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Inclusive Management: Building Relationships with the Public

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<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7rp1985z>

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Publication Date

2004-07-15

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Practicing managers strive to deliver efficient and effective public programs in a way that is accountable to elected officials and the public¹. A rich literature explores the potential benefits of public management directly engaged with the public to develop and implement programs with emphasis on the enhanced quality of public programs and the strengthening of democratic practices (Box 1998; Box, Marshall, Reed and Reed 2001; King and Stivers 1998; Roberts 2003; Roberts and King 1996; Denhardt and Denhardt 2000; Rubin and Rubin 2001; Ingram and Smith 1993). Yet the two dominant models of public management over the past century have distanced public managers and the public. The “principal agent model” emphasizes direct accountability to elected officials, while the “expertise” model emphasizes the application of professional judgment on behalf of the public. These important dimensions of democratic governance—direct accountability to elected officials, the exercise of professional judgment, *and* direct public participation—are not mutually exclusive. In practice, some public managers are finding ways to address all three concerns as they try to serve the public interest and make effective use of scarce resources. This paper is part of an ongoing effort to develop an alternative model of public management, “inclusive management,” that demonstrates all three concerns.

The model is distinguished in two ways. First, it emphasizes including people based on their interest in and relevance to a particular issue or program. Interest and relevance may be based in a formal organizational structure, geographic location, concern for an issue, or many other bases of interest and relevance. Second, the model focuses the attention of researchers and practicing managers on the qualities or characteristics of the relationships managers build (Feldman and Khademian 2002). Who do managers build relationships with? How do managers build relationships with employees, with other organizations and jurisdictions, with elected officials, and with the public? What qualities are needed to make these relationships resources for defining and addressing public problems? In this paper we focus on the relationships managers build with the public. We focus on trust and connections as two important qualities of these relationships, and we develop the methods managers use to create and maintain trust and connections.

It is important to note that the trust and connections with the public are characteristics of the two dominant models of public management, as well. The difference, as we discuss below, is the quality of the trust that is developed and the quality of the connections, and the attention managers give to developing those qualities. In the principal agent model elected officials mediate the connections that are made with the public through hierarchy and oversight of public

¹ A previous version was presented at the 20th Anniversary Structure and Organization of Government Research Committee of the International Political Science Association, Vancouver, Canada, June 15-18, 2004. The authors can be reached via email at feldmanm@uci.edu and khademian@earthlink.net.

programs, while public connections are mediated through the exercise of professional expertise in the “expertise” model. In the inclusive management model, the connections with the public are direct. Similarly, the quality of trust established in the two traditional models rests with confidence in the proper functioning of the system of hierarchy and oversight, and confidence in expert knowledge. In the inclusive management model, trust emerges around a common identity of people working to address public problems. Inclusive managers draw upon methods that facilitate direct connections with the public and help to build identity based trust.

Public Managers, Politicians and the Public: A Continuum of Models

We can understand the evolving relationship of public management theory and practice to the public by considering three models we refer to as 1) the principal-agent model, 2) the expertise model, and 3) the inclusive management model. Each model gives priority to a particular relationship. The principal-agent models focuses on the linear relationship between public managers and elected officials. The expertise model highlights the discretionary relationship between managers and elected officials based upon professional expertise. The inclusive management model emphasizes the relationship between public managers and the public. Each model also gives definition to particular qualities of the relationships—specifically the kind of connections built with the public and the type of trust. These models are united by a continuous effort to deliver effective public policy that has value for the public.

Principals and Agents

In the principal-agent model, managers focus on the technical implementation of public policies defined by elected officials. Public managers are related to the public through a chain of command with elected officials at the helm. Ideally these hierarchical filters reflect the needs, concerns and priorities of the public casting a vote at the polls and hence build public confidence or trust in the representative process. Public managers are then related to elected officials through formal structures of reporting and oversight. The model centralizes and seeks to neutralize management practices to improve public policy outcomes, and especially to enhance the accountability of public managers to elected officials.

Historically this tradition is captured by the politics and administration dichotomy (Wilson 1887; Goodnow 1900; Gulick 1937). Government reformers have long argued that efficient, neutral and accountable management rests with the adoption of hierarchical and specialized organizations, the development of a strong professional civil service, and the careful development of written procedures to guide administrative behavior (Gulick 1937; Knott and Miller 1987). More recently, this tradition has been framed as a principal-agent relationship between elected officials and public managers where strict performance measures defined by elected officials define the chain of command (Aucoin 1995; Boston et al. 1996). The emphasis is on the structure of the policies that guide public management practices (Barzelay 2001) to “make managers manage” toward policy objectives, to reduce costs and improve performance (Kettl 1997). These public management policies also provide the structure for the relationship between public managers and elected officials.

In this model, information and knowledge flows into the practice of public management through the chain of command. It can come from elected officials representing constituent interests, from policy advisors working with elected officials, and from outside sources of

expertise working with and through elected officials. Rather than a substantive “policy” expertise, public managers then bring their managerial expertise to bear on the challenge of implementation to bring policies to fruition in an efficient and effective manner.

Managers as Experts

In the expertise model, managers focus on the application of managerial skill and substantive expertise to enhance public policy outcomes. At one extreme of this model, public managers not only implement mandated policies but also use their own and their employees’ substantive expertise to figure out what policies mean, how best to implement them and what would be a good policy outcome (Behn 1998). This view is represented by the call for managers to exercise an entrepreneurial or leadership expertise to stimulate new discussions, redefine public problems, and to create public value through alternative approaches to policy delivery (Reich 1988; Moore 1995). Less entrepreneurial versions of this model are represented in the assertion that street-level bureaucrats must exercise discretion because of multiple mandated options (Lipsky 1980) and by the exercise of professional discretion as a system of accountability. About the latter, Barbara Romzek and Patricia Ingraham write:

Professional accountability systems are reflected in work arrangements that afford high degrees of autonomy to individuals who base their decision making on internalized norms of appropriate practice.....Employees have the discretion to choose the appropriate managerial responses and the organization defers to their expertise and experiences.” (Romzek and Ingraham 2000; 242).

As this quote suggests, accountability is different in this model than in the principal-agent model. Rather than accountability directly to politicians, accountability is to the proper use of professional expertise. In practice, however, this amounts to an additional type of accountability (Romzek and Dubnick 1987). Public employees continue to be accountable to politicians, but they must also be accountable for using their professional expertise appropriately and in a manner that promotes the expert view of the public interest.

Historically, the expertise model focused on public administrators as professionals able to identify and protect the public interest from large business interests through the exercise of expert judgment (Landis 1938; McCraw 1984). As this more historical perspective suggests, the relationship between the public and public managers is mediated by the exercise of professional expertise on behalf of the public. In addition to assuming that public interests and desires are represented through elected officials, managers use their professional expertise to augment the knowledge of politicians about the interests of the public and the best means to achieve them (Friedrich 1940). As noted above, expertise in this model represents not only the skills of a manager, but the substantive knowledge a manager and his or her employees bring to the implementation process and the institutionalized knowledge held by a public agency. Expertise within this model can also be viewed as knowledge of the history and institutional legacy of an agency or program, and its administrative process and rules (Wamsley, Goodsell, Rohr, Stivers, White and Wolf 1990). This knowledge may play an important role in the development of and/or the implementation of policies.

Inclusive Management

In the inclusive management model, managers focus on building the capacity of the public to participate in the policy process. One way this capacity is built is through the structuring and maintenance of relationships by managers. Managers operate in a myriad of relationship structures that are used for making decisions, implementing policy, and identifying public priorities. These relationships give shape, pose constraints, or present opportunities for the way public policy is pursued. While many relationships are mandated, many are discretionary. Managers have varied degrees of discretion to structure and maintain relationships with members of the public, and in the inclusive management model they draw upon several means to structure relationships around the qualities of identity-based trust and direct connections to extend the capacity of public programs.

Efforts to manage the quality of relationships are not limited, however, to these more discretionary relationships. Even for relationships that are mandated or imposed upon managers and programs, the quality of the relationship is not mandated and can make a difference. An understanding of which relationships are important to what policy processes and of how to create and nurture these relationships is essential to the inclusive public manager (Feldman and Khademian 2002).

The focus on the structure and maintenance of relationships has implications for the exercise of managerial responsibilities. First, inclusive managers are responsible for facilitating problem solving within the community, rather than making decisions on behalf of the community. The work of Heifetz and Sinder (1990) represent this transition from primary decision maker to facilitator. The process of defining a public problem, they argue, is a political one, and the process for finding a solution requires complex learning processes among different public constituencies. Leaders who autonomously define problems and offer solutions cut short these important processes. By focusing on the structure and maintenance of relationships with the public, and the quality of those relationships, the responsibilities of the inclusive manager rest in part with the capacity of communities to define and work toward public policy solutions.

Second, the model of inclusive management shifts the focus of management control efforts from a centralized system to one of localized control. Managers remain responsible for outcomes and the actions of employees and other participants they include in the implementation process. What changes is the way they exercise control or influence (Feldman and Khademian 2000). The challenge for including members of the public in a responsible way is similar to the challenge Peter Senge (1990) poses to managers of the learning organization. Managers in the learning organization, Senge argues, must be “researchers” and “designers.” They must work to understand “the organization as a system . . . and the internal and external forces driving change” and they must design “learning processes whereby managers throughout the organization come to understand these trends and forces” (p. 299). For inclusive managers this means understanding public participation as part of the dynamic system of implementation. It also means designing processes of inclusion that work to build public capacity while providing guidance and oversight to insure the appropriateness and quality of the participation.

The emphasis on managers may make it sound as if the relationships that matter are all between managers or people toward the top of organizations and other people. This is not the case. It is also important that managers encourage their employees to focus on relationship-building and that they facilitate the creation of relationships between their employees and others concerned with the issues their employees work on (Feldman and Khademian 2002). Failure to

extend the practices of inclusiveness throughout the organizations they manage, limits the effect of these practices and can even reverse the effects if employees act in ways that are inconsistent with inclusion. We focus on managers here because their actions are necessary to make inclusion possible.

A Continuum of Models

The emphasis on direct hierarchical accountability to public officials in the first model, and the weight of professional expertise in the second seems to contrast with the emphasis upon direct public inclusion that forms the basis of the third model, inclusive management. Indeed, scholars present variations of these models as distinct alternatives (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000; Frederickson 1996; Eimicke 1974). In theory, perhaps they are alternatives, but in practice they are not. Our observations of those practicing inclusive management show that they continue to emphasize the formal relationship focused on performance, reporting and oversight with elected officials, and they continue to exercise their professional expertise while seeking ways to practice inclusion. In fact, some of the unique challenges of inclusive management come from the need to meld the demands of all three of the models. For that reason, we think it best to view them as cumulative.

Each model highlights different relationships of actors, and each depends upon different kinds of relationships with the public. The principal agent model highlights the relationship between the politician and the administrator. This relationship is structured through legislative mandates, contracts, performance targets, reporting requirements and procedural controls (Boston, et al, 1996; McCubbins, Noll and Weingast 1999; McCubbins 1999). The relationship is also structured through practice over time, such as through the implementation of congressional oversight (Harris 1964; Aberbach 1990). The role of the public in this relationship is in the background, but is critically important. The public's relationship to the administrator is mediated through the elected officials and, at least in the ideal, comes primarily through the structural forms of elections (Fiorina 1977).

The expertise model highlights the relationship between public managers and the community of experts in their field, as well as the relationship between public managers and legislators dependent upon expert knowledge (Khademian 1992, 1996; Eisner 1991). Professional knowledge and certification, standards, peer review, and the creation of public value provide the structural forms. The relationship to politicians in this model involves feedback and consultation (Kettl 1986). The relationship to the public is once again mediated. This time the relationship is mediated both through the politicians as in the previous model and through the community of experts who identify the public interest through their professional understandings (Katzmann 1980; Khademian 1992). Note that this latter relationship is not the public informing the experts of their interests but the experts informing the public of their interests.

The inclusive management model highlights the relationship between public managers, their agencies and the public. This relationship is direct as well as mediated. The relationship to the community of experts and to politicians remains the same as in the previous model and these relationships mediate the relationship to the public. The public official, however, also has a direct relationship with the public and responsibility for promoting and maintaining that relationship.

While inclusive management, as practiced, incorporates the other models, it is also distinct. The emphasis on relationship building with the public gives managers a central role in

policy making in a public policy arena. Public managers have the opportunity to develop relationships that can enhance policy decisions and facilitate program implementation. Relationship building with the public, in short, can be a resource for the making and implementation of public policy. In the following section we explore two qualities of the relationship between managers and the public: connection and trust. We suggest that connection and trust are essential for building collective capacity and the willingness to accept decisions.

Managing Relationships: Making Connections and Building Trust

Building relationships is important to the ability to take collective action. Leana and Van Buren point to the importance of associability in the capacity for collective action (1999). Associability is the ability to socialize for a collective purpose. It involves the *willingness* and *ability* to subordinate individual goals to collective ones (p. 541). Willingness is an affective component while ability is a skill-based one (p. 542). Building relationships is particularly important to the affective part but also important to the development of skills. In the following we suggest that creating connections and developing trust, as qualities of these relationships, is important to cultivating willingness and ability.

Connections

Connections are elements of communication networks (Barley 1990; Brass 1985; Granovetter 1973, 1974; Ibarra 1992; Sproull and Kiesler 1991; Uzzi 1997) that often emerge naturally through physical closeness or propinquity (Barnlund and Harland 1963; Festinger, Schacter and Back 1950; Gullahorn 1952; Newcomb 1956). Connections are not just about the transfer of information but also influence social support (Wellman and Frank 2001) and motivation (Ronen 1994; Maslow 1954; Baumeister and Leary 1995). Connections are similar to a “tie” in network theory, which enables the exchange of information and engenders a certain degree of reliability of the behavior of partners to the tie (Monge and Contractor 1999). Similar to ties, which imply proximity and therefore familiarity with other elements of a network, connections provide knowledge about other participants in a process and enhance the sense of mutual understanding though not necessarily producing agreement among those connected. (Feldman and Rafaeli 2002).

Creating connections between people is a first step in the process of relationship building. The challenge for public managers in the inclusive management model is to find ways to make connections with the public that will contribute to associability, or the willingness and ability of members of the public to participate in a collective effort. Ability is often enhanced by connections as a straightforward consequence of the information flows that connections facilitate. Willingness relies more on the affective state that the connections can activate. As we discuss below, trust is a quality of connections that increases willingness.

Trust

Trust is a quality of connections that is important to relationships with the public. March and Olsen have suggested that trust and empathy are both necessary for the aggregation of political interests. Indeed they claim, “Aggregative political equality has meaning only within an understanding of the empathic comparison and development of interests” (1989: 157).

Depending upon the disciplinary lens of the scholar and the empirical focus, the study of trust as a phenomenon has produced numerous definitions, a range of empirical emphases—from individuals to organizations and institutional settings, to broad social settings—and numerous ways to conceptualize and try to build trust (Williamson 1993; Coleman 1990; Rotter 1967, 1980; Zucker 1986). One way to utilize this diversity is to focus more explicitly on the problem to be addressed with trust (Bigley and Pearce 1998). In the case of the public manager, the problem is how to build relationships with members of the public that build a capacity and a willingness to participate. The challenge is two fold. First, most participants will not know the public managers or many of the other members of the public to be included in the policy effort. Unfamiliarity can be a barrier to trust (Bigley and Pearce 1998; Hardin 1993). Second, as documented in numerous surveys over the past two decades, a growing number of Americans distrust the government (Nye, Zelikow and King 1997; Kettl 2000). Depending upon varied public experiences with government or a government program, public managers might have to overcome barriers of distrust among members of the public before trust can be built.

We can think conceptually about this challenge by focusing on three forms of organizational or institutional trust (Lewicki and Bunker 1996). They are calculus based trust, knowledge-based trust and identification-based trust. Calculus-based trust is also known as deterrence based trust. This form of trust rests on the belief that people will do what they say because they fear the consequences of not doing so (p. 119).² Knowledge-based trust is based on predictability. The key processes for developing knowledge-based trust are regular communication and behavior directed at relationship development (p. 121). Identification-based trust is based on identification with the other's desires and intentions. Activities such as building a collective identity, collocation, creating joint products or goals and commitment to shared values build identification-based trust (p. 122-3).

Tyler and DeGoey have explored some of the dynamics of what they refer to as relational model of trust, which applies to both the knowledge-based and identification-based trust (1996). Through experimental research they found that these forms of trust were more important for the willingness to accept policy decisions than the instrumental or calculus-based trust. This and related work by Tyler on procedural justice (1994) indicates that fair process and being treated with dignity and respect is more important for decision acceptance than getting the outcome that you want. Competence is also an important factor, though in this research trustworthiness has the stronger relationship with decision acceptance (1996: 344). This research supports the idea that “trust is a social commodity” that “gives authorities a ‘cushion of support’ during difficult times” and that cannot necessarily be built in the short term but needs to be nurtured and maintained (Tyler and DeGoey 1996:345). Trust is, in other words, a quality that can be significantly enhanced by the ways in which public managers approach, include, structure, and utilize the input of members of the public.

Practices for Making Connections and Building Trust

We suggest that managers create connections and build identity-based trust, in part, by managing expectations and opening channels of communication. These two practices, while vitally important, are not enough in themselves to create relationships characterized by trust and the ability to work together to solve problems. Two additional practices, creating and using boundary objects and creating common experiences, contribute as well. Boundary objects enable

² Some have suggested that this may not be trust at all (Tyler and DeGoey 1996; March and Olsen 1989).

people to bridge the gap between different kinds of knowledge. Common experiences create a shared base of knowledge and allow people to bridge the gap between different identities (see Table 1).

Table 1: Management Practices

Management tool for making connections and creating identity based trust	Ways connections are made and identify based trust is created
Managing Expectations	Give focus and boundaries to public participation to limit disappointment and to create a common goal.
Opening channels of communications	Allow people to be heard and to transmit information that makes the processes—how decisions are made—transparent.
Common experiences	Bridge the gap between different kinds of identity.
Boundary objects	Bridge the gap between different kinds of knowledge.

We illustrate these four practices with examples of public managers who are concerned with the relationships they build with the public and what kind of capacity they create for the public to participate in the policy process. The managers we discuss include Gretchen, a planner in Midwest City; three representatives of Community Oriented Government in Midwest City; Maria, a planner in West Coast City; and Peter, a former chief of police in East Coast City. First, we introduce these people and provide a little information about the web of relationships they are concerned with.

A Brief Introduction to Inclusive Managers

Over the past several years Gretchen has been involved in orchestrating first a master plan process and now a process of revising and rewriting zoning ordinances for the city of Midwest City. Both efforts have involved significant participation from residents, the business community, the non-profit sector as well as the city employees. Her goals are to:

- Develop an inclusive process whereby the citizens of Midwest City assist in the revision of land use regulations.
- Increase neighborhood capacity and develop citizen leaders by engaging them in the zoning process.
- Increase decision-maker awareness about the importance of development on community quality of life.
- Protect and enhance the character of Midwest City’s neighborhoods.
- Establish comprehensive land use regulations that achieve the goals of the Master Plan.
- Improve and streamline the development approval process by providing clear zoning regulations that define community expectations.

She is quite clear that she does not want residents involved in rewriting the zoning ordinances. She is equally clear that, though she could sit down and write zoning ordinances consistent with

the new master plan, she does not want to miss the opportunity for relationship building that this process presents. This would erode the trust that she and many others have carefully built through the master plan process and deprive the city of useful information relevant to zoning and also to other issues that the residents care about.

The other issues that the residents care about are the domain of the Community Oriented Government representatives. Caroline, Debra and Michael are the COG representatives.³ They attended the meetings held for the master plan and their job was to follow-up on the issues raised that were not related to planning. The reasoning was that when residents are asked about their neighborhoods, lots of issues emerge. Only some of them will be related to planning. Building a trust relationship with the residents, however, is harder if your response to most of the issues that they raise is that they are not relevant. Therefore, the city needs someone at the meetings who can follow up on these other issues. Caroline, Debra and Michael were all chosen for these positions because they were relatively new to the city administration and they felt comfortable asking “why can’t we change this?”

Maria is a planner in West Coast City. She is in charge of producing and implementing a plan for a new development on the edge of the city. The development will house 25,000 people and provide 50,000 jobs. It is an opportunity to create a state of the art, multiple density development that is environmentally friendly. There are many, potentially conflicting interests. Most of the property owners favor development because they want to make money on their land, but some property owners want to continue living in an undeveloped area. Environmentalists want to preserve green space. Residents want to ensure that the quality of life and services in the city will not be hurt. Politicians want to make sure that their constituents are happy. The planners and consultants want to create a development that fits their professional standards. For Maria and her staff this is an opportunity to create and maintain relationships of trust with all of these groups. The challenge is considerable.

Peter was the chief of police in East Coast City from 1990 to 1997. He viewed his responsibility as the transformation of the police department from an agency that reacted to crime with a militaristic approach to one that built relationships with the public to better understand the needs, concerns and dynamics of all East Coast City residents and try to prevent crime. Peter understood his task as one of building trusting relationships with the community including residents, other government agencies, the local University, the schools and nonprofit community organizations. He also understood this task as the need to make connections to allow these different voices in the community to be heard and to facilitate the flow of information to make the processes for addressing and preventing crime more transparent.

Managing Expectations

There are many ways in which the public can be included, and it is the responsibility of the inclusive manager to be clear about the appropriate form of participation. Government organizations and government employees play a vital role in both initiating and sustaining inclusive processes (Vigoda 2002). Experience has shown that it is wise to engage the public in specific and well-defined ways. The International Association for Public Participation defines a spectrum of activities that includes informing the public, consulting with them, involving them, collaborating with them and empowering them (IAP2 2000). Different kinds of participation make sense for different projects. While advertising the process as broadly inclusive may be

³ Michael has moved to another position in the city administration. His position is vacant for the time being.

attractive at the beginning of a project, promising more than you can deliver will quickly erode the trust that has been built or will inhibit the building of trust.

Gretchen, the planner in Midwest City, is quite straightforward about the need to set boundaries. During the process to create a new master plan for the city, she worked with deadlines, financial constraints and legal requirements that she could not change. She found that the citizen committee who directed the master plan process and the members of the public who contributed to it were respectful of these constraints so long as they knew about them:

We have to have as many meetings as possible, but . . . we only have so much time and so many resources to commit to it. And I think people respected the fact that we tried to max out our resources as much as possible, but that we still had that limit. So they understood our limitations because we were honest about it.

While reasonable people understand that organizations have constraints, some of the constraints (e.g., zoning restrictions) have become part of the to-do list that emerged from the master plan process.

In addition to managing the expectations of what form participation might take and the resources that are available, inclusive managers focus on the expectations people have about what will be accomplished. People may come with expectations that their narrow self-interest will be met and the management challenge is to guide participation toward the common good or “collective cognition” (Thacher 2001). In an effort to locate and build a new local police station or firehouse, residents across a city or county will have preferences about the location. Concerns for reducing the crime rate in a neighborhood, or providing faster fire protection will motivate some residents, while concerns about the possible increased noise and traffic associated with a new facility might motivate others. To locate the facility where it can best further the public safety of the community requires a means to manage the expectations of residents across these different interests, and make the knowledge of one interest, group, or resident relevant for other interests, groups or residents. This doesn’t mean that everyone must agree, but there must be a means to go beyond from “Where do *I* want the police station?” to “Where would the police station provide the most benefit for the city?” (Thacher 2001). A public forum used to frame community interests that documents issues and concerns through data and photos, and fosters dialogue between competing interests is one way that expectations of members of the public can be focused on broader community issues rather than immediate self-interests (Thacher 2001).

Opening Channels of Communication

Another means that inclusive managers use to create connections and build trust is by creating and maintaining communication channels. These channels make the connections that enable many voices to be heard. They also can provide information. They need to carry information about the processes used and the reasons for making decisions. There are many ways to open communication channels and practitioners of inclusion use as many of them as possible in a given situation. The methods for communication can be quite diverse in terms of scope and degrees of formality. Communication can be targeted to a specific group or neighborhood, or to the public at large. In Midwest City during the planning process communication with the public at large was important. Newspapers, newsletters from the city, websites and billboards were used to announce and describe the master plan process, to answer frequently asked questions,

and to invite the public to each of the public forums. Minutes of the Master Plan committee meetings and outcomes of the community forums were all available on the website and in public libraries and neighborhood association offices around the city. An effort was made to make all information available in English and Spanish (the most frequently spoken languages in the area) and to make some information available in Vietnamese.

The scope of the communication efforts practiced by an inclusive manager might be more targeted, as well, utilizing more specialized methods of communication. In East Coast City, Peter hosted conferences to open channels of communication between the police force and members of the community. Conferences brought together community residents, police, social service providers and other professionals to focus on particular topics to develop and communicate an understanding of the concerns and needs of women and children exposed to domestic violence, for example, or the concerns and needs of the homeless residents of East Coast City (Khademian 2002). These efforts to open channels of communication built connections that began to form the capacity or skills of residents to work collectively with police on a community policing effort.

Communication methods vary in the degree of formality, as well. The Community Oriented Government representatives provide formally designated points of contact for residents in Midwest City to communicate with the city administration. Routine monthly meetings between a beat officer and residents of a community provide a similar forum (Thacher 2001). An inclusive manager would also find less formal, more spontaneous opportunities to listen, learn, and share information with the community. When police officers in East Coast City attend social gatherings, neighborhood meetings, or local sports competitions, for example, they are building opportunities for communication outside of more structured settings. Just as “management by walking around” is intended to connect a manager to employees by providing on the spot communication and information, organizations that routinely create opportunities for employees and leaders to meet informally with the public provide opportunities for spontaneous communication flows. An inclusive manager will utilize a range of these formal to informal mechanisms for communicating with the public.

The effort to communicate with the public requires more than just creating opportunities to communicate. Public hearings and public notification, for example, have long been mandated for many different kinds of policy processes. The hearing creates a formal setting with boundaries defining the topic at hand and the rules for participation. The mandated structure and process of a formal hearing mediates the direct relationship between public managers and the public. The exercise of judgment by public managers following the common hearing experience again mediates the relationship between the manager and the public through the application of professional expertise. But the setting inhibits the kind of dialogue researchers have identified as essential for an exchange of information that moves communities toward policies that are broadly supported and viewed as valuable (Roberts 1997; McAvoy 1999). The placement of these communications toward the end of the policy process has been one problem (Konisky and Beierle 2001). Another problem has been the inability to find ways of connecting the kinds of knowledge and identities that different participants have. The practices of creating common experiences and of creating and using boundary objects help to make these connections.

Common Experiences

One particularly powerful way of opening communication channels also has the potential for creating (or not) identity-based trust. Having people from a broad array of perspectives do something together is a powerful means of helping them see what they have in common – and what they do not.

Maria, the planner in West Coast City, knows that people have different interests, but she also believes that there will be more acceptance of the plan that is ultimately made if people see that all these interests are taken into consideration. The way she works to orchestrate this outcome is illustrated in the speakers she set up for an early meeting of the citizen task force. Consultants had recently been hired through a process in which the task force had been involved. This was the first meeting in which the consultants talked to the task force about their vision for the work plan. Rather than just have the consultants speak, Maria also asked two other speakers to present their visions for the area. One was the representative for a local environmental group that had created its own vision for the development before the city had decided to proceed with the project. In their vision, much of the land is zoned for agriculture or green space rather than development. The other speaker was a member of the task force and one of the smaller property owners in the area that the environmental group hopes to maintain as agricultural. He is a farmer who came over from Europe some 40 years ago. He has raised his family on the farm. It is increasingly hard to make a living this way, and he has to drive farther and farther each year to sell his crops. He needs the profit from selling his land to retire. Maria encouraged him to tell his story to the assembled group. He brought his wife and son to the meeting and told his tale in a very moving way. Through these two presentations, the task force was confronted with the complexity of the task before them and also the very real human and environmental implications of their work. They began their work bearing in mind the necessity of taking seriously the very different interests that are affected by the way the new development is created. This was their common starting point.

A few weeks later, Maria and her staff organized the first of four community forums that will take place as a preliminary plan for the development is being created. About 150 people participated in the day-long event. The day began with a bus trip that toured through the area to be developed. The bus trip was followed by facilitated discussions and lunch, which were also opportunities for common experiences. People were so excited when they returned from the bus trip that rather than launch right into planning considerations as they had planned to do, the staff switched the meeting around so that everyone could first discuss their impressions.

For the bus trip, participants were divided among three buses. Task force members, technical, environmental and design consultants, city employees and members of the public were distributed among the three buses. The trip took two hours. There were sixteen points of interest. Three of these were places where the buses stopped and people got out. The points of interest provided information about some of the features of the area that need to be considered in the process of development – the flood plain, the industrial development, the mature oak trees, the differing parcel sizes of various lots, the existing greenbelt, and so forth. Also pointed out were the great views from this part of the city, the well-used bike path that people were encouraged to return to on another day, the “spectacular sycamore trees”, and the historic area dating back to the 1850s. The tour – which was also made available on the Internet – raises issues that may be challenges for the development and about which there will surely be some difficult decisions. Like the earlier meeting it raises these issues without proposing a particular

outcome. It also brings people together to celebrate the beauty and resources in this part of the city and the opportunity to develop this area in a way that is respectful of these features.

Maria describes the purposes of the bus trip as multiple. It provides a common reference point for future discussions. People see the same things at the same time of year and time of day. This gives them a common base that they can refer to in future conversations. They see a broad spectrum of what developing the land entails including beautiful aspects and things that make the area look junky, which are often illegal uses. This helps to dispel myths and stereotypes that have built up over time and helps people develop ideas about what they would like to preserve and change.

The bus trip also has a social side. It helps to create connections between people and to dispel stereotypes that enable people to keep their distance from one another. Think of it as a traveling reception. There are many opportunities for people to meet others who view the project differently from them. Maria reports that many of the people did circulate much as people do at a reception. The power this process has to connect people is illustrated by an example Maria related. She sat next to one of the people who invested in a large and beautiful house in an area that is relatively undeveloped when he was unaware of the fact that the area was slated for development. When he realized that he was sitting next to the person who is in charge of the development, he relocated himself at the next available opportunity. Maria's understanding of this was that he was uncomfortable being in a social situation with someone he sees as the "enemy" and that he really did not want to come to see what he shared in common with her.

For the inclusive manager, a common experience such as the bus ride in West Coast City is one way to begin to make connections and build trust between residents and the government. It does so by beginning to bridge the gap between individuals with different interests and different identities. A common experience provides a way for members of the public to view a problem collectively. Seeing common interests is a way to build identity-based trust, and to make connections that help to build the capacity and the willingness to address a problem collectively.

Creating and Using Boundary Objects

Another approach to creating connections and building trust involves spanning different kinds of knowledge. Though it greatly simplifies the many kinds of different knowledge that need to be connected, the gap between local knowledge and expert knowledge is one of the persistent problems that makes creating connections and building trust difficult. Local knowledge is knowledge that is specific to a particular time and space. It is contrasted to generalizable knowledge or "placeless principle" (Geertz 1983) that is essential to science and is the base of many professions.

A critical barrier to recognizing local knowledge in the policy area is the perceptions among public policy professionals and managers of what constitutes knowledge. This barrier relates to the development of public policy expertise and policy analysis:

As such training is located in university graduate programs, the profession is bolstered by the societal status accorded to 'science', 'scientists' and 'scientific' expertise with their attendant features of class and power. Under such circumstances, an untrained lay person – neither an academic nor a scientist nor an expert in any recognizable sense – could not

possibly be seen as having knowledge worth taking into consideration (Yanow 2004:19-20).

As this quote illustrates, the bias is toward the perception of “knowledge” as information collected, analyzed, and interpreted utilizing scientific methods. Local knowledge, or the “mundane yet expert understanding” of local conditions is typically viewed as outside of this scientific realm. Local knowledge may be discounted when it comes from the “wrong” sources, generally lower levels of an organization or outside an organization (Yanow 2004). Local knowledge from these sources may be discounted because the knowledge conflicts with the use of scientific knowledge as a fundamental feature of authority systems (Yanow 2004; Stone 1997). Yet, as Tsoukas and Mylonopoulos (2004) suggest, whatever knowledge *is* depends upon what questions are asked, how they are answered, and how they fit together. Local knowledge *is* a form of expertise, but it is gathered, analyzed, and given meaning and structure through different processes.

The challenge of recognizing and incorporating different kinds of knowledge is addressed in the business literature, particularly as it relates to product development (Carlile 2002). An organization, by its very nature, develops specialized knowledge that is often rooted in a division or office—it has, in other words, boundaries. In the business literature, the challenge is to communicate across these boundaries and to find ways for individuals separated by boundaries to “alter their own knowledge” and to influence the knowledge used by another division or unit (Carlile 2002). One way managers can overcome these boundary challenges is through the use of a boundary object (Carlile 1997, 2002; Wang and Edward Jones 2001). Many things can serve as boundary objects. Pictures, prototypes, graphs, even text can serve the purpose. As Carlile (2002) describes it, an “effective boundary object facilitates a process where individuals can jointly transform their knowledge.”

Boundary objects can also be used in the process of creating and implementing public policy and, in particular, can bridge the gap between local and expert knowledge. Boundary objects have been used to bring attention to a policy issue. Caroline Wang has promoted the use of photovoice and photonovella as a way of encouraging policy makers to consider issues confronting their constituents. She has, for instance, used photos to give voice to peasant women in China and poor people in America (Wang and Burris 1997; Wang 2000). They take photos and provide text that she can present to policy makers literally transporting the knowledge across multiple boundaries. Boundary objects can also be used to move a conversation forward that has broken down. A particularly moving story of such use involved a dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis. The conversation became mired in discussions of past grievances and could not move on to envisioning a common future. Between meetings the facilitator asked the participants to send him pictures of their grandchildren. He had the pictures enlarged and wallpapered the meeting room with them. When the participants arrived for the next meeting they were motivated by these pictures to imaging the common future their grandchildren would share.⁴

One of Gretchen’s primary methods for building trust involves boundary objects. She facilitates conversations with residents and other members of the public and feeds back what she hears from them in the form of a visual object. In the case of the zoning ordinance process, for instance, the first major boundary object will be a pattern book that will provide a visual display of the various patterns of neighborhoods the residents have identified as desirable. The pattern

⁴ Personal communication, Nancy Roberts, March 28, 2004.

book will be developed through a series of facilitated conversations with residents, neighborhood associations and members of the business community. In the first phase, focus group meetings, neighborhood meetings and business area meetings will be held to identify community character elements. In the second phase, sub area workshops will be used to build a preliminary pattern book that will draw together the ideas discussed in phase one. In the third phase, meetings will again be held with residents, business owners and interest groups to finalize and test the pattern book. This process leads inexorably toward a product. The back and forth process ensures public input and reaction to each increment of the boundary object's development.

Gretchen's use of boundary object is particularly powerful because she uses what she has heard to produce them. In providing the boundary object, she is transcending the boundary and saying, "I heard you." By using the object for the next step of the process, she is making clear that their input matters. Both uses promote connections with the public and enhance trust.

In these instances of using boundary objects, the transfer of knowledge is important for the enhanced quality of information. Connections with the public allow local knowledge to become part of the policymaking process, and connections allow residents to understand and utilize the role of expert knowledge in the process. Boundary objects used in this way help to create both ability and willingness. Ability is enhanced through the information shared and willingness is enhanced through the process of sharing.

Why Inclusive Management?

It is clear from the examples we have given that inclusive management requires a fair amount of effort. One might at this point be wondering, why would public managers want to engage in it? The inclusive public managers we have been interviewing often feel it is the right thing to do and that it promotes democracy in ways that we will discuss in a moment. Beyond that, however, these managers point to the resources that inclusive management creates and how it enhances their ability to do work that is meaningful.

Creating Resources

Public managers are increasingly asked to "do more with less." They are expected to find creative and flexible ways to stretch limited public dollars to accomplish increasingly robust results (Osborne and Gaebler 1990; Osborne and Plastrik 2000). Similarly, expectations for public managers to play a leadership role in the identification of an organization mission, and to revise, improve and add value to the work of an organization are strong (Reich 1988; Moore 1995; Behn 1998). We suggest that some public managers generate new resources to try to meet these expectations through a publicly inclusive approach to the implementation of public programs.

People who practice inclusive management often consider relationships with the public as a resource. When public support is lacking, resistance to or even indifference to policy initiatives and programs can make implementation difficult and can eventually feed back to the political process resulting in policy reversals. The consequent costs of starting, working to promote, and stopping or reworking programs are particularly intolerable in periods of tight resources. Distance between public officials and the public (lack of communication, perceived differences in goals, perceived inaccessibility) diminishes trust and decreases the likelihood that

members of the public will support additional public programs through tax dollars or their participation.

Inclusion is one way of breaching the cycle and creating more resources. Three resources created through inclusive management are information, skills for collective decision-making and political capital. First, the establishment and maintenance of relationships with the public provide for the flow of information about what residents want and expect, or new ideas and concerns residents may have. These relationships also can provide a means to communicate with the public about what government might want to accomplish or address. The inclusion of local knowledge in the mix of information helps managers think through what might work and why other approaches might not be working. This use of information can eliminate the common need for consultants to canvass the public in an effort to sell a program that has been decided upon without public input. Practicing managers find that inclusive efforts draw attention to problems and make the problems more transparent.

Second, as managers work to build relationships that provide connections and create trust, a capacity for making collective decisions is also built. Methods emerge for bringing problems to the attention of government, working to identify differences and find collective understandings of problems, and finding ways to address the problems. The use of inclusive management techniques helps to develop knowledge about how to work together.

Finally, inclusive management can create political capital in the form of public support for programs and the financial support of programs, and the adoption of policies by elected officials that reflect the priorities of the public. Public participation in a public plan for development, zoning or policing can increase the likelihood the public will support the bond issues or other forms of paying for new programs. Similarly, cooperation or compliance with a program is likely to be stronger when the public has participated in the development process or even knows that the program is being implemented.

Democratic Governance

Scholars working to document democratic practices and to theorize about the historical manifestations of democracy cite direct public engagement as essential to the development of social capital, the identification of a community, and ultimately the ways in which individuals understand their liberty and their role in governance (Sandel 1997; Putnam 2000; Box 1998; Markus 2002). Increasingly, scholars recognize a management role in nurturing democratic practices by helping members of the public identify, articulate and work to accomplish shared interests (Denhardt and Denhart 2003; Vigoda 2002; Box, et al 2001; Rohr 1982).

Inclusive management, we argue, is one way managers can support the capacity of communities for democratic governance. This includes the skills of members of the public to participate in a collective effort, as well as the willingness to participate. By focusing on the methods managers use to create trust and make connections, we hope to understand better the techniques that create the ability and willingness to engage in the collective effort.

Conclusion

In this paper we address a small but important part of the inclusive management model—how managers build relationships with the public to make connections and build trust. The role of communication, information and expertise are prominent in our treatment of this subject. We

have argued that information flows that are reciprocal, decision-making processes that are transparent and mechanisms for transcending differences in kinds of expertise play important roles in inclusive management. The importance of efforts to make connections and create trust suggests that expertise in facilitation, negotiation, and basic communication augment the traditional types of expertise we associate with public managers. Experts learn to use their expertise to facilitate the collective decision making process, rather than to make decisions for the collective.

Implications for accountability in inclusive management remain to be examined. The two traditional models of public administration frame accountability in hierarchical terms (for the principal agent model) and in terms of professional responsibility (for the expertise model). Inclusive managers acknowledge these two forms of accountability and add the direct participation of the public as another source of accountability. Direct participation cuts into the long running debate over whether and how bureaucracies can be more responsive or directly accountable to the public they serve without sacrificing efficiency and the pursuit of clear goals articulated through the political process. As we view inclusive management, it is not an either or approach—either inclusion and responsiveness, or efficiency and effectiveness. Indeed, inclusive management can build resources that enhance program effectiveness and reduce costs.

Significant questions remain unanswered. What form does accountability take in this model? Does inclusion augment accountability by more finely honing the connection between the public and policy outcomes? If so, how broad must the base of participation be in order to be representative of the public? Perhaps more critically, what type of influence does an inclusive manager exercise to insure a particular group or highly motivated individuals do not dominate the inclusive management effort?

The challenge is significant. “It is possible that the various risks associated with integrative institutions, the threats of their corruption, the dangers of the perversion by willful self-interested actors, and the accumulated inertia of institutional structures, make their design and maintenance a study in frustration and disappointment” (March and Olsen 1989:158). For many that practice inclusive management, however, the alternatives are even less attractive. As one manager said, “Well, that will take forever. Well, of course it will. The alternative is to just do it the way we’ve done it for the next five years” (B, 1997). People who practice inclusive management often speak about their practices in terms of the need to find ways around the institutional and political obstacles to providing service that makes sense to them and to the people they serve.

The applicability of inclusive management beyond community settings is another question. All of our examples are based in cities. There is a logic to this in that managers at the community level must find ways to make programs work; there are no additional layers of government to which programs might be delegated. This level of government also facilitates making connections and opportunities for developing trust, in part, because of the local and proximal nature of the interactions. The economic development and planning literatures, however, present rich examples of inclusive efforts that suggest the potential for inclusive management at the state, federal and transnational levels. Future research needs to explore the use of the practices we have identified and other practices that are useful for creating relationships in contexts where the actors may be physically distant.

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