The Role of the Public Manager in Inclusion: Creating Communities of Participation

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In this article, we focus on the role of the public manager in bringing about inclusion. While inclusion often implies public participation, we have observed that one of the challenges for public managers practicing inclusive management is the necessity of combining information and perspectives of three domains: the political, the technical, and the local or experiential. Inclusion, from this perspective, involves the creation of communities of participation in which representatives of these three domains can use their knowledge to address public problems. We examine the ways in which managers do informational and relational work to enact such communities of participation.

Overview

Inclusion is increasingly important to the management of public programs (Box 1998; Box et al. 2001; Denhardt and Denhardt 2000; Fung and Wright 2001; Ingram and Smith 1993; King and Stivers 1998; Roberts 1997, 2004; Roberts and King 1996; Vigoda 2002). The days of command and control are vanishing as the adoption and the implementation of public programs come to require the support of politicians, experts, and people with local knowledge (Barzelay 1992; Khademian 2002; Moore 1995; Reich 1988). In this article, we focus on the role of the *public manager* in bringing about inclusion. We recognize that there are many people, who influence inclusive processes, but we think government and the managers of core government tasks are and will continue to be an important part of governance. We define public managers broadly. Public managers manage people and/or programs that serve the public. Some plan for cities, others educate children, regulate industries, promote public health, and provide security. These managers bring together the participants necessary to pursue and enact their core tasks (Feldman and Khademian 2002) and, hence, are in a position either to promote or inhibit inclusion.

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Inclusive management has two broad premises. The first is that bringing people together from different perspectives in ways that allow them to appreciate one another's perspectives will enhance the design as well as implementation of policies. Among the potential perspectives, three stand out as foundational: (1) the *political*, (2) the *scientific or technical*, and (3) the *local or experienced-based* perspective. These perspectives are all important in the formulation, adoption, and implementation of plans and programs. Inclusive management, as we conceptualize it, requires attention to all three perspectives in the production of effective programs and policies. The second premise of inclusive management is that informed deliberative processes are fundamental to democracy. The public manager as inclusive manager facilitates the practice of democracy by creating a community of participation where people can share information from different perspectives and work together on problems.

In this article, we explore the role that public managers play in bringing together the political, technical, and experiential ways of knowing problems and creating communities of participation that can propose and implement ways of addressing these problems. We recognize that within these three foundational perspectives, there are additional organizational, sectoral, and interest-based boundaries that inclusive managers must engage (Feldman and Khademian 2003). Elected officials and political appointees, for example, have a political perspective but will vary in their understanding of a problem given their different constituencies, knowledge of the problem, and concerns for their careers. Similarly, anyone with experience of the local environment will have local or experiential knowledge of a problem, such as the traffic problems in their neighborhood, but will vary in their understanding of a problem given their commute time, location of their home, or options for mass transit. Finally, those with an expert or technical perspective will vary depending upon the type of expertise they draw upon for addressing the problem, and their experience in addressing the problem. Inclusive managers must make decisions on how to engage the three broad perspectives and how to include the variation within each perspective that will be useful for addressing a problem.

In addition to identifying the three perspectives and developing their importance for inclusive management, we explore the informational and relational work that inclusive managers engage in to bring communities of participation together and to enable them to be effective. Informational work identifies and disseminates information about different ways of understanding policy problems, translates ideas between participants and promotes a synthesis or new way of knowing the public problem (Feldman et al. 2006). Relational work creates connections between people in ways that legitimize perspectives and create empathy for participants who represent different ways of understanding and addressing the problem. Managers use various tools, such as boundary objects and boundary experiences, in performing this informational and relational

work. In the course of this article, we examine the connections between inclusive practices, types of work, and tools in the process of creating inclusive processes as public managers engage in their core tasks.

To illustrate this argument, we use the actions of two public managers that we have observed over several years. These two managers have been engaged in projects that span several years and provide numerous examples of both the challenges of inclusion and ways of addressing these challenges. We have gathered information about these actions through interviews with the public managers and with others in the context.[1] We introduce the projects briefly here.

In 2001, Midwest City began a process to develop the first master plan for the city in nearly four decades. Politicians and planners working behind closed doors had created previous master plans. This time, however, the process involved hundreds of meetings and engaged thousands of members of the public. Planners, politicians, neighborhood organizers, members of public interest groups and neighborhood residents worked side by side to discuss what kind of neighborhoods they wanted and how these neighborhoods could be created. The process operated within strict financial constraints and firm deadlines as well as legal guidelines. Local nonprofits provided much of the funding for this public engagement process. Planners provided expertise that enabled members of the public to visualize options and to understand their consequences.

Midwest City's master plan was finished in 2002, on time and within budget. It had such constituency support that it sailed through the approval process. The master plan is not collecting dust on a shelf, as many master plans do, but has become a part of the ongoing discussion about the nature of the city and the kinds of decisions that will enact the vision that the master plan represents. Members of business and neighborhood associations routinely refer to the plan as they make decisions, requests and recommendations. It has also become the basis for other participatory processes, including a process of rewriting the zoning ordinances to reflect the city plan. Though the planners in the planning department could have rewritten the code relatively quickly, they chose to embark on another public process that included the six surrounding cities in the county. They raised nearly $100,000 from local nonprofits to fund the process that is still under way as this article goes to press.

West Coast City embarked on a project in 2001 that would add 50,000 jobs and 25,000 houses on land that had been designated years before as urban reserve. The project was highly controversial and highly complex. It was an opportunity to create a smart growth development that would provide a new template for development in an area that was characterized by urban sprawl. It would also create housing where there were undeveloped and beautiful rolling hills. A variety of sources provided input to the decision-making process including a task force co-chaired by the mayor and the local city councilmember who chose members representing immediate stakeholders, a technical advisory committee with open membership and self-selected members, a team of consultants with expertise in design, environmental and economic impacts, and members of the public at large who were brought together in regularly held community forums attended by hundreds of people and in smaller, more focused groups brought together to discuss particular issues as they arose. The city planning staff who coordinated all of the participation also provided input.

As this article goes to press the West Coast City project is moving through the evaluation process and will be considered for approval in fall of 2007. An outline for a smart growth design is gradually being filled in as analyses are performed and consensus builds among politicians, experts, and residents about what will work and what will not.

Theoretical Context

The question of who should be involved in policymaking and implementation is a central question in public policy and public management. Models that describe and prescribe relationships between actors in the policymaking process have been developed to address this question. Until recently, two models have dominated: the political oversight model and the expertise model. The primary relationship of concern in the political oversight model is the relationship between the politician and the public manager (Harris 1964; Wood and Waterman 1991). In this model, the public elects the politicians and make their wishes known through the elected officials. The primary concern, then, is how to make sure that public managers fulfill the politicians' mandates (Calvert, Moran, and Weingast 1987; McNollgast [McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast] 1999).

In the expertise model, the role of a community of experts is highlighted (Friedrich 1935; Rourke 1986). The experts are people who provide certified knowledge. Many of these experts hold positions in government agencies and often the public managers are experts. Other experts may be found in universities or in other research and training organizations that disseminate information and certify skill levels for many of the people who act as public managers, such as planners, educators, engineers, doctors, scientists, etc. As certified experts, it becomes legitimate for public managers to inform politicians about issues of concern to the public (McCraw 1984). Thus, in this model, experts in areas such as health, education, or defense work in agencies and provide information useful to politicians in making policy in these areas.

A third model of public participation has its roots in the planning discipline and efforts to include people directly impacted by planning practices (Arnstein 1971; Burke 1968), as well as in efforts to democratize the development and implementation of public policies (*Public Administration Review* 1972; Roberts 2003). In this model, the primary role of the public manager is engaging the public impacted by public policy by creating opportunities for participation as well as providing information and facilitating public deliberation and decision making (Box 1998; Heifetz and Sinder 1990). Public participation in this model is privileged as a means to enhance the quality of the policy process and the eventual policy impact (Carr and Halvorsen 2001; Mazmanian 1976; Rosener 1978) as well as a means to enhance the participatory capacities of members of the public (Ingram and Smith 1993).

Inclusive Management—A Cumulative Model

These models are important because they identify three domains of participants: the political, the scientific or technical, and the local (or experiential). Variations of these models are often presented as distinct alternatives (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000; Eimicke 1974; Frederickson

1996). In practice, however, the three models are not mutually exclusive. There is a cumulative quality to both the concerns that brought them about and the relationships emphasized by the models. All of these domains are necessary for the creation of effective public programs.[2] The scientific or technical domain is important in providing answers to questions about what actions will solve particular problems. The political domain is important in addressing issues of what actions are likely to be adopted and funded. The local domain is important in figuring out whether or not proposed actions can work in a particular institutional, organizational, cultural, and geographic context.

This cumulative quality is found not only in the theoretical models but also in the practice of public managers. Including the public and finding ways to connect different parts of organizations or organizations in different jurisdictions or sectors does not free the public manager of the responsibility of paying attention to political priorities or available technical and scientific expertise. Ensuring that each of these domains is integrated in the process of developing and implementing a program is an important part of an inclusive process, and because these domains have often been considered to be separate and competing, the boundaries between them can be significant.

The responsibility for combining these sometimes disparate perspectives in the efforts to address public problems implies a different role for public managers than the role implied by any of the three models taken separately. They are not simply in charge of execution as in the political oversight model, nor are they primarily advisors and decision makers as in the expertise model, and they are not principally facilitators as in the models of public participation. Instead, these managers "assume the roles of steward, teacher, and designer whose functions are . . . to ensure a process in which generative learning can take place" (Roberts 1997, 125). Inclusive public managers consider it to be part of their responsibilities to bring together the different ways that politicians, experts, and members of the public know an issue in an effort to develop an alternative, collective way of knowing. Simply bringing these groups together, however, is often not sufficient. A public that has not been systematically included in the processes of making and implementing policy will not necessarily have the skills to do so. Experts that are used to providing solutions will not necessarily have skill at listening and advising as opposed to dictating. Politicians used to attending to electoral polls will not necessarily understand the potential benefits of deliberative processes.

Inclusive managers, therefore, need to engage participants in ways that enable them to learn new ways of working together (Feldman et al. 2006). This requires identification of the three domains and a range of people within those domains who may know the problem in different ways, engaging and helping participants to see the relevance of different perspectives in the discussion, and fostering a deliberative space where problem solving can occur. These inclusive practices, as we discuss later,

can be enacted through relational and informational work and we illustrate how managers use various tools to enact this work.

We want to be clear here that there are many degrees of inclusion. Total or even substantial inclusion may not be appropriate for all policies and programs or even possible. Public managers are hired by the public to provide services. Making policy decisions and implementing programs are some of the services they provide. Who should be directly included, when and to what degree do complex questions and the answers to them vary from context to context. A variety of tools are available for thinking about such questions, including tools such as stakeholder and SWOT analyses (Bryson 2004).

Inclusive Practice

Creating an inclusive community of participation is a fundamental practice of inclusive management. By "community of participation" we mean the people and organizations involved in a process of policymaking and implementation. In any policymaking or implementation process, a community of participation will be created. This community can be more or less inclusive. It is not uncommon for the community to be very exclusive. Some communities will consist only of those whose participation is mandated by law; other communities will be considerably broader. In an *inclusive community of participation*, representatives of the political, expert-based, and local domains as well as representatives of groups within these domains will all be seen as having a legitimate role to play as participants in a joint effort to address a problem effectively. Creating a participatory process is often thought of as an action separate from the day-to-day activities of the public manager. We argue, however, that the ways in which managers conduct their work in pursuit of a core task are fundamental to creating hindrances or opportunities to take part in a community of participation.

The theory that guides us in developing the concept of a community of participation is a theory of practice. This theory emphasizes the interaction between structures and actions. It charts a middle course between theories that give priority to individual actions and theories in which institutional structures predominate. According to practice theories, structures of interaction are created and recreated by the actions we take (Bourdieu 1990; Giddens 1984). Previous interactions leave traces in the form of memory or expectations, but structures do not continue to exist unless they are enacted. This raises questions about a whole range of phenomena that are often called structures, such as laws or organizational hierarchies. Practice theory draws attention to the fact that it is how they are used or acted upon that brings them to life. Thus, we have laws that require public hearings. There are, however, many ways of having public hearings and both the laws requiring public hearings and the public hearings take on meaning through the ways that we enact them.

Many of the structures that evolve are an unintended or secondary consequence of the actions that we take. Consider the use of language. We speak in order to communicate, but while we are communicating, we are creating and recreating the structure of language. This consequence is usually, although not always, unintended. While most of the time when we speak, we are not conscious of the effect on language, in the process of parenting or teaching, for instance, one may be very conscious of the effect one's speech has on the acquisition of, and therefore the recreation of, language.

We can understand the development of a community of participation drawing upon these dimensions of practice theory. A community of participation is a consequence of the actions that people take in the pursuit of core tasks. Whenever public managers create or implement a policy, they create a community of participation. For instance, planners had worked in isolation from the public in planning exercises in Midwest City prior to the 2001 exercise. These planners created themselves as authoritative experts, and they created a community of participation that was relatively exclusive. Whether or not they were aware of how their actions created the community of participation, we do not know. In the 2001 exercise, however, the planners were conscious of wanting to create a new kind of community of participation. The public manager coordinating the master plan process knew that not all the issues that were raised at the hundreds of meetings would be strictly planning issues or could be dealt with through the master plan result. Therefore, she coordinated with the community-oriented government liaisons who made sure that representatives from several city departments (e.g., police, streets and sanitation, parks and recreation) attended every meeting and followed up on the nonplanning issues that were raised. Dealing with many of these issues involved additional public participation and coordination within city agencies and across county, state, and federal agencies. Through these actions, they produced not only a new master plan, but also an inclusive community of participation.

Types of Work

The kind of community of participation created is influenced by at least two types of work that public managers perform as they engage in their core tasks. One kind of work is informational; the other is relational. Informational work is aimed at recognizing ways of understanding policy issues and disseminating information about these different ways of knowing. Relational work is aimed at creating connections between the people who need to work together. Public managers always do informational and relational work, but informational and relational work does not always produce inclusion. In this section, we focus specifically on informational and relational work that promotes inclusion.

Informational Work. Public managers need to amass and understand a great deal of information in order to understand what boundaries are relevant to the core task they are currently engaged in. Public managers are in positions to access different ways of knowing public problems and to find ways to share that information to help participants see and know the perspectives of others. We can identify at least three roles that the public manager can play in this effort: broker, translator, and synthesizer. As a broker, the public manager needs to receive information related to different ways of knowing a policy issue, and disseminate information across whatever boundaries exist in the particular policy arena. As a translator, the public manager reformulates ways of knowing so that they can be appreciated, or at least understood, across boundaries. As a synthesizer, the public manager needs to see ways in which information from different ways of knowing can be combined in order to create new ways of knowing the policy issue.

Each of these informational roles can play a part in creating an inclusive community of participation. Gathering information about the different ways of knowing a policy issue and finding ways to pass on or share that information helps the manager assess where the potential obstacles are to fostering an alternative, collective way of knowing the public problem. Reformulating information related to different ways of knowing and seeing the ways in which different ways of knowing can be combined are both part of helping participants see the validity of different perspectives, find common ground, and take joint ownership of a problem (Bechky 2003).

Not all informational work is related to the substance of the policy issue. Some informational work will focus on gathering information to understand what capacities participants may have for deliberation and how those capacities can be blended and developed (Rosenberg 2007). This type of information is crucial for building the capacity needed to establish a community of participation. This informational work is closely associated with the relational work that we discuss next.

Relational Work. The other type of work that plays a part in creating a community of participation is relational or creating connections between people and developing the potential for empathy. Connections between people based on feeling are important in the ability to legitimize different perspectives and to create a community of participation. Durkheim (1915) identified feeling as the way that we are aware of our sense of belonging. More recent theorists have pointed out the importance of community and a sense of belonging as a source of identity and a reason for action (Etzioni 2004; Sandel 1998; Taylor 1989). Recent perspectives on organizations have supported this view. Organizations, from this perspective, are not defined in terms of information flows but in terms of the form they give to human feeling (Sandelands 1998a, 1998b). Organizational processes are not just important because they enable people to have information but also

because they impart a feeling of belonging (Feldman and Rafaeli 2002). Research has shown that relational work often goes unnoticed but is nonetheless critical to the ability of a group of people to work effectively together (Dutton 2003; Fletcher 1999; Gittell 2003), and relational work is fundamental to the development of trust (Lewicki and Bunker 1995; Tyler and Degoey 1996).

In the field of public policy and public management, more specifically, the relational domain has also been shown to be important for joint problem solving (Feldman and Khademian 2002). Work on procedural justice has shown that when the connection of participants to public officials is based on mutual respect, they are more accepting of the outcomes even if they do not coincide with their preferred outcomes (Tyler 1989; Tyler and Degoey 1996). Connection is also important for people to engage in deliberation. Rosenberg argues that empathy is essential to being able to legitimize perspectives that differ from one's own (Rosenberg 2007), and connection is one of the ways to create empathy.

Relational work is, thus, critical to the practice of creating a community of participation with the capacity to deliberate and implement plans. Inclusive managers try to develop a sense among participants that they belong to a community in which all participants' perspectives are legitimate and their differences can be used to enhance their joint ability to solve a problem. How public managers accomplish this work is the subject to which we turn now.

Doing Informational and Relational Work

Informational and relational work is often accomplished by the same actions. Providing, translating, and synthesizing information are often ways of creating connections between people. And bringing people together to share experiences often facilitates the sharing of information. Thus, actions taken to accomplish informational or relational work often have implications for each other. Take, for instance, the way different interests were handled in an early task force in the planning process for the development in West Coast City as discussed earlier:

> *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. His wife and son were present as he told this moving tale. 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.

In this example, Maria engages in informational work as a translator by creating an opportunity for people who represent different interests to see the project from each other's perspective. She communicates that she recognizes the range of interests and is willing to surface differences and expose boundaries rather than bury them. Making it clear that there are profound differences in the preferences people have for the outcome of this process tells the task force that they will need to bear those differences in mind as they do their work with the expectation of informational synthesis, or accomplishing a new collective way of knowing the challenge of development.

The facilitation that Maria engages in also helps to create a community of participation in which differences are respected and connections are made. It is important that Maria did not set this communication up in relation to a particular decision or as a choice between the various interests. Instead, her use of this moment in the task force to present these distinct interests sends a signal that a broad range of interests are valid and need to be respected. Each of the forms in which information is presented—the reports of the consultants, the vision of the environmental organization, and the story of the farmer and his family—is provided a space that makes it legitimate.

A public manager can also accomplish informational and relational work by communicating constraints (International Association for Public Participation 2000; Roberts 2004; Vigoda 2002). Constraints come in many different forms. Some constraints are political, some are technical, some are financial, and so forth. Some constraints are clear at the beginning but many constraints develop or are discovered during the course of the decision-making process. Communicating information about financial or technical constraints, when they are known, makes it easier for participants to understand why others think that particular actions can or cannot be taken. Information about time constraints can help people understand the pacing of a process. Having these understandings can facilitate trust and making connections, or avoid exacerbating distrust among participants. During the master plan process in Midwest City discussed earlier, the planner 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.*

Boundary Objects and Boundary Experiences. In this section, we present two tools that can help public managers do informational and relational work in ways that promote inclusive communities of participation: boundary objects and boundary experiences. The effectiveness of any management tool will depend upon the way it is used. Public hearings, for example, are often a mandated part of a policy process to provide public input. However, research shows that the ways in which processes and opportunities for participation in a public hearing or meeting are enacted can either support deliberation (Adams 2004; Carr and Halvorsen 2001; Rabe 1994; Reich 1988) or inhibit the sharing of ideas and engagement of public values (Beierle and Konisky 2000; Konisky and Beierle 2001; McAvoy 1999; Roberts 1997). Furthermore, no action that a public manager takes will have a uniform effect on the various publics that are affected by it. Therefore, we provide examples from Midwest City and West Coast City to explore how these tools can be used to produce inclusive communities of participation.

Boundary Objects. An "effective boundary object facilitates a process where individuals can jointly transform their knowledge" (Carlile 2002). Many things can serve as boundary objects. Pictures, prototypes, graphs, building blocks, or even text can serve the purpose. Research has shown how these objects enable people from different perspectives to come to know something in common (Bechky 2003; Carlile 1997, 2002; Star and Griesemer 1989; Wang and Burris 1997).

Gretchen, the planner in Midwest City, uses 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 principal boundary object was a pattern book that provided a visual display of the various patterns of neighborhoods the residents identified as desirable. The pattern book was developed through a series of facilitated conversations with residents, neighborhood associations, and members of the business community. The patterns identified served as a basis for writing the zoning codes. The pattern book provided an easy way to communicate to politicians on the zoning board and the city commission why particular zoning codes were being proposed and politicians were reassured of constituent support by the degree of consensus on the desirable patterns.

The way Gretchen uses boundary objects enables her to engage in informational work in a variety of ways. Creating the pattern book

involved bringing people with different perspectives together to talk about what pattern(s) were desirable for their part of town. For instance, one business association was made up of mostly people who were oriented to retail and one person who was oriented to wholesale and warehouses. The people who cared about retail cared a lot about traffic—that it not move through the area too quickly and that there were plenty of places to park. The person with the warehouses just wanted the streets to be truck-friendly so that he could have his big trucks move in and unload their wares. Everyone thought there was going to be a lot of conflict, but during the pattern book meeting, Gretchen showed them images of streets that accommodated both needs (D.J. Participant interview December 16, 2004). She used, in part, a Web site that provides images of specific areas of a town (main street, urban avenue, etc.) and the way they have been changed overtime (http://www.urban-advantage.com/). They found that they could agree on a design that served a variety of needs. In this case, the planners provided background information that enabled a synthesis of the different ways of knowing the street and they translated the possibilities into zoning codes. The way they enacted these functions supported the business community rather than taking the decision away from them and, in this way, supported inclusion.

The pattern book process also involved relational work. The process necessarily made connections between people. Relationships between members of the neighborhood were forged or reinforced by the process of creating the pattern book. The many different concerns that people have about what their neighborhood is or what they would like it to become can be aired. As an inclusive manager, Gretchen's job is to provide leadership and expertise and also to "give permission to others to speak up and compromise" (D.J. Participant interview December 16, 2004). While the informational work in this process helped people to understand each other's perspectives and also to see some options that they were not aware of, it did not do away with differences in interest. The relational work was important in moving to the next step of accepting the need for mutual compromise. In this way, public managers both change the relationship between potentially conflicting members of the public and between themselves and members of the public. The relationship between public managers and politicians also changes as the public managers facilitate agreements that make the politician's job easier.

This powerful use of boundary objects is not easy and does not come without a great deal of work. Gretchen facilitated 50 meetings over six months. The production of the pattern book took place in three different phases to ensure that people had ample opportunities to make midcourse corrections. Moreover, the pattern book process built on the master plan process that involved thousands of people in hundreds of meetings and community forums, which also created boundary objects and that, by all accounts, had built a base of information and relationships that were being used in a variety of projects throughout the city.

Boundary Experiences. Boundary experiences are shared or joint activities that create a sense of community and an ability to transcend boundaries between participants. Public managers often bring people together to acquire and provide information. These experiences, however, do not necessarily enable people to feel connected, to care about one another, or to trust one another. Dewey pointed out that while joint activity is important in creating a community, it is not sufficient.

> Associated or joint activity is a condition of the creation of a community. But association itself is physical and organic while communal life is moral, that is emotionally, intellectually, consciously sustained. . . . No amount of aggregated collective action of itself constitutes a community. . . . Combined activity happens among human beings; but when nothing else happens it passes as inevitably into some other mode of interconnected activity as does the interplay of iron and the oxygen of water. (Dewey 1927, 151–152)

Indeed, joint activity can be destructive as well as constructive (McAvoy 1999; Roberts 1997; Walsh 2005). The way in which activities are organized is critical to whether they are able to create a sense of belonging to a common community (Feldman and Rafaeli 2002). Therefore, it is important for managers to think about shared experiences as an opportunity to create an ability to transcend the boundaries between participants and the public manager(s) and a sense of community. Experiences that can become boundary experiences include field trips, community forums, parties, and even public hearings. In the following example, a series of community forums is kicked off with a bus tour specifically designed both to impart information and to create connections between participants.

A few weeks after the task force meeting related earlier, Maria and her staff organized the first of four community forums that took place as a preliminary plan for the development was 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 also gave the participants 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 16 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," 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 raised these issues without proposing a particular outcome. It also brought 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.

For the inclusive manager, an experience such as the bus ride in West Coast City is one way to provide information in a way that allows participants to make connections with one another both through the information and directly through the shared experience. The Internet tour, in contrast, provides much of the same information but does little to advance the relational work done by the bus trip.

Maria describes the purposes of the bus trip as multiple. There are many informational aspects to the event. 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 dispel myths and stereotypes that have built up over time and helps people develop ideas about what they would like to preserve and what they would like to change.

The bus trip also does important relational work. It helps create connections between people and dispel stereotypes that enable people to keep their distance from one another. Think of it as a traveling reception. It provides 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 planning process, 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.

Discussion

Some models of deliberative democracy speak to what the inclusive manager is trying to attain (Dewey 1927; Roberts 1997; Thacher 2001). Thacher draws on Dewey when he notes that "it is important to our idea of democracy not simply that the majority should rule, but that it should rule in a way that upholds these additional ideals—that public decision

making should be *informed* decision making and that wherever possible it should rest on debate and persuasion rather than on numerical superiority alone" (Thacher 2001, 5, emphasis in original). From this perspective, inclusive processes "are not simply vehicles for individual groups to make their interests known. Instead, they are sites of public deliberation about the common good" (Thacher 2001, 5). The informational work of the inclusive public manager is directed toward the goal of informed decision making; the relational work is directed toward the goal of creating connections that allow people to use that information to deliberate.

The creation of a community of participation that can engage in deliberation will not hinge on any single act (Feldman and Khademian 2005). Indeed, it is likely to take many inclusive acts especially if the role the public manager has played has not previously been perceived as one of an honest broker or if the participants have not respected one another. Current actions will be interpreted in light of previous relationships and the best-intentioned informational and relational work of public managers will not always produce consistent signals needed to create new roles and a community of participation. The receipt of many different signals, interpreted differently by many different people, complicates the process of building a deliberative space. This is, perhaps, one of the reasons that Flyvbjerg (1998, 5) states, "Democracy is not something a society 'gets'; democracy must be fought for each and every day in concrete instances, even long after democracy is first constituted in a society."

The goal of informed deliberation that is broadly inclusive resonates throughout the literature examining the expansion of participation in policy processes. While worth fighting for, it is important to underscore the difficulty of such efforts and the frequent failure as well. Managers who practice inclusion make continuous decisions about the extent of inclusion. For example, what other perspectives are out there and should those other perspectives be included? Who are the stakeholders and should they be part of the process? And what other connections should be made? Efforts to practice inclusion may fizzle, stalemate, or even heighten differences between participants for any number of reasons, some of which might be related to the breadth of inclusion. Not all topics and issues of varied complexity may be ripe for the practice of inclusion, and even the best-intentioned, most energetically pursued inclusive practices can falter on the strength of boundaries or the distance between ways of knowing a public problem.

Public managers do, however, have the ability to make communities of participation more inclusive. Integrating participation into the way they do core tasks rather than treating participation as an extra or extraordinary part of their work is one way that they can promote more inclusive communities of participation. Attention to the quality of inclusion in the informational and relational work they do as they enact their core tasks is an important part of integrating participation. By attending to such opportunities, public managers can fight for inclusion "each and every day in

concrete instances" rather than feeling helpless or overwhelmed by the enormity of the task.

Conclusion

Communities of participation are created continuously in the pursuit of core tasks and public managers play a direct role in facilitating the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of a community. Creating an inclusive community of participation involves doing informational and relational work that brings people together from different perspectives in ways that allow them to appreciate one another's perspectives and potentially work together to address problems. Informational and relational work can be facilitated through the use of boundary objects and boundary experiences. How these tools are used will be essential for the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of a community of participation. Used effectively, these tools can help shape processes that build connections between participants previously separated by their different perspectives and help participants jointly transform their knowledge of a problem and consider ways to address it.

Fundamental to inclusive management is recognizing and working to include the political, expert, and local or experiential based perspectives associated with a problem, and the variation within each perspective. Rather than privilege or accentuate the public, experts, or politicians in an effort to address problems, a premise of inclusive management is the importance of working with all three perspectives to enhance the design and implementation of policy. The challenge is not to build a distinct venue where the public can participate, but rather to do core tasks in a way that creates a community of participation where local and experience-based ways of knowing problems engage political and expert ways of knowing problems to move toward alternative ways of knowing and addressing problems.

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Notes

1. The primary source of data for this article is interviews with the two public managers. One of the authors has been interviewing these managers on a regular basis over the span of several years. Interviews with the manager from West Coast City have taken place on a biweekly basis starting in

October 2001 and continuing through the present time. Interviews with the manager from Midwest City began in April 2001 and take place monthly continuing through the present time. In both cases, the author has also interviewed others in these cities and attended task force meetings and community forums and collected documents, newspaper articles, and material from Web sites.

In Midwest City, the author began interviewing in 1998 and has interviewed managers and employees engaged in numerous efforts to broaden participation over these years. These interviews documented the city administration's efforts to broaden participation of employees and residents. Managers and employees engaged in these efforts have been interviewed intermittently between 1998 and 2005. Interviews with the manager from Midwest City began in April 2001 and take place monthly continuing through the present time. The interviews most relevant to this project include interviews with the assistant city managers, with members of the master plan task force, neighborhood association and business association representatives, and approximately two years of biweekly interviews with two community-oriented government representatives. In addition to interviews, data gathering has included attending task force meetings and community forums and collecting documents, newspaper articles, and material from Web sites.

In West Coast City, interviewing also began before this project in March 2000 focusing primarily on city managers. Interviews relating specifically to the project discussed here include interviews with politicians, representatives of interest groups, city staff members, developers, and residents. Interviews with the manager from West Coast City have taken place on a biweekly basis starting in October 2001 and continuing through the present time. In addition to interviews, data gathering has included attending task force meetings and community forums and collecting documents, newspaper articles, and material from Web sites.

2. The importance of three arenas is also recognized by Mark Moore. In his book *Creating Public Value* (Moore 1995), he argues that an effective "sustainable deal" that creates public value will be "substantively valuable," "legitimate and politically sustainable," and "operationally and administratively feasible." In other words, an effective sustainable deal will be valued by the public, by political overseers, and will be feasible given organizational capacities and resources. While his argument focuses the work of a manager to accomplish a broadly defined goal, we argue that inclusion of the three arenas is essential for building an inclusive community of participation.

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