 million yen...15 = Over 14 million yen and under 15 million yen, 16 = Over 15 million yen). This research made the actual age as the variable equal to AGE.	6.72	3.71	1	16
EDUCATION		1.73	0.57	1	3
MALE		0.51	0.50	0	1
AGE		43.43	13.70	20	79
OWN HOME		0.69	0.46	0	1

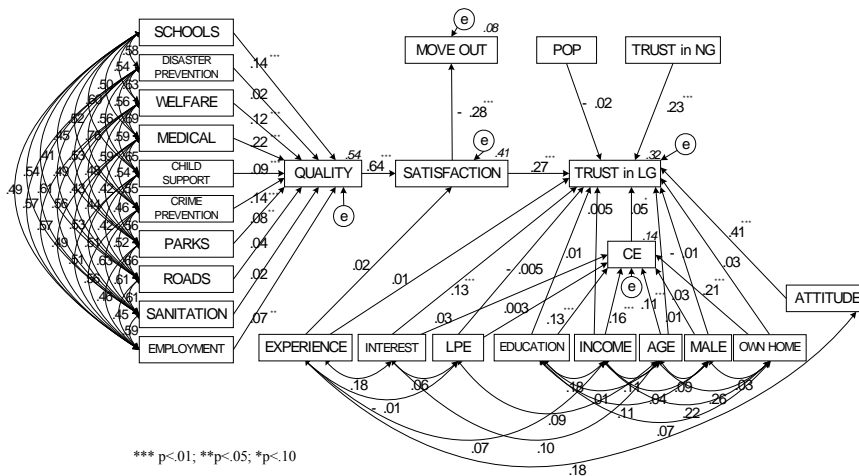
2W model that maps the bidirectional relationship between CE and TRUST make up the demographic variables. The LPE instrument variables for CE are shown in Figures 2, 3 and 4 respectively. The goodness-of-fit indices for these are shown in Table 2. Note that the  $\chi^2/df$  value is satisfactory, and p-value is significant. AGFI, NFI, TLI, and CFI are the closest to 1, while RMSEA is the closest to 0. Hence, the three models are good fits. There is no significant difference among these models, but the 2W model is very good in terms of fit indices.

**Table 2. Goodness of Fit Indices**

	$\chi^2/df$	p	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
CT model	5.159	.000	.916	.872	.877	.854	.897	.065
TC model	5.119	.000	.917	.873	.877	.856	.898	.064
2W model	5.008	.000	.916	.875	.877	.860	.898	.063

First, let us take a look at the CT model in Figure 2 below. The italic value (0.54) indicated at the top-right corner of QUALITY is the R-Square of QUALITY. There are also italics positioned at SATISFACTION, MOVE OUT, and TRUST in LG and CE. The multiple services that have a significant positive influence on QUALITY are SCHOOLS, WELFARE, MEDICAL, CHILD SUPPORT, CRIME PREVENTION, PARKS, and EMPLOYMENT. These services stimulate SATISFACTION through the overall quality of local governments, with a significant negative influence on MOVE OUT. It can be seen that SATISFACTION leads to a rise in TRUST in LG. All path coefficients among these variables and QUALITY have statistical significance, and the signs are the same as those assumed in the theoretical model. The coefficient of TRUST in LG for POP is an insignificant minus and close to 0. This means that for this Japanese local government, the size of the government does not have a direct influence on trust, and does not amount to the decisive basis used to explain trust advocated by any of the traditional metropolitan reformers and Public Choice Scholars. The coefficient for ATTITUDE is a very large 0.41,

**Figure 2. Determinants of Trust in Local Government CE-TRUST (CT) Model**



which shows that the more public servants process civic needs promptly, kindly, appropriately, and with a high sense of ethics, the more the trust of citizens will grow. The coefficient for TRUST in NG is a large 0.23, and thus it can be construed that citizens in Japan feel equally distant from both local and national governments. EXPERIENCE has hardly any effect on SATISFACTION and TRUST in LG. At close to 0, LPE has no significant influence on TRUST in LG either. The linkage among these variables differs from our assumptions. On the other hand, there is evidence that INTEREST has a positive influence on TRUST in LG. In addition, at close to zero, the influence of the demographic variables on TRUST in LG has no significance at all.

Now, although our chosen focus, CE, shows a marginal statistical significance at 10 percent in its influence on TRUST, the coefficient is very small at 0.05. Of the effect of INTEREST, LPE, and the demographic variables on CE, only the demographic variables showed significant influence. We cannot say that CE provides a strong stimulation to TRUST, but we note that the sign is not negative. It can be argued that citizen understanding of their local area through CE has not been stimulated much at all. Even if citizen understanding of the area had been stimulated, there is no strong influence to form an appropriate demand level. On the other hand, despite citizens' expanded understanding of the local area through CE as well as their awareness of the administrative organization and the actual conditions in which service quality might be lower than their expectations, we cannot infer that TRUST in LG is pulled down.

If we exclude CE, the variables, model path coefficients, significance, and R-Square of dependent variables for both the TC and 2W models (Figures 3 and 4 below, respectively) are almost the same as those of the CT model. That is, it is clear that there are significant positive influences toward TRUST in LG from QUALITY, SATISFACTION, ATTITUDE, TRUST in NG, and INTEREST. There is no effect from POP or LPE in either model. The relation between CE and TRUST in LG, which is the

**Figure 3. Determinants of Trust in Local Government TRUST-CE (TC) Model**

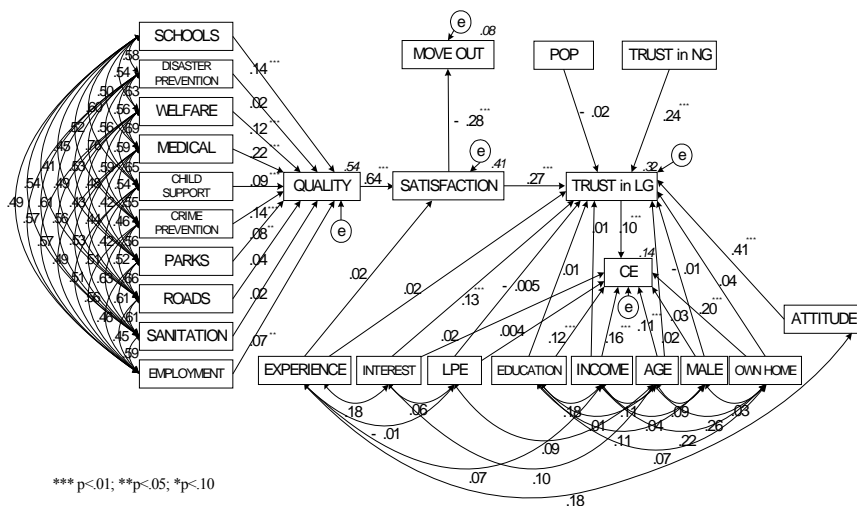
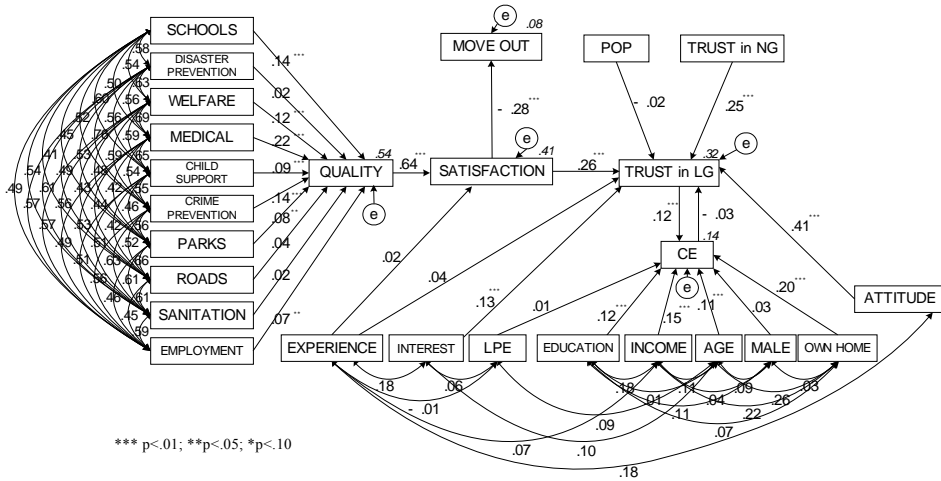


Figure 4. Determinants of Trust in Local Government Two-Way (2W) Model



chief aim of this research, shows that the path coefficient between them is at the 1 percent level in the TC model. This represents a significant positive influence. Interest in government, politics and public services deepens as citizens develop trust in a familiar government. From this we can construe that participation increases if citizens become familiar with their area. In contrast to the effect toward TRUST from CE, as observed in the CT model, the effect on CE from TRUST is clear.

Turning now to the 2W model, we can note something even more interesting about the relation between TRUST and CE. The effect toward CE from TRUST in LG at 0.12 is stronger than the effect in the TC model. The effect of CE on TRUST is insignificant and negative. In light of this negative effect, we can assume an effect where administrative organization and the actual condition of public services are lower than citizen assumptions or expectations; however, because the value is close to zero, the effect is unlikely. It can be said that the influence of CE on TRUST is not linear. Therefore, to convert the demographic variables into instrument variables, the model is one in which the paths from the demographic variables to TRUST and the paths from INTEREST to CE are removed. None of the deleted paths bear any significant effect.

Of these models, it can be argued that the 2W model has the best goodness-of-fit indices and that it provides the best explanation of the determinants of TRUST in LG and of the current state of the relationship between TRUST and CE. The results verify that while TRUST promotes CE significantly, CE does not contribute to the improvement of TRUST. Even if citizens strengthen civic engagement and governmental administrations stimulate transparency and distribute information in local areas to satisfy citizens' need for assistance, these do not necessarily induce a build-up in confidence. If we look at the total effect in Table 3, it is clear that ATTITUDE, SATISFACTION, TRUST in NG, and QUALITY strongly regulated TRUST in LG. Further, in the 2W model, the total effect of CE toward TRUST in LG is about 0, with a figure of 0.123 for the total effect of TRUST in LG toward CE. Although the total effect of TRUST in LG is itself closer to zero by the

**Table 3. Path Coefficients 2W model**

	Total effect				Direct effect				Indirect effect			
	TRUST in LG	CE	QUALITY SATISFAC -TION	MOVE OUT	TRUST in LG	CE	QUALITY SATISFAC -TION	MOVE OUT	TRUST in LG	CE	QUALITY SATISFAC -TION	MOVE OUT
TRUST in LG	-.004	.123			.123				-.004			
QUALITY	.167	.021		.640			.640		.167	.021		-.181
SCHOOLS	.023	.003	.137	.088	-.025		.137		.023	.003	.088	-.025
DISASTER PREVENTION	.004		.022	.014	-.004		.022		.004		.014	-.004
WELFARE	.021	.003	.124	.079	-.022		.124		.021	.003	.079	-.022
MEDICAL	.037	.005	.224	.144	-.041		.224		.037	.005	.144	-.041
CHILD SUPPORT	.015	.002	.088	.056	-.016		.088		.015	.002	.056	-.016
CRIME PREVENTION	.024	.003	.142	.091	-.026		.142		.024	.003	.091	-.026
PARKS	.013	.002	.076	.049	-.014		.076		.013	.002	.049	-.014
ROADS	.006	.001	.037	.024	-.007		.037		.006	.001	.024	-.007
SANITATION	.004		.023	.014	-.004		.023		.004		.014	-.004
EMPLOYMENT	.012	.002	.074	.047	-.013		.074		.012	.002	.047	-.013
SATISFACTION	.260	.032			-.283				-.001	.032		
POP	-.018	-.002			-.018							-.002
TRUST in NG	-.246	.030			.247				-.001	.030		
ATTITUDE	.410	.051			.412				-.002	.051		
CE	-.030	-.004			-.030					-.004		
EXPERIENCE	.041	.005	.020	-.006	.036		.020		.005			-.006
INTEREST	.133	.016			.134				.016			
LPE		.006			.006							
INCOME	-.005	.154			.155				-.005	-.001		
EDUCATION	-.004	.119			.120				-.004			
MALE	-.001	.028			.028				-.001			
AGE	-.003	.106			.106				-.003			
OWNHOME	-.006	.204			.205				-.006	-.001		

negative effect on TRUST in LG from CE, based on the fact that the negative effect from CE to TRUST in LG is insignificant, the total effect itself should not be interpreted as is.

## Discussion

This research, delving into the relation between trust and civic engagement that serves as a key factor in the structure of citizens' trust in local government, has verified the determinants of that trust. The attitude of public servants has the strongest total effect among the determinants of trust, followed by the quality of public services vis-à-vis the expectation and satisfaction of citizens. By improving the attitude of public servants, making improvements in service quality, and keeping the levels of expectation to an appropriate level or standard, citizen satisfaction is amplified, leading to an increase in trust. Training government officials to encourage kind and appropriate interaction with citizens is the most effective strategy to improve trust.

This research also demonstrates that INTEREST and TRUST in NG are both positive factors of TRUST in LG, and that local political efficacy and the size of a population do not have any influence on trust. In order to encourage citizens to take an interest in their government, it is important that a local government briefs its citizens thoroughly about the basis for its services and informs them about the expenditures, manpower, and other resources that are required to provide them. If a government addresses its citizens clearly and appropriately, it might be able to provide them with an experience that is equitable and realistic, and, as a result, it may be reasonable to expect that the experience will exert a positive influence upon trust. The fact that there is a positive influence from TRUST in NG to TRUST in LG means that local government problems related to trust and national government problems related to trust mutually affect each other. In order to improve citizens' trust in local governments, it is necessary for the national government to become an institution in which citizens can place their trust. Although it is difficult to interpret

the insignificance of local political efficacy, the present study found that, in Japan, there is no linear relationship between that variable and trust. While it was also thought that efficiency in supplying services, psychological closeness between citizens and their government, as well as citizens' monitoring were influenced by the size of population, the study does not bear this out. It can be said that the relation between population size and democracy cannot be expressed simply and clearly.

The greatest contribution to the investigation of reliance that this research reveals is the clarification of the linkage between civic engagement and trust. Civic engagement, considered to be effective in the improvement of government programs and democratic education, has hardly any impact on trust in local government. Conversely, the fact that the existence of trust in local government stimulates civic engagement demonstrates that civic engagement is not a factor in trust. Put another way, trust induces security, but security does not induce trust.

It can be argued that the results of this study overturn the view that the relationship between civic engagement and the improvement of information distribution and transparency lead to a rise in trust. Even if information distribution is stimulated by civic engagement, it will not meet citizens' expectations of appropriate standards. So beyond the participation culture formed by civic engagement, does trust increase by fostering greater transparency in policymaking or by the public participating in governmental activities, such as public hearings and public meetings? If local governments provide a low quality of services and if the attitude of public servants is poor, trust in governments will not increase no matter how well positive information distribution is promoted and no matter how well transparency is secured. The promotion of civic engagement does not automatically lead to citizens' greater understanding of the various types of information that are related to policies, the administration, and the community. It is fair to say that civic engagement will not influence trust in local governments immediately. To establish a trustworthy government, it is necessary to engineer the improvement of citizens' attitudes, improve the quality of services, and control citizens' expectations. On that basis, transparency needs to increase through the distribution of positive information. The reorganizing of programs or the strengthening of democratic education can be realized by virtue of the fact that there already exists a certain amount of high trust.

This research is a theoretical exposition with a focus on local governments in Japan. It does not guarantee that the observed results are applicable to other countries with different cultures. In addition, the improvement in local political efficacy and other variables require further research to be considered definitive. However, having verified the systematic derivation of trust factors and their relationship with civic engagement, this study provides a clear route to future research on trust.

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**Biosketch**

**Yu Noda** is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Regional Policy at Aichi University. His research interests include trust in local government, citizen satisfaction with public services, public management, the relationship between bureaucracy and citizen participation, and intergovernmental relations. He received his Ph.D. in Policy Sciences from Doshisha University.

## Review Article

### A Kindred Organization Celebrates its 50th Anniversary

GUIDO BERTUCCI, Governance Solutions International

EROPA is happy to recognise the achievement of a kindred international organization that brings together academic and professional members and interests, and which has just celebrated its 50th anniversary. This is the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration, or IASIA, which marked this significant milestone at its annual conference in Rome in June 2011.

I was very pleased and honored to launch the commemorative volume, *Public Administration in a Global Context: IASIA at 50*, at the conference. As head of the United Nations Program in Public Administration, I developed strong ties with the Association, sharing views and goals and developing joint initiatives such as the “Standards of Excellence in Public Administration Education and Training.” Both the UN Program and IASIA strongly believe in the centrality of government in promoting the public good, in the need to build public administration capacity through training and education, and in the importance of exchanging views and experiences. I am very happy that this appreciative review appears in *Asian Review of Public Administration*, the journal of EROPA, a kindred organization which shares many of IASIA’s objectives.

As the book highlights it, these were the original goals of IASIA, as envisaged by its promoter, Dean Donald Stone, who at the IAS meeting in Lisbon in 1961 gave impetus to the foundation of the Association and strongly believed in the importance of exchanging ideas and experiences among administrators around the world, particularly with the goal of building the governing capacity of the newly independent countries.

Writing about 50 years of the life of IASIA means also writing about 50 years of the history of public administration theory and practice. As the book’s editor O.P. Dwivedi says in his introduction, “the book commemorates the transformations that occurred in the discipline and profession of comparative public administration over the past 50 years and IASIA’s contribution to the discipline.” The book’s seven chapters bring us from the birth of the Association, when the Weberian model of public administration was the paradigm, through the new public management movement, to the governance model, and to the post-governance stage, and it ultimately analyzes the future challenges that public administration will face in the next 20 years, an experience shared by EROPA.

The appendix to this review article outlines the subject matter and lists the authors of the book’s preface and the following chapters. Together these items provide fascinating information and comment about the origins of IASIA and highlight the contribution of past presidents and members to its growth and development.

Of course such a listing can provide only a glimpse of the depth and scope of the whole IASIA experience. But a number of key messages can be noted here. The first message is that IASIA has provided a key contribution to the internationalization of the study of public administration, which previously was mainly studied within national confines. The discipline of comparative public administration that Donald Stone and Sam Richardson (first and second Presidents) so profoundly promoted has gained prominence and credibility thanks to the work of the Association, its presidents, its members and alumni.

Particularly through its working groups, IASIA has studied, discussed and published on the various ideas, theories and movements that have emerged since its foundation, but it has never become ideologically committed to any of them, thus ensuring diversity of opinions and becoming an important platform for dialogue and criticism on those trends. IASIA has been instrumental in creating a community of academics and practitioners and an atmosphere of collegiality which fosters discussion and exchange.

Independent of the “flavor of the month” in public administration theory and practice, IASIA has constantly stressed the importance of strengthening state capacity in policy development and implementation by enhancing professionalism, integrity and competence of public servants. According to Paul Collins in Chapter 3, IASIA in the 1980s was prophetic in rediscovering the concept of “capacity building.”

IASIA has been an advocate for diversity in the practice of public administration and it has constantly opposed the “one size fits all” approach, and the mere transfer of western models and practices to the developing world. By promoting the sharing of ideas and practices IASIA has allowed countries to pick and choose from a vast menu those recipes or combinations thereof that best suit their specific characteristics, circumstances and needs.

IASIA has been the strongest contributor globally to the quality of public administration education and training by promoting excellence among its member institutions and providing guidance to training institutions around the world. The UN/IASIA Task Force on Standards of Excellence in Public Administration, Education and Training is a key initiative in this respect, and its work should be continually updated.

Another message emerging from the book is that dominating movements in public administration are becoming obsolete. The world is changing so rapidly and constantly that public administrations systems must be in a mode of constant adaptation, innovation and experimentation. As Tugay Ergun says in Chapter 5: “As boundaries of government are now being shaped so civil servants profiles’ must also be reshaped.”

IASIA is looking into the future and studying how public sector leadership of the future can be shaped. It should be a leadership able to operate in a complex environment and in turbulent circumstances; a leadership able to work in a collaborative manner in a world dominated by the internet and social media. Thus Allan Rosenbaum tells us in Chapter 6: “We need to develop a new generation of public servants .... and to do so also devise new and innovative learning systems based more on problem solving rather than academic knowledge.”

As the last chapter by current IASIA President Valeria Termini and her colleagues looks into the next 20 years, it confirms IASIA's key role as "the most comprehensive organization operating in the domain of public sector training." IASIA's global perspective and pluralistic approach allow the expansion of the horizon well beyond Western Europe and North America by providing a platform to learn from innovative experiences taking place in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Because of its international and comparative vocation, IASIA can perform in the next 20 years a key role in helping countries develop a new generation of leaders who, as President Termini points out, will not only have a global perspective but will also be able to act effectively in their own countries and regions.

I conclude by saying that the book, while analyzing past trends, draws important lessons for the future role that public administration, education and training must play in order to allow governments to fulfill, in ever changing circumstances, their central and pivotal responsibilities in delivering the public good. In doing so, it confirms the important role IASIA has played in advancing the practice and the study of public administration. I strongly encourage you to read this interesting and forward thinking book and to draw your own conclusions.

**APPENDIX: CONTENTS OF BOOK**

Preface – Here Editor O.P. Dwivedi introduces the book and provides a brief outline of its contents.

Chapter 1 – Public Administration: State of the Discipline – an Historical Odyssey, written by *O.P. Dwivedi and Gabriel William*, traces the origins of “Comparative Public Administration” and of the internationalization of the discipline and identifies the challenges facing academics and practitioners of public administration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Chapter 2 – Genesis and Visionary Hopes: The Formative Years, written by *Roger Wettenhall and Ladipo Adamolekun*, shows us how IASIA grew from “child to partner” of IAS and evolved to become an organization with a global outlook. It also demonstrates the contribution of IASIA’s working groups to the internationalization of the study of public administration.

Chapter 3 – The Vicissitudes of Change: Public Policy Sidelines Public Administration – The 1980s, written by *Paul Collins*, follows the Association during the new public management decade and stresses how IASIA did not blindly follow the trend but continued to emphasize the importance of professionalizing public administration and of building its capacity

Chapter 4 – The 1990’s – Pragmatic Institutionalism: The New Public Management, written by *Melchior D. Powell and Michiel S. De Vries*, addresses the question of how new public management could have spread to the world of public administration so quickly and widely. It also analyzes the impact that NPM had on public administration as a discipline and practice around the world.

Chapter 5 – Governance as a New Paradigm – the Decade of 2010, written by *M. Turgay Ergun*, follows IASIA through transition from the new public management movement to the governance movement and highlights the new role of public administration, education and training with respect to the new relationship between public administration and civil society.

Chapter 6 – The Post-Governance World: Continuing Challenges, New Opportunities, written by *Allan Rosenbaum*, rediscovers the importance of a strong and smart public sector as the foundation for a stable society particularly in times of crisis. It calls for a new generation of public servants capable of operating in a turbulent environment.

Chapter 7 – IASIA Faces the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, written by *Valeria Termini, Bernardo Giorgio Matterella and Stefano Pizzicannella*, tries to predict what the future of IASIA will be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It stresses that the Association should continue to focus on “a global perspective and pluralistic approach.” It also emphasizes the role of the Association in helping civil servants manage the new relationship between state and society.

Part II of the book includes nine appendices listing IASIA's presidents, meetings, working groups and publications since its inception in 1961.

*Public Administration in a Global Context: IASIA at 50* can be purchased for 15 Euros by contacting the IASIA Secretariat (j.irschik@iias-iisa.org). Payments are accepted by bank transfer or credit card.

### **Biosketch**

**Guido Bertucci** is currently Executive Director of the Governance Solutions International and a member of the Global Agenda Council on the Future of Government of the World Economic Forum. He also served as Director of the United Nations Program in Public Administration. He has written, spoken and organized meetings worldwide on topics such as democratic governance, civil service reform, leadership, innovation in government and public administration, e-government, decentralization, economic and social governance, ethics and integrity.



## **EASTERN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

EROPA is an organization of States, groups and individuals in the general area of Asia and the Pacific.

The Organization came into being in 1960, in response to a common desire among developing countries to promote regional cooperation in improving knowledge, systems and practice of government administration to help accelerate economic and social development. It was the first organization in the region to be devoted to the development of public administration in order to advance the economic and social development of countries in Asia and the Pacific.

EROPA has three classes of members: (1) States; (2) Group members, such as institutes or schools of public administration, universities, government agencies and municipal corporations; (3) Individual members, whose achievements have been outstanding and who have been specially admitted to membership.

EROPA endeavors to achieve its objectives through regional conferences, seminars, training programmes, special studies, surveys, researches and publications. Its activities are carried out through the EROPA headquarters in Manila, as well as through its three regional centers, namely, the EROPA Local Government Centre in Japan, the EROPA Training Centre in India and the EROPA Development Management Centre in the Republic of Korea.

Activities of EROPA have been held in different parts of the region. Meetings and Seminars have been conducted in Manila, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Bangkok, New Delhi, Seoul, Tehran, Jakarta, Kathmandu, Beijing, Kuala Lumpur, Canberra, Hanoi, Macau, Apia and Bandar Seri Begawan.

EROPA has been accorded consultative status by the United Nations further emphasizing the co-operative relationship between the UN headquarters in New York and EROPA. The organization is also one of the online regional centers (ORCs) of the UN Public Administration Network (UNPAN).

The work of EROPA is made possible through the help of host governments which are Member States of EROPA. It is financed through subscriptions from its State, Group and Individual Members.

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## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Manuscripts are solicited for the *Asian Review of Public Administration* (ARPA). ARPA will consider manuscripts that draw attention to and/or discuss important developments in public administration/public management with wide international relevance. However it is essentially a regional journal, so that some preference will be given to manuscripts focusing on developments of relevance to the Asia-Pacific (EROPA) region. Articles submitted for publication should be between 6000 and 8000 words inclusive of notes and references.

ARPA is a blind peer-reviewed journal, so articles submitted should contain title and author name(s) on a sheet separate from the text. A brief biographical sketch of the contributor, and a short abstract of approximately 100 words, should accompany each article.

They should be submitted double-spaced, preferably on-line, to [eropa.secretariat@gmail.com](mailto:eropa.secretariat@gmail.com). As to format and style, contributors should take note of and follow the heading, paragraphing, general writing and referencing formats and styles explained in the EROPA website <http://www.eropa.org.ph/publications/arpa.html>.

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