



GOVERNANCE REFORM

UNDER REAL-WORLD CONDITIONS

Citizens, Stakeholders, and Voice

SINA ODUGBEMI AND THOMAS JACOBSON, Editors



THE WORLD BANK

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THOMAS JACOBSON

Editors



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1818 H Street NW
Washington DC 20433
Telephone: 202-473-1000
Internet: www.worldbank.org
E-mail: feedback@worldbank.org

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About the Editors and Authors

Matthew Andrews, a South African, is Assistant Professor of Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. He has worked in government and for the World Bank and is particularly interested in why governments look the way they do and how they evolve over time.

David E. Apter is the Henry J. Heinz Professor Emeritus of Comparative Political and Social Development and Senior Research Scientist at Yale University, where he holds a joint appointment in political science and sociology. He has done field research on development, democratization, and political violence in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

J. Kevin Barge is Professor of Communication at Texas A&M University and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium, devoted to facilitating communities working through polarized and polarizing issues. His research includes developing an approach to management and leadership and exploring the relationship between discourse and public deliberation.

José-Manuel Bassat, a Senior Communications Officer at the World Bank, advises governments around the world on how to develop communication programs to build consensus for public policies. He holds a B.A. in Russian Studies from London University and an M.A. in International Relations and Economics from SAIS–Johns Hopkins University. He speaks six languages fluently.

Michele Bruni is Communication Specialist in the World Bank's Development Communication Division, focusing on the water and sanitation and agricultural and rural development sectors. He has extensive experience in development projects in Latin America and recently in Africa and South Asia. He holds a master's degree in agricultural science and technology from the University of Perugia.

Cecilia Cabañero-Verzosa is Communication Advisor at the External Affairs Vice Presidency of the World Bank. She leads the learning program on strategic communication for Bank staff and country clients. She holds a Ph.D. in Intercultural Communication and Conflict Management from the University of Maryland and an M.A. in Public Administration.

David Cohen is a senior advisor to Experience Corps and Civic Ventures. He is also President of Global Integrity and a cofounder of the Advocacy Institute. He concentrates on international advocacy, drawing on his advocacy and strategic experience on major social justice and political reform issues in the United States since the early 1960s.

Rey Anthony G. David, Jr., heads the Great Wall Advertising and Communications Group in the Philippines, which specializes in advocacy communications and strategic counseling. His group has worked with various government and multilateral institutions for various reform initiatives. He currently serves as a consultant to the Philippines Finance Secretary.

Stanley Deetz is Director of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder. His several books focus on corporate relations to society, organizational communication, and stakeholder collaborations. His current work investigates native theories of communication and democracy and their consequences for mutual decision making, and promotes alternative conceptions and practices.

Robert de Quelen has 20 years of experience in public relations. Currently based in Paris, France, he has spent more than seven years in Asia, first with Edelman Singapore, and then with EON, the Stakeholder Relations Firm, a Philippines affiliate of Edelman. He is a graduate of Paris III, Sorbonne Nouvelle.

James S. Fishkin holds the Janet M. Peck Chair in International Communication at Stanford University, where he teaches communication and political science and directs the Center for Deliberative Democracy. He is author of *The Voice of the People, Democracy and Deliberation*, and other books. He is best known for the theory and practice of Deliberative Polling.

John Forester is Professor of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University. His best-known publications include *The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes* (MIT Press, 1999), *Planning in the Face of Power* (University of California Press, 1989), and, with Norman Krumholz, *Making Equity Planning Work: Leadership in the Public Sector* (Temple University Press, 1990).

John Gastil is a Professor of communication at the University of Washington. He is the author of the newly published *Political Communication and Deliberation* (Sage, 2008), coeditor with Peter Levine of *The Deliberative Democracy Handbook* (Jossey-Bass, 2005), and other books and articles on small groups, deliberation, and politics.

Baogang He (Ph.D., ANU, 1993) is Chair in International Studies at the School of Politics and International Studies, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia. Baogang He has published four single-authored books and three edited books and 39 international refereed journal articles. His most recent book is *Rural Democracy in China* (Palgrave, 2007).

Lisa Irvin is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Communication at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her current research investigates multistakeholder

collaborative governance as an institutional and organizational response to resolving environmental conflicts.

Thomas Jacobson (Ph.D., University of Washington) is Professor and Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, School of Communications and Theater, at Temple University. He has been Chair of the Department of Communication at SUNY-Buffalo and was Founding Director of its Informatics Research Center. Recent research addresses globalization, democratization, and program assessment.

Karen S. Johnson-Cartee, Ph.D., is a tenured Professor of advertising and public relations at the University of Alabama. She specializes in political communication research, consulting for political campaigns as well as corporations. Her latest two research books are *Strategic Political Communication* and *News Narratives and News Framing*.

George O. Krhoda is Associate Professor of Geography with research interests in policy analysis and natural resources management, specifically on water and environment. Formerly Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, and Chairman of the Department of Geography, University of Nairobi. Krhoda was Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Kenya.

Sumir Lal is Head of Internal Communications at the World Bank. From 2000 to 2006, he served as External Affairs Advisor in the Bank's India office, where he pioneered the use of political analysis in Bank operations, provided advice to the regional and country leadership, and specialized in risk communications in infrastructure reform.

Antonio G. Lambino II is a CommGAP consultant and Ph.D. candidate at Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and does comparative research in political communication, governance reform, and citizen engagement. He holds advanced degrees from Harvard University and the University of Pennsylvania and has worked for the Office of the President of the Philippines, National Democratic Institute, and Internews Europe.

Peter Malinga is an Information, Education, and Communication Specialist at the Human Resources and Institutional Capacity Development Agency in Kigali, Rwanda, which is coordinating the implementation of a Government Multi-Sector Capacity Building Programme. He has been a public relations practitioner for eight years and a communications lecturer for the past 11 years.

S. J. Masty is an advisor in public policy communication based in London. He was a U.S. presidential speechwriter, journalist, and public relations executive before a career in development, including relief to Kabul in the 1990s. An author, graphic artist, and documentary filmmaker, he has worked extensively on four continents.

Phil Noble is one of the top experts in the United States and internationally on the use of the Internet in the civic sector—media, politics, governments, and

nonprofits. He is the founder of PoliticsOnline and its affiliated company, Phil Noble & Associates, an international public affairs consulting firm.

Sina Odugbemi heads the Communication for Governance and Accountability Program at the World Bank. He has over 20 years of experience in journalism, law, and development communication. Before joining the World Bank in 2006, he spent seven years with the U.K. Department for International Development.

Lori Ann Post is the Assistant Dean for Research in the College of Communication Arts and Science, Assistant Professor in Telecommunication, Information Studies & Media, and Senior Research Fellow at Outreach and Engagement at Michigan State University. She directs research projects on the impact of emerging media and technology on public health.

David Prosser is a Projects Manager for the BBC World Service Trust, the international development arm of the BBC. He is the Executive Producer of *Bangladesh Sanglap* (“Dialogue”), a major governance initiative supported by the DFID. He is an award-winning producer who has made some 50 documentaries for BBC.

Amber N. W. Raile is completing her doctorate at Michigan State University. She will join the faculty at North Dakota State University as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication in August 2008.

Jeremy Rosner, Ph.D., is Executive Vice President of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and is one of the world’s leading consultants on strategy and public opinion for political parties, candidates, governments, NGOs, and corporations. During the 1990s, he served on the Clinton National Security Council staff, and as Special Advisor to President Clinton and Secretary of State Albright on NATO enlargement.

Charles T. Salmon is Dean of the College of Communication Arts and Sciences at Michigan State University, where he also holds the Ellis N. Brandt Chair in Public Relations. With a focus on the intersection of public health, public information, and public opinion, he has served as a Fulbright Fellow in Israel and UNICEF Advisor in Kazakhstan.

Avjeet Singh is a consultant in the World Bank’s Sustainable Development Network, where she works on various aspects of results-based monitoring and evaluation. She has hands-on experience in providing consultancy to the public sector in India on various reform aspects including corporate governance, regulation, and private sector participation in the infrastructure sector.

J. P. Singh is Associate Professor in the Communication, Culture and Technology Program at Georgetown University and Editor of the Blackwell journal, *Review of Policy Research*. He has authored three books and nearly 30 articles and chapters on international development and trade. His latest book is *Negotiation and the Global Information Economy* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

Alice Siu is a Ph.D. candidate at Stanford University’s Department of Communication and a Research Assistant at Stanford’s Center for Deliberative Democracy. Her

research interests are in deliberative democracy, public opinion, voting behavior, and the effects of political information on representative democracy.

Seth Tuler, Ph.D., is a senior researcher at the Social and Environmental Research Institute in Greenfield, Massachusetts. During the past decade, he has focused on studying and evaluating public participation in a variety of policy domains, including cleanup of contaminated sites, public health effects from nuclear weapons testing, forestry management, and watershed management.

Thomas Weblor, Ph.D., is a senior researcher at the Social and Environmental Research Institute in Greenfield, Massachusetts. His research specializes in bringing local and expert knowledge together in collaborative democratic ways to produce innovative solutions to problems of environmental management and risk decision making.

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We hope that this book will make a contribution to development policy and practice, particularly in improving the ways in which governance reform initiatives are implemented. It is to the reform managers working tirelessly under real-world conditions and the intended beneficiaries of reforms that this book is dedicated.

Abbreviations

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AI	Appreciative Inquiry
ALGAK	Association of Local Government Authorities of Kenya
ALPE	Association for Legal Public Education
ASI	Adam Smith International
AusAID	Australian Aid Agency
BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
CAAC	Catchment Area Advisory Committee
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCHD	Catholic Campaign for Human Development
CDD	Center for Deliberative Democracy
CDD/R	Comité de Desarrollo Departamental y Regional
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CommGAP	Communication for Governance and Accountability Program
CONADES	Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo Sostenible
CONPES	Consejo de Planificación Económica y Social
CPAR	Country Procurement Assessment Report
CPI(M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CSO	civil society organization
DC	District Commissioner
DCEG	Dirección de Comunicación Estratégica y Gobernabilidad
DFID	Department for International Development (U.K.)
DFO	District Forest Officer
DGI	Dirección General de Ingresos
DJB	Delhi Jal Board
DOE	Department of Energy
DP	Deliberative Polling
DPE	Department of Public Enterprise
DR-CAFTA	Dominican Republic–Central America Free Trade Agreement

DWB	Delhi Water Board
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
EVA	Estrategia Voluntaria de Acceso a Información Pública
FISE	Fondo de Inversión Social de Emergencia
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales
FMIS	Financial Management Information System
GDP	gross domestic product
GNP	gross national product
G-EPS	Government Electronic Procurement System
GONGO	Government-Operated Nongovernmental Organization
GPPB	Government Procurement Policy Board
GWA	Great Wall Advertising
GYLA	Georgian Young Lawyers Association
HAI	Health-Care-Associated Illness
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDPA	Institute for Development Policy and Analysis
IDR	Instituto de Desarrollo Rural
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEC	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos
IP	Information Professional
JBIC	Japan Bank for International Cooperation
KAM	Kenya Association of Manufacturers
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude, and Perception Survey
LGU	Local Government Unit
MHCP	Ministerio de Hacienda y Crédito Público
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
MINSA	Ministerio de Salud
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoLF	Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoWI	Ministry of Water and Irrigation
MSCBP	Multi-Sector Capacity Building Programme
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MTI	Ministerio de Transporte e Infraestructura
NAMFREL	National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NGO	nongovernmental organization

NIH	National Institutes of Health
NWCPC	National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PED	Public Enterprise Department
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional
PSCBP	Public Sector Capacity-Building Project
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSP	Private Sector Participation
PSU	Public Sector Unit
PWC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
PWI	Procurement Watch Inc.
RBA	Rights-Based Approach
RDA	Regional Development Authority
SA	Social Accountability
SECEP	Secretaria de Coordinación Estratégica de la Presidencia
SETEC	Secretaría Técnica de la Presidencia
SNIP	Sistema Nacional de Inversiones Publicas
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
SUTRA	Society for Social Uplift through Rural Action
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WAB	Water Appeal Board
WDR	World Development Report
WHO	World Health Organization
WRM	Water Resources Management
WRMA	Water Resources Management Authority
WRUA	Water Resources Users Association
WSB	Water Services Board
WSP	Water Service Provider
WSPA	Water Service Providers Association
WSRS	Water Sector Reform Secretariat
WSRSC	Water Sector Reform Steering Committee
WSS	Water System and Sewerage
WSTF	Water Services Trust Fund

Governance Reform under Real-World Conditions

Introduction: Development and Governance Challenges

This book is a contribution to efforts to improve governance systems around the world, particularly in developing countries. It offers a range of innovative approaches and techniques for dealing with the most important nontechnical challenges that prevent many of those efforts from being successful or sustainable. By so doing, the book sets out the groundwork for governance reform initiatives. Its overarching argument is that the development community is not lacking the tools needed for technical solutions to governance challenges. The toolbox is overflowing; best practice manuals in various areas of interest tumble out of seminars and workshops. However, difficulties arise when attempts are made to apply what are often excellent technical solutions under real-world conditions. Human beings, acting either alone or in groups small and large, are not as amenable as are pure numbers. And they cannot be put aside. In other words, in the real world, reforms will not succeed, and they will certainly not be sustained, without the correct alignment of citizens, stakeholders, and voice.

The surprise is that those who reflect on politics have known this for centuries. There is, for instance, what might be called the collective action problem. Efforts to improve governance—for instance, anticorruption programs—if successful are likely to benefit the majority of citizens in any country. Yet the potential beneficiaries are not likely to be as organized and as outspoken as those who are likely to lose out if the reforms succeed. As long ago as 1532, Niccolò Machiavelli described the same phenomenon in *The Prince*:

And it should be realized that taking the initiative in introducing a new form of government is very difficult and dangerous, and unlikely to succeed. The reason is that all those who profit from the old order will be opposed to the innovator,

whereas all those who might benefit from the new order are, at best, tepid supporters of him. This lukewarmness arises partly ... from the skeptical temper of men, who do not really believe in new things unless they have been seen to work well. The result is that whenever those who are opposed to change have the chance to attack the innovator, they do it with much vigour, whereas his supporters act only half-heartedly; so that the innovator and his supporters find themselves in great danger. (Machiavelli 1988: 20–21)

The implication is clear: a sensible innovator in governance needs to worry about public attitudes, public opinion, self-interested forces, and inertia and must seek to shape those forces in ways that support reform efforts.

It is also important to point out at the outset that the challenges dealt with in this book come up in all countries and in all sectors whenever one seeks to deliver serious reform initiatives. For instance, a change like the location of a new power plant, airport, or prison might clearly benefit the entire society, but those directly and adversely affected by it will mobilize to stop the change. The phenomenon is often known as NIMBY: Not in My Backyard. A larger, famous example of reform efforts blocked by powerful vested interests is health care reform in the United States, where the most expensive health care system in the world still leaves close to 47 million citizens uninsured. The question is: How do you fix the problem? Is it a technical challenge? In the course of the 2008 presidential election campaign, Senator Barack Obama provided this compelling answer: “There’s no shortage of plans out there. There is no shortage of policy papers. This is not a technical problem. It’s problem of politics. It’s a problem of getting a big enough coalition of people who are organized, inspired, mobilized and will then put pressure on those who are elected ... in order to get it done.”¹ Obama’s argument is sound because although every reform initiative provides technical challenges to be solved, once you have good technical solutions, you then have to work out how to make the reforms happen and have an effect in the real world. The subject of this book is showing a variety of ways in which one might achieve that.

Communication has something unique to offer poverty reduction and governance reform by facilitating the development of democratic practices that are not limited to the ballot box. These practices make up the public surveillance of government activities, the public debates within civil society regarding interlocking and often contesting interests, the publicizing of social services, and other areas. Communication research tools have been employed in the service of development goals for more than 50 years, tools that include public health programs, audience segmentation analysis, literacy campaigns, social marketing efforts, communication audits, and media development projects. Each of these communication techniques has a vital role to play in contributing to general democratic capacity, and yet a more political treatment of communication holds promise that has not yet been fully explored.

A radical change is under way in both the thinking and practice of national development work that represents a new level of priority accorded to

multistakeholder engagement. An almost single-minded devotion among policy makers to growth in gross national product (GNP) reaching back at least to Walter Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth* (1960) has begun to fade, to be replaced by the emergence of something richer and more complex. The establishment of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 signaled a turn to economic priorities more immediately concerned with "whose" economic growth (OECD 2005; United Nations 2000). Poverty reduction is now accorded a higher priority in lending practices. Priorities for economic growth, it is now more often admitted, should be focused on those who need it most (U.K. Department for International Development 2006).

Even this approach is only a half measure because economic change, whether focused on overall growth or on poverty reduction, must take place in social and political contexts that defy economic reasoning alone. The vast number of failed development programs has, finally, yielded a hard-won lesson. Citizens will do what they wish whether it accords with economists' views of their self-interest or not. And so it now dawns on the development community that development experts must listen to the people. Development, including economic development, is more likely to be effective when grant and lending programs abide by the cultural sensibilities of clients and beneficiaries, when local self-determination is enhanced, and when the way to succeed in such matters is seen to begin with partnerships among stakeholders. Development projects must be planned under real-world conditions.

This idea has a history, even in development. But, of late, it is an idea that has a little more traction. Scores of development agency personnel and non-governmental organization (NGO) workers claimed in the 1970s that local participation would yield meaningful benefits whereas the big clunky boots of large development agencies often squashed those they intended to help. Innumerable works subsequently explored the possible benefits of citizen participation through dialogue (Cernea 1991; Holland and Chambers 1998; Salmen 1989). By the late 1990s, the largest donor agencies, including the World Bank, had begun to take part in this discussion.

The Comprehensive Development Framework adopted by the World Bank Group during the latter half of the 1990s signaled a major change in its own conception of development (Kagia 2005; Wolfensohn 2005). Despite decades of debate among development experts advocating the importance of social, cultural, and political dimensions of development, the Bank had remained largely preoccupied with technical solutions to problems of economic policy and management. The comprehensive development framework changed this by stressing the idea that citizen voice should be key to development planning, putting the Bank on a more equal footing with development theory promulgated by others.

This is progress, at least in thinking about how to proceed. Implementation is another matter. Recognition that poverty reduction depends on improvement in governance and self-determination may be a step in the right direction,

but barriers to progress remain. Social and political theories that directly address conditions facing developing societies today are still surprisingly scarce. Modernization theory faded away, but it has not been replaced with a more contemporary program of research into democratization and governance reform challenges.

Another issue is the bureaucracy of development technocrats who hold much of the decision-making power within the development context. There is an iron triangle of stakeholders whose interests seem to converge mostly on business as usual. Economists in donor agencies, experts in consulting firms, and CEOs in large NGOs are well intentioned. But the natural inertia of modern large-scale organizations, together with residual affinities for the cult of expertise, threatens to halt progress toward people-centered development in its tracks.

No doubt much of the threat, if one can call it that, lies in simply not knowing exactly what to do. Large-scale organizations need to change their best practices. Academia has not been terribly attentive to this need, and those who control the spigot of funding are those whose thinking remains most determinedly technocratic. The challenges faced by reformers who would most like to engage governance reform are many and complex. Key problems must be clearly identified; productive approaches must be advocated in compelling ways; evidence must be sifted to identify both challenges and solutions. Governance reform priorities, too, must be addressed under real-world conditions.

The Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP) is devoted to addressing just this nexus of challenges. It was established on the principle that a key tool for governance reform is communication: communication among local stakeholders, among donor groups, and between local stakeholders and donor groups. Its work is based on the understanding that although they are necessary and often first rate, technocratic solutions alone have been ineffective in delivering real change or lasting results, primarily because reform programs are delivered not in controlled environments, but under complex, diverse, sociopolitical, and economic conditions: real-world conditions. In political societies, ownership of reform programs by the entire country cannot be assumed, public opinion will not necessarily be benign, and coalitions of support may be scarce or nonexistent even when intended reforms really will benefit those who need them most. Technocratic solutions, therefore, must be accompanied by strategies to understand and address obstacles to reform that will often rely on communication among networks within and outside of government, among civil society organizations, and between citizens in the public sphere.

The CommGAP Program

CommGAP is funded through a multidonor trust fund. This program, launched in 2006, seeks to confront challenges inherent in the political economy of

development. By applying innovative communication approaches that improve the quality of the public sphere—by amplifying citizen voice; promoting free, independent, and plural media systems; and helping government institutions communicate better with their citizens—the program aims to demonstrate the power of communication principles, processes, and structures in promoting good and accountable governance, and hence better development results.

CommGAP defines communication in its broadest sense to include the structures, principles, and processes that define a society's sociopolitical context. CommGAP emphasises those institutions within society that influence and shape public opinion, including the media environment, and the legal and regulatory framework that enables or precludes the free flow of information from government to citizens and vice versa. The program is divided into three complementary program areas: (1) Research and Advocacy, (2) Capacity Building and Training, and (3) Support to Development Projects and Programs.

Research and Advocacy

The Research and Advocacy program area is undertaking a substantial research agenda to develop a convincing body of evidence to demonstrate to the development policy community the contribution that communication makes to development outcomes. This includes commissioning a series of case studies that can be used in scientific publications, capacity building, and training programs, as well as advocacy to promote the use of communication in development. The research program also seeks to develop practical frameworks and tools that can support development practitioners in their work.

Capacity Building and Training

The Capacity Building and Training program area seeks to develop a strong set of core training modules in communication (particularly focusing on governance and accountability issues) that can be broadly used with officials at partner governments, the World Bank, and other bilateral and multilateral agencies. The focus here is on expanding the narrow definition of communication as understood by development policy makers and practitioners (e.g., journalist training, press releases, Web sites, public relations) to encompass the broad understanding of communication noted above.

Support to Development Projects and Programs

The Support to Development Projects and Programs program area covers selected governance-related operations in Africa and Asia, including stand-alone governance projects; public sector reform projects; postconflict programs; and programs supporting decentralization, community-driven development, and social accountability. CommGAP-supported operations receive long-term, comprehensive communication support and, in most cases, are undertaken jointly with other donors.

CommGAP's Method

This section discusses how CommGAP works.

Practitioner Surveys

Practitioner surveys were gathered among employees of the Bank as well as government partners to determine perceptions of needs and priorities in communication and governance reform. Results were used in preparing a needs assessment for a learning program on communication and governance and for input into ongoing research. In addition, background papers were prepared on key communication techniques such as public opinion research, negotiation strategies, media effects assessment, and multistakeholder dialogue to serve as state-of-the-art preparation for moving forward.

Identification of Key Challenges

The surveys, background papers, and other information were used in identifying six key challenges facing governance reform efforts:

1. How do we use political analysis to guide communication strategy in governance reform?
2. How do we secure political will, which is demonstrated by broad leadership support for change? What are the best methods for reaching out to political leaders, policy makers, and legislators?
3. How do we gain the support of public sector middle managers, who are often the strongest opponents of change, and then foster among them a stronger culture of public service?
4. How do we build broad coalitions of influentials in favor of change? What do we do about powerful vested interests?
5. How do we help reformers transform indifferent, or even hostile, public opinion into support for reform objectives?
6. How do we instigate citizen demand for good governance and accountability to sustain governance reform?

A Dialogue Exploring the Way Forward

To address these key challenges, a workshop, or dialogue, was held in Washington, D.C., on May 30–31, 2007, to gather knowledge and recommendations on the use of information and communication to support governance reform under real-world conditions. Governance reform, with its inextricable link to good governance, is aimed at producing effective public administration with several characteristics, including ethical leadership, public finance management and procurement, a civil service based on meritocracy and adequate pay, service delivery and regulatory agencies, support for decentralization, and an effective judiciary. The dialogue sought to answer key questions about how information and communication systems can improve the feasibility of governance reforms under what are typically adverse conditions. In particular, it sought

hard evidence, using case studies and existing literature, for techniques and strategies that have been proven effective.

Dialogue Participants

Participants in the dialogue included leading communication firms working in the area of governance reform, individual consultants who have performed exemplary work in this area, opinion leaders and academics who have done research and written prominently on the subject, development communication experts leading efforts in this area within development agencies, and technocratic specialists in the area of governance reform.

What Has Been Learned

The output from this meeting is largely contained in this book. Participants submitted papers addressing the six key challenges in advance, and suitable papers were selected for publication. An analysis was conducted of gaps in topics that should be covered, and then a number of additional papers were solicited to help address these gaps. Case studies were collected to illustrate both successful governance reform efforts, as well as cautionary tales of what can happen when technocratic planning advances heedless of political conditions and communication opportunities. The collected papers form what we hope is a notable start to research and to the consolidation of best practices and relevant theory and research. Some important subjects have received relatively light treatment, whereas others are more abundantly covered. However, this research is a start.

Sharing: A Community of Practice

The long-term aim of these exercises is to develop a community of practice around the effective use of communication for governance reform. Capacity building is widely undertaken in projects of all sizes and descriptions serving populations of those most in need worldwide. However, the community of professionals and organizations devoting resources to these efforts has its own capacity-building requirements. The work of the donor community as a whole will benefit if a new set of best practices is developed and widely promulgated among high-level policy makers, program directors, task team leaders, and others. CommGAP aims to play a role in jumpstarting this particular form of capacity building.

Volume Overview

The book is divided into seven sections. Six of the sections address the key challenges for governance reform covered in the learning event dialogue as laid out earlier. Each of these sections contains individual chapters analyzing specific concepts or experiences relevant to the theme of the section. An additional section presents case studies from which can be drawn lessons

about best practices covering all the challenges. Some of the case studies also illustrate what can happen when best practices are not observed.

The first appendix condenses lessons from the dialogue and groups them into approaches and techniques useful in regard to each of the six challenges. The second appendix presents a Grounding Path Toolkit, which is a graphic representation of social and political processes relevant to each of the key challenges along with approaches and techniques that policy makers and project directors may find useful in addressing them. The toolkit graphic is also intended to remind reformers of the need to conduct political analysis in every situation as well as to use evaluation as an essential tool of program design.

Chapters vary widely in the subjects addressed and in the perspectives from which each subject is addressed. Some are academic in nature, whereas others present lessons from World Bank analysts, private consultants, and technocratic experts. This diversity is instructive even if it is not completely comprehensive. The variety of circumstances that confront reformers cannot be anticipated in a single volume given that these conditions range across the full spectrum of economic, social, political, and cultural matters. Nevertheless, a broad variety of topics is addressed.

Overview of This Book

Part One of the book addresses this question: “How do we use political analysis to guide communication strategy in governance reform?” Sina Odugbemi starts by recounting the origins in classical political theory of modern ideas regarding the importance of public opinion for the quality of governance. He develops two main arguments: first, that public opinion is a critical factor in governance and, second, that a democratic public sphere is a critical part of the architecture of good governance. Thomas Jacobson and Antonio G. Lambino II address the question of political analysis by highlighting the relevance of a theory of communication that is politically oriented, that of Jürgen Habermas. They use Habermas’s work as a background against which to present a framework for scoping communication challenges facing government reformers. J. P. Singh unpacks some terminology common in the development context in which participation is concerned by analyzing the terms *dialogical communication* and *monological communication*. Sumir Lal shows how relevant the analytic skills of a seasoned reporter can be when lent to the task of assessing political dynamics in development planning and implementation.

Part Two asks, “How do we secure political will—demonstrated by broad leadership support for change? What are the best methods for reaching out to political leaders, policy makers, and legislators?” Matthew Andrews makes the case for using the idea of space in a metaphorical way to focus the attention of reformers on the need for three key factors to be present in change

efforts: acceptance of the need for change among stakeholders, the political authority to make change possible, and the individuals along with organizations possessing the skills to effect change. Lori Ann Post, Charles Salmon, and Amber Raile use their expertise as empirical communication researchers to dissect the ways that the political will to change in many ways depends on public will to change. Thomas Webler and Seth Tuler review the literature on deliberative processes used to reach out to stakeholders and engage them in change. The authors share results of a study detailing the great many elements involved in deliberative processes.

Part Three addresses this question: “How do we gain the support of public sector middle managers who are often the strongest opponents of change, and foster among them a stronger culture of public service?” Stanley Deetz and Lisa Irvin address the frequent tendency of private sector organizations to look at their needs by considering only their own short-term interests. Deetz and Irvin argue that management can advance both long- and short-term goals by harnessing the energies and interests of public, as well as civil society stakeholders, in effect making public relations truly public in spirit. Peter Malinga, working from the perspective of an information, education, and communication specialist in Kigali, Rwanda, provides an account of a multi-sector capacity-building program that demonstrates why it is important to gain the support of middle management for any change in strategy, policy, or reform. J. Kevin Barge details an “appreciative inquiry” approach to cultivating norms of professionalism within middle management that are collaborative.

Part Four asks, “How do we build broad coalitions of pro-change influentials? What do we do about powerful vested interests?” John Forester analyzes in detail differences between dialogue, debate, and negotiation; he offers important lessons that are of crucial importance when stakeholder talks are difficult. In his chapter, George Khroda demonstrates the success of a consensus-based, stakeholder-driven, decentralized approach to building coalitions around water reform efforts in Kenya. Robert de Quelen proposes coalition building with a stakeholder relations approach, which requires engaging people with credible messages, backed up by research and proof points and delivered by credible messengers with the aim of building trust.

Part Five addresses a challenge: “How do we help reformers transform indifferent, or even hostile, public opinion into support for reform objectives?” Karen Johnson-Cartee reviews the uses of *framing* in communication, which can improve the odds that messages are presented in ways audiences can properly understand. Rey Anthony G. David Jr. shares lessons from a Philippine reform project summarized in the form of an equation, $6R = 1R$. The equation is intended to remind readers that a combination of Research, Reason, Reach, Resources, Record, and Review will produce Results. Phil Noble reminds readers of the democratizing potential of the Internet and new communications technology with a brief plea for “six big ideas.”

Part Six, which concludes the analytic chapters, considers this question: “How do we instigate citizen demand for good governance and accountability in order to sustain governance reform?” James Fishkin shares his work on deliberative opinion polling designed to improve the often poor-quality information obtained from standard polling techniques, replacing it with well-considered opinions gathered from citizens after they have deliberated collectively on public issues. In his chapter, David Cohen reviews ways to help citizens fight institutional corruption and suggests policies that are critical to foster a citizenry that is engaged with public and civil society institutions. John Gastil details skills and resources required to facilitate face-to-face citizen discussions and meetings of anywhere from 5 to 500 participants. Finally, David Apter concludes the section with a nuanced view of what has been learned over decades of development work, an approach organized around a collection of “questions and caveats.”

The case studies section presents large-scale governance reform projects in eight countries. Michele Bruni reports on a very large, national-level public sector reform effort in Nicaragua. Steve Mastly describes public enterprise reform efforts in West Bengal and Orissa, India, in which dogged persistence in stakeholder consultations won hard-fought gains. Complexities of public will, coalition politics, and communication challenges in Slovakian economic reform efforts are presented next, complemented by a note from Jeremy Rosner that summarizes some lessons learned. José-Manuel Bassat details a strategic information campaign undertaken to support judicial reform in Georgia. A condensed version of a work by Steve Mastly presents a success story of effective communication and media relations in the reform of the Bulgarian tax collection system. With her account of a Delhi water sector reform, Avjeet Singh shows how lessons can be learned from projects that surely would have been more successful if communication contingency planning had been undertaken early in the reform planning process. Cecilia Cabañero-Verzosa examines the contributions of strategic communication to procurement reform efforts in the Philippines. David Prosser contributes a description of the BBC World Service Trust project Bangladesh *Sanglap*, in which radio and television programs present politicians to their audiences who interact with positive results. In the last case study James Fishkin, Baogang He, and Alice Siu document a first-ever deliberative opinion poll in the People’s Republic of China.

Summary

Across these academic, professional, and practitioner contributions, including the case studies, a number of recurrent themes emerge as having key importance. There is much talk of consensus-seeking, the dangers of fake consultations, and the importance of leadership even in consensus-building

efforts. The importance of networks is repeatedly raised: sometimes in the sense that professional networks among individuals are key to getting things done in a pragmatic sense, and sometimes as a tool of analysis. The concepts of dialogue, deliberation, decision making, and negotiation appear often, mostly in attempts to clarify differences among them while emphasizing the importance of not mistaking them for being one and the same.

The idea of strategic communication is often invoked. As it is used in these studies, the term refers to systematic efforts to engage communication thoughtfully and proactively, rather than in a post hoc, put-out-the-fire manner, and to use all available communication tools ranging from media campaigns, to participatory stakeholder dialogue, to collective decision making. Of course, the ideas of participation and the public sphere arise—leitmotifs in publicly spirited governance reform work today.

None of these ideas is defined or analyzed in a definitive fashion, but their appearance in a collection of studies that all address the subject of governance reform is unique. CommGAP's intention is to bring together theory and research from the academic world to provide systematic and evidence-based justifications for best practices in the field. The fieldwork and case studies flesh out the meaning of the theory, and they go further by testing it. The outcome is a volume making a compelling case that communication has something unique to offer governance reform work.

Note

1. For the interview report, see www.npr.org, "Obama Analyzes New Hampshire Performance," January 9, 2008.

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Part I

Using Political Analysis to Guide Communication Strategies





Public Opinion, the Public Sphere, and Quality of Governance: An Exploration

Sina Odugbemi

Only fools, pure theorists, or apprentices fail to take public opinion into account.

Jacques Necker (1792), finance minister to Louis XVI

Introduction

Nobody knows for sure how to bring about and secure capable, responsive, and accountable government in developing countries, but ideas tumble out of learned papers with great regularity in this age of volubility. Thus, an agenda that began its life three decades ago with a preoccupation with public administration has now ballooned into something known as “governance” or “good governance.” It is not easy to ask that we look at a fresh set of approaches to the challenge of how one secures responsive and accountable government in developing countries. What is proposed in this chapter can be justified as complementary to much of the excellent work already being done. The discussion here is a way of understanding the challenge of securing good governance that straddles both the supply and demand sides of governance by focusing on a dynamic force in politics, the power of public opinion, and a structural force in politics, the democratic public sphere.

This chapter develops two main arguments: first, that public opinion is a critical factor in governance and, second, that a democratic public sphere is a critical part of the architecture of good governance. Its organization follows these two lines of argument: the next section takes up public opinion, and the following section addresses the democratic public sphere. This introductory

section continues with a short discussion of the development context and definitions of key terms and concepts.

Development Context

Because this chapter is written as a contribution to thinking in international development, it is important to state at the outset that the overarching goal of all efforts in international development is the elimination of world poverty. As a result, before one can address the claims that this chapter sets out to defend, there is a prior claim: that good governance is crucial to the elimination of poverty. Now, although naysayers still, no doubt, exist, this claim is going to be taken as given. For instance, in its new governance and anticorruption strategy paper *Strengthening World Bank Group Engagement on Governance and Anti-corruption*, the Bank (2007) reports that “a large body of research shows that in the longer term good governance is associated with robust growth, lower income inequality, child mortality, and illiteracy; improved country competitiveness and investment climate; and greater resilience of the financial sector. Research also indicates that aid projects are more likely to succeed in well-governed environments” (iii–iv).

Key Terms and Concepts

Good governance: An excellent definition of the term in a development context is offered by the white paper published by the U.K. Department for International Development (2006), the U.K. government’s development ministry, titled *Eliminating World Poverty: Making Governance Work for the Poor*:

Good governance is not just about government. It is also about political parties, parliament, the judiciary, the media, and civil society. It is about how citizens, leaders, and public institutions relate to each other in order to make change happen. Good governance requires three things:

- State capability—the extent to which leaders and government are able to get things done;
- Responsiveness—whether public policies and institutions respond to the needs of citizens and uphold their rights;
- Accountability—the ability of citizens, civil society, and the private sector to scrutinize public institutions and governments and to hold them to account. This ability includes, ultimately, the opportunity to change leaders by democratic means (2006: 20).

Accountability: The sense in which the concept of accountability is used in this chapter has been well captured by Bessette (2001: 38–39):

Political accountability is the principle that government decision-makers in a democracy ought to be answerable to the people for their actions. The modern doctrine owes its origins to the development of institutions of representative democracy in the eighteenth century. Popular elections of public officials and

relatively short terms of office were intended to give the electorate the opportunity to hold their representatives to account for their behaviour in office. Those whose behaviour was found wanting could be punished by their constituents at the next election. Thus, the concept of accountability implies more than merely the tacit consent of the governed. It implies both mechanisms for the active monitoring of public officials and the means for enforcing public expectations.

Public opinion: In the literature, the term *public opinion* has at least four different usages. First, public opinion can mean the values, beliefs, and prejudices of a community. Second, it can mean elite opinion, especially the opinion of politically active elites. Third, it can mean the aggregate of individual attitudes to a public issue, which is what opinion polls mostly measure. Opinions are canvassed about an issue to which people have not necessarily given much thought. Fourth, public opinion can mean the majority view that comes into being on a public issue after that issue has been debated and discussed in the public arena. This usage is the discursive or deliberative conception of public opinion, which arises out of debate and discussion. It might not be wisdom, but it is not blind, irrational prejudice. In fact, it is wholly and entirely rational, and it is a critical force in public affairs. This is the sense in which *public opinion* is being used here (Glynn and others 2004).

Democratic public sphere: At the center of this idea is the *agora*, a bequest of ancient Greece. The agora was the heart—the main political, civic, religious, and commercial center—of the ancient Greek city. It was here that citizens traded goods, information, concepts, and ideas to try to better their situations and impact the powers that governed them. Thus citizens wanted to improve the quality of their lives. In political philosophy the agora has come to be known variously as the public arena, public realm, public domain, or public sphere. As a normative ideal, it represents that space between the state and the household where free and equal citizens come together to share information, to debate, to discuss, or to deliberate on common concerns. This is what this chapter calls the democratic public sphere (there can be authoritarian ones), the defining features of which are stipulated next.

Public Opinion, Good Governance, and Accountability

This section will argue that public opinion is a critical factor in governance.

Foundations

Why should public opinion be a central part of any framework for thinking about good governance and accountability? The beginning of wisdom in this matter is the realization that public opinion is the only true basis of power and legitimacy. A regime or a system of government is secure only to the extent that the relevant population willingly consents to the rule. If public support—really, public opinion—for a regime or system of government collapses, that

support will not survive for long. Arendt's claim that a people always have the "reserve power of rebellion" (1958: 237–38) explains why authoritarian regimes or dictatorships are the most assiduous in seeking to shape public opinion through propaganda and the fierce control of information flows—anything that might turn public opinion against them. Such regimes know only too well that when public support is completely eroded, their hold on power becomes as solid as the morning dew.

This attention by authoritarian governments to public opinion is true especially because the armed forces come from the people. The armed forces are part of majority opinion in a country. If it comes to a showdown between the people and the regime, the armed forces cannot be relied on to turn their guns on the same people from whom they have emerged. Recent popular revolutions around the world have involved that "tipping point" when the armed forces switch to the side of the people and the hated ruler or regime falls. Of course, contextual factors often delay this tipping point, but the fact that this switch can and does happen is the real reason dictators and authoritarian regimes seek to control access to information in their countries and to muzzle the press. They are terrified of the consolidation of hostile public opinion; they know how corrosive that consolidation would be of the very plinths of power.

Political philosophers have had much to say about the link between power and public opinion. One may begin with Thomas Hobbes's important insight that there isn't that much difference in bodily force between men, with the implication that you cannot base your control of other men on bodily force alone. In the *Leviathan*, Hobbes (1996) points out that

... nature hath made men so equal, in the faculties of body, and mind; as that though there bee found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind then another; yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim to himselfe any benefit, to which another man may not pretend, as well as he. For as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others, that are in the same danger with himself. (1996: 87)

Hobbes supports authoritarian control of a political community once the people cede the power to the sovereign, so he is quite adamant that the latter must control all opinions. His recognition of the power of public opinion is striking:

It is annexed to the Sovereignty, to be Judge of what Opinions and Doctrines are averse, and what conducing to Peace; and consequently, on what occasions, how farre, and what, men are to be trusted withal, in speaking to Multitudes of people; and who shall examine the Doctrines of all bookes before they be published. For the Actions of men proceed from their Opinions; and in the well governing of Opinions, consisteth the well governing of mens Actions, in order to their Peace and Concord. (124)

The great philosopher of the Scottish Enlightenment, David Hume (1994), is even more trenchant. He argues that all government is based on opinion:

Nothing appears more surprizing to those, who consider human affairs with a philosophical eye, than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few; and the implicit submission, with which men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers. When we enquire by what means this wonder is effected, we shall find, that, as FORCE is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is therefore, on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and popular. (1994: 16)

Hume goes on to argue that three prevalent opinions are the true basis of government: the opinion that the government can take care of the public interest, the opinion that the government has a right to be in power, and the opinion that the right to property of the governed is protected. He concludes: “Upon these three opinions . . . are all governments founded, and all authority of the few over the many” (17).

James Madison, the philosopher of the Constitution of the United States of America, agrees that all governments rest on opinion and says that in every nation there is an advantage in making sure that a government has public opinion on its side. In *Federalist* 49, he writes:

If it be true that all governments rest on opinion, it is no less true that the strength of opinion in each individual, and its practical influence on his conduct, depend much on the number which he supposes to have entertained the same opinion. The reason of man, like man himself, is timid and cautious when left alone, and acquires firmness and confidence, in proportion to the number with which it is associated. When the examples, which fortify opinion, are ancient as well as numerous, they are known to have a double effect. In a nation of philosophers, this consideration ought to be disregarded. A reverence for the laws would be sufficiently inculcated by the voice of an enlightened reason. But a nation of philosophers is as little to be expected as the philosopher race of kings wished for by Plato. And in every other nation, the most rational government will not find it a superfluous advantage to have the prejudices of the community on its side. (Madison, Hamilton, and Jay 1987/1788: 314)

It is important to restate at this juncture the meaning of public opinion as used in this discussion: “collective judgments outside the sphere of government that affect political decision making” (Price 1992: 8). Because much of what happens in international development is shaped by macroeconomic frameworks, it is interesting to note that the person credited with popularizing the phrase “public opinion” (*opinion publique*) is Jacques Necker (1732–1804), French minister of finance in the 1780s. He noticed that the attitude of the French public to the king of France determined whether or not they bought his treasury bills. He figured out that public opinion was thus crucial to the

financial standing of the king and, hence, his power. Necker pointed out that the minister of finance “stands in most need of the good opinion of the people” (quoted in Speier 1950: 380). In Necker’s view, fiscal policies should be pursued with “frankness and publicity,” and the minister of finance should “associate the nation—as it were, in his plans, his operations, and even in the obstacles that he must surmount.” Necker began systematic management of public opinion to reassure public creditors. His great innovation was the regular publishing of fiscal statements (*comptes rendus*). Palmer quotes Necker, who in 1792 said, “Only fools, pure theorists, or apprentices fail to take public opinion into account” (cited in Price 1992: 12).

This statement brings us to the role of public opinion in the stability of financial markets and the entire financial system. The key concept here is public confidence. For instance, at the beginning of a study of the confidence game in Latin American emerging economies, Martinez and Santiso (2003) point out that “at the heart of financial transactions lies a question of confidence. Economists from Smith to Coase have emphasized the importance of confidence, whether to explain the wealth of nations or the birth and death of firms. More recently, Paul Krugman has highlighted the contemporary ‘games of confidence’ that lie behind financial turbulence” (363). Krugman himself says, “The overriding objective of policy must ... be to mollify market sentiment. But, because crises can be self-fulfilling, sound economic policy is not sufficient to gain market confidence; one must cater to the perceptions, the prejudices, and the whims of the market. Or, rather, one must cater to what one hopes will be the perceptions of the market (quoted in Martinez and Santiso 2003: 363).

Those who manage financial markets know that if they do not build public confidence—really favorable, sanguine public opinion—in the markets, investors will flee in droves. This is why all the corporate governance work designed to build public confidence in financial markets is so crucial. Banks and the banking system face a similar challenge. If citizens and customers have faith in a bank or the banking system as a whole—really favorable, sanguine public opinion—savings will be deposited and all will be well. If that confidence is shattered, when public opinion becomes negative, savers will all show up at once to demand their money. A run on the system ensues, and the system might very well collapse. That recognition of the power of public opinion is why heads of central banks always have to speak with the utmost care.

In an important essay on this point published in 1892, Arthur Ellis wrote,

Good credit is public opinion that particular firms, or people in general, can pay up. If opinion goes the other way, credit breaks.... The appetite to buy [shares on the Stock Exchange] is only based on a belief or opinion that there will be others to buy in their turn. That has been the history of all great booms, or bubbles, from the South Sea bubble onwards, and it is also the history of a number of little known booms of which the public have heard little, and would understand little even if they heard.... Facts are “a good horse to ride”; but the knights who tilt in the markets know that opinion is their most trenchant weapon (113–16).

As it is with markets, so it is with politics. Public opinion is a critical force in politics, and it can be a force for social and political change favorable to the poor. Public opinion is normally understood to be important for shaping electoral results. Elections matter in governance not least as a device for accountability. Informed, considered public opinion does not have an impact on governance only at election time. It is at work all the time and leads very often to protests, demonstrations, petitions, even riots and rebellions. Intelligent rulers worry about public opinion all the time; however, they also continuously take the pulse of the public. This phenomenon is sometimes known as the permanent reelection campaign. Above all, in modern governments, such as Great Britain's, the communication function is a fundamental part of the machinery of capable and effective states. Citizens are always being studied, surveyed, and bombarded with messages packaged in various attractive ways (Kohut 2008; Lavrakas and Traugott 2000). It is thus surprising that governance frameworks used by the development community do not as yet include the power of public opinion.

A major thinker who was never in any doubt about any of this is Jeremy Bentham, Utilitarian thinker and the leader of the Philosopher Radicals who pushed successfully for the reform of government in nineteenth-century England. Bentham's argument regarding how public opinion helps to secure good and accountable government can be summarized as follows. The goal of constitutionalism is to make the state pursue the greatest happiness of the greatest number of the citizenry. However, the constitution maker cannot afford to assume that human beings are essentially selfless, altruistic creatures. It is far more sensible to assume self-interest. The task, then, is to make the few who govern on behalf of the many in a representative democracy pursue the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Crucial in this regard is to organize a coincidence of duty and interest, and this organization is done by making the operative power of the governing few rigorously subject to the constitutive power of the subject many. The best method to deploy between frequent elections is to publicize all the activities of the governing few. This, together with a free press, will bring official wrongdoing to the attention of what Bentham calls the "Public Opinion Tribunal." This tribunal is like a court composed of all citizens who take note of a public issue (including others overseas who do the same). The subcommittees are everywhere, witnessing everything, telling other citizens, and discussing what is going on. Once it is made aware of a matter, the tribunal will debate the issue and pass judgment, as well as make suggestions for better governance. This tribunal is all-powerful. Not only can it impose the moral sanction of ill repute, but also it can carry out acts of civil disobedience. Finally, it can also withdraw its allegiance and thus bring the system of government to an end. Such is the force of public opinion that, with the spread of public information, education, and understanding, through free and fair debate, public policy will eventually coincide with the greatest happiness of the greatest number (Bentham 1983, 1990).

The ever-evolving and much disputed framework for achieving capable, responsive, and accountable government in developing countries that are badly run is at bottom a theory of change, one that is supposed to provide an adaptable blueprint for changing political communities in which elite interests crowd out the general welfare into ones in which the preponderance of public resources will go toward securing the general welfare. That task is massive. If real change is to happen, whatever theory of change is developed must have robust explanatory power. This discussion now turns to a detailed explanation of why the power of public opinion—in the overarching context described by Bentham earlier—is a fundamental part of the answer.

The Centrality of Communication Influence

Public opinion processes matter if governance reform initiatives are to succeed. If they matter, then deliberate work to influence public opinion will matter as well.

Abundant evidence suggests that governance reform initiatives depend for their success largely on crucial stakeholders, and they always need to have these stakeholders go through noncoerced changes in attitudes, opinions, or behavior. The only trouble is that initiative managers do not always tease these needs out and call in the relevant expert support. These expectations of different publics or stakeholders are often signaled by some well-known, often loaded words or phrases, which need unpacking. It is only when they are unpacked that one can see what influencing challenges they portend for each initiative. The set in table 2.1 comes from a survey of World Bank project appraisal documents for different governance initiatives.

Table 2.1. Examples of Communication Influence Requirements of Governance Projects

Where the Critical Stakeholders Are	Where You Need Them to Be
Deep disagreement	Consensus
Indifference to public opinion	Active dialogue
Opacity	Transparency, access to information
Government doesn't care/elite opposition	Cultivating political will and using public will to generate political will
Focus on elite priorities	Responsiveness to citizen needs
Political interference from vested interests	Political buy-in
Isolated reformers	Broad pro-reform coalitions
Apathy	Active participation
Tepid support	Broad ownership
Disobedience	Increased compliance
Divided and weak communities	Effective demand by citizens
Public backlash	Public support
Voiceless and ineffectual citizens	Citizen voice and oversight
Widespread cynicism and despair	Public trust and confidence

Source: Author.

Unless the communication influence work is done, critical stakeholders will not move from the left-hand side of the table to the right—where they are required to be if the project is to succeed. In addition, a qualitative survey of public sector reform task team leaders in the World Bank conducted in late 2006 revealed that technocratic reforms almost always run into the following communication influence challenges (Garcia 2007):

- Encountering shallow political will: Many reforms fail or are reversed because political support is shallow. Many reforms are started with one single champion in government. When that person leaves, the reforms are reversed. Clearly, there is the need to build deeper and broader leadership support.
- Facing weak pro-reform coalitions: Many reforms fail because the coalitions that support them are weak and are not able to overcome the resistance of entrenched interests.
- Gaining the support of middle managers in public agencies: Many reforms fail because middle managers resist the reforms. It is not that middle managers are inherently conservative, but they need to be won over for reforms to succeed.
- Overcoming hostile public opinion: Many reform efforts collapse because public opinion is hostile. In some countries, this hostility has led to protests, riots, and even loss of power by reform leaders. Clearly, this adverse opinion is a major concern.

Communication influence is clearly needed for dealing successfully with all these challenges. This need is especially the case where the usual tools of the technocracy—manipulating incentive structures—turn out to be ineffective. The task is how to bring about noncoerced, nonmanipulative opinion and, hopefully, behavior change through engagement, information sharing, discussion, and deliberation. No matter how excellent the technocratic work is—and it is of major importance—without these efforts at communication influencing governance, reform efforts are not likely to succeed or be sustainable.

The same argument covers so-called demand-side initiatives (that is, initiatives designed to generate citizen demand for accountability and good governance). The leading intellectual frameworks undergirding this work recognize the crucial role of information and communication processes, as well as the communication media. Two of them will be discussed briefly.

The first is the empowerment framework. Empowerment is defined as “the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives” (Narayan 2005: 5). The conceptual framework contains the following building blocks:

- Institutional climate
- Social and political structures
- Poor people’s individual assets and capabilities
- Poor people’s collective assets and capabilities.

Communication influence challenges run through this framework, but the one explicit discussion of information needs falls under “Access to Information” as part of the necessary institutional climate for empowerment. On this point, Narayan (2005), the lead author of the framework, writes, “Information is power. Two-way information flows from government to citizens and from citizens to government are critical for responsible citizenship and responsive and accountable governance. Informed citizens are better equipped to take advantage of opportunities, access services, exercise their rights, negotiate effectively, and hold state and non-state actors accountable” (80). Although all this rings true, this question arises: How do we do all these things? Not surprisingly, the empowerment framework does not tell us—a clear gap that needs filling.

The second framework is the ARVIN framework (World Bank n.d.). It aims to synthesize the conditions that affect the ability of civil society organizations to “engage in public debate and in systems of social accountability.” The enabling elements in the framework are the following:

- **Association:** the freedom of citizens to associate
- **Resources:** their ability to mobilize resources to fulfill the objectives of their organizations
- **Voice:** their ability to formulate and express opinion
- **Information:** their access to information (necessary for their ability to exercise voice, engage in negotiation, and gain access to resources)
- **Negotiation:** the existence of spaces and rules of engagement for negotiation, participation, and public debate.

As with the empowerment framework, the communication influence challenges of the ARVIN framework are clear and enormous, but the framework does not spell out how to deal with these challenges, which is, assuredly, a gap.

Particular interest surrounds the use of social accountability mechanisms as part of the role of communication influence in generating demand for good governance and accountability. Several social accountability (SA) tools have gained widespread acceptance and application in development today, particularly as mechanisms for improving the delivery of basic services: for example, the Citizen Report Cards, the Community Scorecard, the Social Audit, Participatory and Transparent Monitoring, and the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey.

To capture first-hand knowledge on the use of these SA tools systematically under real-world conditions, qualitative and quantitative surveys were conducted on behalf of the World Bank’s Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP).

For the qualitative survey (Garcia 2007), 15 task team leaders and country sector specialists were interviewed. Respondents were selected on the basis of their experience in using social accountability mechanisms in their operational work in various regions of the world.

Main findings include the following:

- Access to information is indispensable but insufficient.
- Securing political commitment is necessary to achieve real and sustainable change.
- Lack of effective public advocacy and communication strategies weakens the impact of social accountability.
- Incentives influence stakeholder attitudes toward social accountability initiatives.
- Participatory spaces amplify citizen voice and build confidence in citizen engagement.
- Strategic partnership with the media is essential in generating citizen demand and eliciting public response.

The quantitative study (Petrie 2007) was conducted online from June to August 2007. The sample consisted of social accountability practitioners of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe, and the survey instrument was translated into four languages. Main findings include the following:

- Support of social accountability is strong among NGOs and donors but low among government stakeholders.
- Insufficient government support and funding are key drivers behind the lack of effectiveness of existing social accountability tools.
- Receiving support from local community groups and the government is most important to practitioner social accountability work.
- Overall, practitioners are generally upbeat about their past work and are even more enthusiastic about the potential for social accountability programs in the future.

This section has tried to show how public opinion is a critical factor in governance and how governance reform initiatives depend crucially on the attitudes and opinions of key stakeholders, hence requiring communication influence work. This discussion moves now to the second of this chapter's two arguments: the democratic public sphere and the architecture of governance.

Why the Public Sphere Matters

This section will argue that a democratic public sphere is a critical part of the architecture of good governance.

What Kind of Caesar?

Faith in the possibilities of public opinion cannot be blind or naive. When Enlightenment political philosophers such as Hume began to argue that public opinion created obligations for rulers that those rulers had to heed, it was a claim made on behalf of the growing educated middle classes in Europe and

America, and it was a means of challenging the claim to absolutism by kings. This growing educated middle class met in salons and coffee houses and read the same periodicals and books. They discussed public affairs, and majority views crystallized around public issues. This emergence was the birth of the idea of public opinion as a critical force in politics. At the time, there were very few doubts about the virtue and competence of public opinion.

This confidence was to change. By the late nineteenth century, reform movements were becoming successful. The franchise was spreading, particularly adult male franchise. The idea of public opinion, just like the idea of democracy, now had to embrace the great masses of the people. But can one be sanguine about the virtue and competence of public opinion when that concept is inclusive of the views of the great unwashed masses? Skeptical voices began to be raised, including notable philosophers of liberty like John Stuart Mill (1946). He and others raised fears regarding the tyranny of majority opinion, especially where it is *uninformed* or *unconsidered*, two words that matter a great deal.

We have to be frank; public opinion is a powerful but problematic force. It has pathologies: for example, blind prejudice, irrational fears, and ethnic and sectarian prisms. Many readers will be aware, for instance, of an oft-repeated criticism of politics in many developing countries, that it is not issue based because primordial sentiments and deep divisions in society play too large a role. Thus, the public policy question “Where do we build a power plant?” is not merely about the political economy of a power plant but about ethnic, sectarian, or regional rivalries as well. What that criticism—the lack of an issue-based politics—is really after is a process of rational debate and discussion about public affairs. The real issue is how one encourages the evolution of informed and considered public opinion.

The answers that democrats gave in the nineteenth century remain the proper ones, for the two problems are connected. If one is willing to trust ordinary citizens to elect their leaders, why is one not willing to take their opinions seriously? If the people need help, then help them to get better at fulfilling their duties to the republic as the body of electors. Democrats and reformers thus set about thinking through how to help the people. An outstanding example is Jeremy Bentham. In *Political Tactics*, he directly addresses the issue of the fallibility of public opinion and argues that the fallibility of the public should never be an excuse to set up a system of government that insulates representatives from the influence of public opinion. What is proper is to act as though the public were infallible (Mill 1999: 144). If one objects that this might make rulers “disposed to sacrifice their real opinions to the general opinion,” his answer is that what is needed is mental courage and strength of character. Gradually, people will learn to distinguish “between the clamour of the multitude, which is dissipated in noise, and the enlightened opinion of the wise, which survives transitory errors” (144–45). He concludes confidently that “it is, therefore, in a correct knowledge of public opinion, that the means must be found for resisting it when it is considered ill founded: the appeal lies

to itself—as from Philip misinformed, to Philip correctly informed. It is not always according to public opinion that an enlightened and virtuous man will decide—but he will presume, in consulting general utility, that public opinion will take the same course; and there is no stronger moral probability in a country where discussion is free” (145).

Bentham (1983), as well as the other reformers and democrats, provided two solutions that are still relevant today and ought to be a part of the governance agenda: first, you spread good basic literacy, by compulsion if necessary; second, you organize your public realm such that citizens have access to official information and a free press as a forum for information, debate, and discussion.

There is an elitist tradition of thought that remains skeptical about the capacity of ordinary citizens to acquire the information necessary to make sound decisions on election day or to form rational, considered opinions (Lippmann 1922). Others, such as Dewey (1927), have countered that citizens do not need to be policy wonks to be able to form sound opinions about public affairs; in any event, opinion leaders and others have information shortcuts that they use, and the threshold requirements for civic competence cannot be set absurdly high (Delli Carpini 2004). The discussion here agrees with the latter view, but, in any case, this is a foundational question. Once one accepts the moral equality of all citizens in a political community, one has to accept their right to have a say in how they are governed. The question then becomes how ordinary citizens can be helped to be better able to discharge the obligations of citizenship, including the forming of informed and considered opinions on public affairs. That question takes us back to the solutions offered by Bentham and others: the spread of basic education—which nobody disagrees with today—and the constitution of the public realm/sphere.

What Is the Public Sphere?

In a small, reasonably inclusive political community, the public sphere or realm is a physical site where members gather from time to time to talk about common concerns, agree what to do about them, and go and get these things done. In old Hollywood Westerns, for instance, when a bank in a small town is robbed, citizens rush to the sheriff’s office to discuss the event and what to do. Very often, they agree to form a posse and go after the robbers. History furnishes us with a number of classic examples of the public sphere:

- The agora in ancient Athens
- The Roman Forum
- The New England town meeting in pre-Independence America
- The African-American church in periods of political struggle
- The gathering of the tribe(s) in stateless communities in Africa and other parts of the world.

So we can agree that the public sphere is a site where members of a political community gather to discuss common concerns. When the discussion

produces agreement, it is as though the many become one. A public emerges; a common will emerges. An emissary can say of a decision, for example, “The community has asked me to tell you that it is of the firm view that if you do not release the hostages war will be declared at its next meeting.” The many have become a unity.

The problem with the idea of the public sphere arises once we leave the world of political communities whose members can fit into the same physical space and enter those whose members cannot all fit into the same space. As we all know, most modern political communities are vast entities—some are as vast as continents. In such situations how does one speak of a public sphere? The modern answer is that the means of mass communication re-create that open site where citizens gather to discuss common concerns. The modern public sphere is mediated by the mass media system in each country. We have moved from knowable political communities to imagined ones.

The mass media can indeed be said to act as the key institutions of the modern public sphere, but they are not the only players. As even notable media scholars agree, reality is not completely mediated by the media (McQuail 2005). Citizens witness and participate in public events and affairs directly. Above all, ordinary citizens talk about public affairs all the time. People are affected by the acts of public authorities and public events. People meet all the time in the normal traffic and intercourse of life in any community. When they meet they will naturally talk about public affairs. As they talk, public opinion will form, albeit slowly if the machinery of the modern media is absent. This phenomenon is now known as *everyday talk*, but it is an old insight.

It is possible to argue that there is no political community without some kind of public sphere. For unless every citizen is locked in solitary confinement, people will meet up for all kinds of reasons in the normal traffic of life; and where two or three are gathered there shall be talk of common concerns—or politics! It is true, nonetheless, that the kind of public sphere that will be a force for good governance and accountability will be a *democratic public sphere*. Before one stipulates what that is, however, it is important to appreciate that there is an intimate connection between the idea of civil society and the idea of a democratic public sphere. If civil society is the dense associational life outside the state, it needs a certain kind of public sphere to thrive. For the exemplary users of the public sphere are not really ordinary citizens acting alone but are those acting in civil society organizations, especially social movements. It is in the free and open public sphere that social movements acquire a public voice, fight for recognition, assert themselves, seek to shape public opinion, influence leaders and policy makers, and bring about change. Every successful social movement is a creature of a certain kind of public sphere. As Sales (1991: 308) argues, “[T]he capacity to form public opinion is closely linked to the existence of a vital civil society capable of developing without constraints. . . . [C]onversely, civil society can only develop in a system

which recognizes freedom of opinion and freedom of association. That is why, despite the distortions and manipulations to which it is subjected, despite its trivialization and reification by surveys, the capacity for public opinion formation and the sensitivity of power to these changes are two of the fundamental characteristics of democratic systems.”

It is clear, then, that the idea of the public sphere is normative; we are talking about a democratic public sphere, not an authoritarian one. The idea is simple. One of the ways good and accountable governance is secured durably is to have in the political community a domain of free flow of information, free expression, argument, debate, and discussion about common concerns. Such a domain is a grand corrective of political evil, and it tends to promote responsive and accountable governance. It is the idea of truly inclusive, participatory governance as the best security against misrule. Leading political thinkers have promoted this idea: Jeremy Bentham, John Dewey, Hannah Arendt, and Jürgen Habermas. Within development, versions of the idea can be traced to Amartya Sen and Joseph Stiglitz.

What, then, are the characteristics of a democratic public sphere? They are as follows:

- Constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties, especially freedom of expression, opinion, and assembly
- A media system that is free, plural, and not under state control (including independent public service broadcasting on the BBC model)
- Access to official information (that is, freedom of information legislation and a culture of transparency and openness)
- A public political culture of free debate and discussion on issues of common concern
- Equal access to the public sphere: voice, having a say, especially the protection of minorities.

Participants in the democratic public sphere include citizens, individuals living in the country, the state and its organs, foreign powers (via public diplomacy initiatives), businesses with a social concern, social movements, and other civil society organizations. The democratic public sphere is also undergirded by certain principles:

- The public use of reason: one must advance reasons for policy preferences (Kant 1784)
- Openness to public argument (although people will always use emotional appeals)
- Respecting facts and evidence in public debate
- Ability to compromise
- Right of reply, the fairness doctrine, and other principles of fair public debate
- The principles and ideas of socially responsible media, such as truthfulness, accuracy, fairness, and objectivity (McQuail 2005: 172).

It is important to note that these are learned behaviors; they evolve over time and are always contested. As was pointed out earlier, the democratic public sphere is a normative ideal. No country is a perfect example.

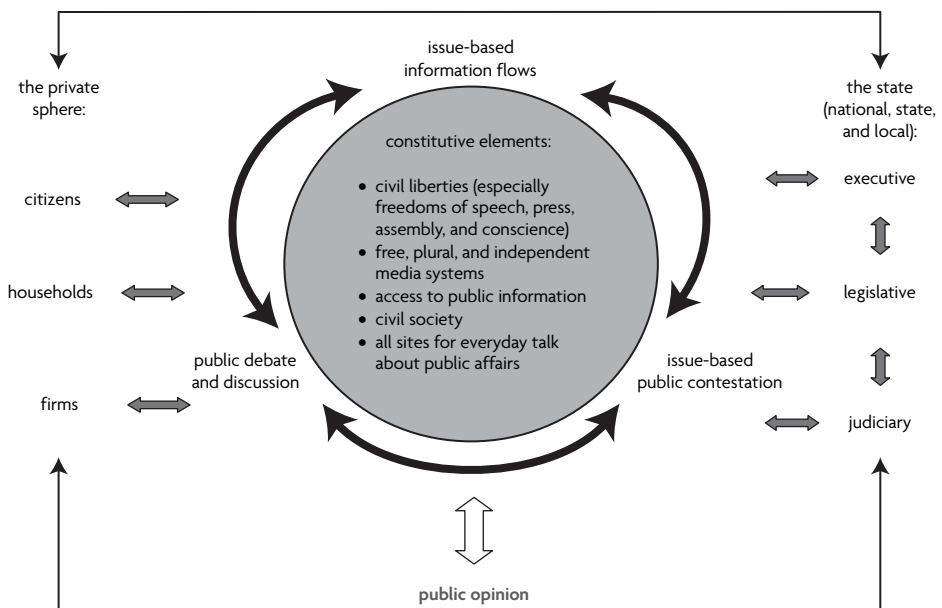
It is important to see, first, that the democratic public sphere is a force for capable, responsive, and accountable government, and it is a permanent, self-acting force. Second, it is a structural fundamental for any governance system keen on promoting accountability on a permanent basis. The only opponents of democratic public spheres are dictators and authoritarian regimes.

Figure 2.1 sums up what has been said about the nature of the democratic public sphere. Note that in authoritarian and totalitarian states, the constitutive elements of the sphere are either absent or very weak. Particular attention should be drawn to the dynamic element in the democratic public sphere: the process by which informed, considered public opinion is produced. This process is, as we have seen, one of the most powerful forces for good governance and accountability. Yet it is a process that needs constant work and vigilance everywhere. It is about the creation and sustenance of a culture of free, open, and rational public debate about public issues. Powerful forces, peculiar to every political community, are always trying to subvert this process for their own selfish reasons.

Constitutive Elements and the Governance Agenda

Three of the constitutive elements of the democratic public sphere do not need to detain us. The first is the civil liberties agenda. Since the signing of the

Figure 2.1. The National Democratic Public Sphere



Source: Author's drawing.

Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, no country today objects to basic civil liberties as a matter of principle. The actual securing of these liberties in individual countries has been the focus of brave struggles across the world. All we can say is that progress is being made, although much remains to be done. Brutal regimes still scar the conscience of humanity and remind us how feeble our efforts often are. Of greater concern has been the view often expressed by a variety of technocrats: that the priority in developing countries is economic growth; one worries about rights once a country has become better off. Happily, this view is now discredited. As Sen (1999) and others have shown, the object of development is the full human being. The idea that it is all right for citizens to be brutalized so long as the gross domestic product is burgeoning is now generally regarded as a crass misplacement of priorities. Moreover, it has been shown by Sen and others that polities with free speech and a free press provoke greater government responsiveness. Famines, for instance, tend not to happen.

The second constitutive element of the democratic public sphere that need not detain us is this: sites of everyday talk. All that we need to appreciate is that everyday talk is an important part of how public opinion forms and hence a critical process in politics and governance. At homes, theaters, work places, wine bars, coffee shops, and other public gathering places, citizens will talk about public affairs. Local opinion leaders will hold forth on this or that topic, shaping the opinions of those around them. Debates will happen. Father will disagree with son; friends will argue. Then the process rises to a semiformal level: debating societies in schools, colleges, universities, and clubs discuss public affairs all the time.

The third constitutive element of the democratic public sphere that need not detain us is the vibrancy of civil society. Increasingly at the heart of the governance agenda in international development today is a concern with building up the associational life in developing countries as countervailing centers of power. The work generally typifies the demand side of governance, and tremendous resources are flowing into that work—an excellent development and one that ought to continue. Those who work on the strengthening of civil society need to understand that a democratic public sphere is crucial to their efforts. For without that deliberative space, associational life will atrophy and social movements will be far less effective. True voice is a public sphere phenomenon. As a result, these efforts need to be pulled together and coordinated much more than they are now.

This brings us to the fourth constitutive element of the democratic public sphere: access to official information by citizens or the transparency revolution. Much work has been done over the years to show that a culture of transparency and access to official information help the fight against bad rulers and corruption—for the simple reason that evil deeds need secrecy (Islam, Djankov, and McLeish 2005; Stiglitz 1999). Pushing for open government, as well as freedom of information legislation, is now a central pillar of the governance

agenda. Beginning with the first act granting freedom of the press, adopted in Sweden in 1776, a large number of countries now have freedom of information laws. (For an online database of these laws, see <http://www.ijnet.org/director.aspx?p=home>.)

Although these are all excellent advancements, one problem is the tendency of many of those in the so-called access-to-information community to see the issue as an isolated one, even an information technology challenge. They often forget that a culture of transparent and open government will not be created or sustained without the other constitutive elements of the democratic public sphere. Publicity, for instance, is vital, an insight as old as Bentham's reflections in the early nineteenth century. The media system, associational life, and everyday talk are all crucial aspects of how a culture of transparency has an effect.

We come to the final constitutive element of the democratic public sphere: free, plural, and independent media systems. Two concepts need to be clarified immediately. The first is the idea of the media system, by which is meant simply the totality of the media in the country as an aspect of the political system. The media system can be fragmentary, consistent, or confusing, but it is always dynamic, since it is always evolving (for an elaborate view, see the introduction of Hallin and Mancini 2004). The second is the ideological debate about what the formula "free, plural, and independent" might mean. In this discussion, it does not mean simply the commercial press; an independent public service broadcaster on the BBC model would qualify. When one has cleared these points, it is important to realize that the media system is seen by many as the main institution of the public sphere. For instance, McQuail (2005) describes the public sphere as follows:

The conceptual "space" that exists in a society outside the immediate circle of private life and the walls of enclosed institutions and organizations pursuing their own (albeit sometimes public) goals. In this space, the possibility exists for public association and debate leading to the formation of public opinion and political movements and parties that can hold private interests accountable. The media are now probably the key institution of the public sphere, and the "quality" will depend on the quality of the media. Taken to extremes, certain structural tendencies of media, including concentration, commercialization and globalization, are harmful to the public sphere. (502)

The question thus becomes: Where do the media stand in the governance agenda today? Were one to ask governance specialists active in international development today if the media system has an impact on quality of governance, probably most of them would say yes. If one were to ask whether or not they should be doing something about it, perhaps half would say, "Not sure, and not sure what to do anyway." A major stumbling block is power politics. In every political community, the media system is part of the configuration of power. Totalitarian or authoritarian regimes, in particular, tend to see any attempt to create free, plural, and independent media systems as attacks on

their grip on power. They are loath to see this as part of the business of international development. They shout “Interference!” when donors push the issue. This protest also creates particular difficulties for multilateral institutions like the World Bank and the United Nations, whose mandates forbid any interference in domestic politics.

Yet the work goes on here and there, and the evidence mounts that the media system, if liberalized, is a factor for good governance. There is growing evidence in the new political economy literature (see, for example, chapter 10 of the *World Development Report 2002* in Bank 2002; Islam, Djankov, and McLeish 2005; Norris 2005), and the evidence base for the importance of the news media to good governance keeps getting larger as well.

Nonetheless, one particular area of challenge is that the governance agenda does not yet fully embrace the sheer scope of what is involved in the necessary work of building free, plural, and independent media systems to secure responsive and accountable governance. The work involved is so multidimensional that some like Paul Mitchell (2007) of the World Bank have argued that it ought to be a sector in development in its own right. Some recent research has pointed to the scope of work needed in this area. For instance, the BBC World Service Trust and a couple of leading African universities recently surveyed the media sector in Africa under the Africa Media Development Initiative and identified the following areas of need:

- Regulatory reform and work on the enabling environment to create media systems independent of state control
- Low levels of professionalization of both journalists and managers
- Poor technical equipment and facilities
- Weak financial sustainability of media enterprises
- Low levels of local programming and content.

This area is clearly one where much work remains to be done regarding the *why* and the *how* of media development as a part of the governance agenda.

The Dynamic Elements of the Public Sphere and the Governance Agenda

One often hears the call for something called open, inclusive, and participatory governance. It is universally agreed as something worth aiming for. What is not realized as often is that open, inclusive, and participatory governance cannot be secured and maintained unless one has, among other things, a democratic public sphere. Nothing makes this point clearer than the dynamic element of the public sphere. As figure 2.1 has made clear, the dynamic element of the public sphere is what produces informed, considered public opinion through issue-based information flows, issue-based public contestation, debate, and discussion. This process creates competent citizens, citizens able to hold rulers and representatives to account. This process keeps rogues honest,

and its beauty lies in that, once the elements are in place, it has the potential to stay in perpetual motion. It should, and can be, a permanent force for responsive and accountable government. Above all, this process is relevant in all political communities, not simply in developing countries. One can always improve the quality of public debate and discussion in any public sphere. The work never stops. The machinery always needs oiling and tending and strengthening. To adapt Voltaire, the price of good government is eternal vigilance.

We thus have a bill of four particulars:

1. *Principles of rational public debate and discussion.* Many developing countries are deeply divided polities: Ethnicity and sectarianism are both rife. Several countries are just coming out of conflict. Communal distrust and intergroup divisions are all sharp. In such environments, it is of fundamental importance to promote rational public debate and discussion. Otherwise, every policy question, every reform proposal will be viewed from the prism of ethnicity or sectarianism. It is important, for instance, to work to promote the ethics of socially responsible journalism. Media policy needs to secure free access to the airwaves by all groups, all voices. It is also crucial to promote a culture of rational public debate, which should be a universal commitment to public argument using evidence and reason and not a reliance on the authority of rival deities or other primeval prejudices. Efforts to promote public deliberation such as phone-in shows and deliberative opinion polls are some of the possible approaches.
2. *Training skilled intermediaries for the public sphere.* Two feeder groups are central to the workings of the dynamic element of the public sphere. In one group are those who take what is hidden into the public domain as *exposés*. They can be leakers of secrets, whistleblowers, or investigative journalists. Happily, efforts to train or protect these groups are now being recognized as key parts of the governance agenda. The second group of feeders is not as recognized. In this group are the skilled interpreters. There is so much that ordinary citizens need to know to execute their duties as citizens that is too technical for them to grasp without the help of specialists able to make the arcane accessible. This is not a question of mere literacy. As George Bernard Shaw said in his play *The Doctor's Dilemma*, every profession is a conspiracy against the laity, and the professions all rely on abstruse, impenetrable language. So there will always be a need for those who can be interpreters for the rest of us. Examples of good work in this area can be found in public involvement in the crafting of annual budgets. Increasingly, effective work is being done to explain budgets to ordinary citizens to empower them, but there is much more to do in that direction.
3. *The spread of advocacy and public argument skills.* It is now generally accepted that a docile and apathetic citizenry will be badly governed, and it will deserve to be badly governed. Citizens will not be effective in the face of bad government if they cannot make their voices heard, make a case,

deploy arguments, or use the media skillfully. They need to know how to do these things. Work of this kind is currently being done at the community level, but that is not enough. Citizen voice must be able to operate at scale, depending on what level of the government needs to be assailed and compelled to listen. Not all issues can be settled at the community level. Depending on the issue the local government might be the relevant focus of the citizen campaign; or it might be the provincial or state government or the national government at the center. The important point is that the spread of advocacy skills for operating at scale is a fundamental aspect of the agenda.

4. *The communication capacity of governments.* It must be accepted that the state is a major part of the public sphere, and the public sphere is democratic to the extent that the state does not dominate it. The state has legitimate interests to pursue in the public sphere. It has to listen carefully to the public, take the pulse of the citizenry regularly and on different issues, and put its own point of view across. The state has to do all these things competently and skillfully. State communication capacity at any level is an important part of state capability. *A state that cannot engage in effective, two-way communication both internally and externally cannot be a capable and effective state.* Yet today ministries of information and similar outfits in the governments of developing countries are mostly backwaters characterized by lack of skills, lack of equipment, low pay, and low morale. The anecdotal evidence is compelling that many reform efforts are hampered because of the lack of government communication capacity. Filling this gap is a fundamental aspect of the agenda, for in the leading postindustrial states today, modern government is an enormous communication operation—sharp, alert, responsive, and sophisticated. Governments of developing countries that have to face regular elections are asking for support to build communication capacity. Work in this area might also be a good way of negotiating the opening of the public sphere and, especially, the media system. This is clearly an area in which public sector reform specialists and communication specialists need to work together.

Conclusion

It should be clear that we have two exceedingly useful complements to the excellent work being done to secure capable, responsive, and accountable governments in developing countries: (1) the power of informed and considered public opinion as a critical force for good governance and (2) the power of a democratic public sphere as a fundamental part of the architecture of good governance. It is also clear that these boons will not, on their own, descend from the heavens. They ought to be essential parts of any serious agenda for social and political change to help the poor.

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Citizen Voice and the Public Sphere: Scoping Communication Challenges

Thomas Jacobson and Antonio G. Lambino II

Introduction: Citizen Voice and Governance Reform

This chapter advocates a political analysis of communication's contribution to governance reform. At one level, Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action is used as a framework to reaffirm the fundamental importance of civil society's role in determining government priorities. It is a theory widely known for its discursive, that is, communicative, approach to problems of democracy (Habermas 1984, 1987). This highly acclaimed contemporary theory is broad ranging and addresses philosophical as well as political and communication processes, strictly speaking, but the theory does offer practical guidance in analyzing communication opportunities and challenges. First, the theory's philosophical elements justify the recent, increasing emphasis on voice in development. In addition, programmatic recommendations can be drawn from its analysis of the structure of the public sphere. Understanding this structure, and its complexity, is essential to any understanding of democratic prospects for change in governance, in general as well as in specific cases.

At another, more schematic, level, the chapter uses tools recently designed for analyzing social and political change. The World Bank's *Sourcebook on Policy Reform* (2007a) provides guidance by defining political analysis in the context of development work, and the Bank's *Tools for Institutional, Political, and Social Analysis: A Sourcebook for Development Practitioners* (2007b) offers more specific techniques for policy reform research. The Overseas Development Institute has developed a toolkit of methods for analysis of relevant social and political contexts, *Mapping Political Context: A Toolkit for Civil Society*

Organizations (Nash, Hudson, and Luttrell 2006). These reports and others are mined here for guidance on methods.

The chapter begins with a more general discussion of theory that is relevant to the analysis of voice for governance reform and then moves to tools that may be useful in advancing the role of voice in governance reform, by scoping communication challenges in relation to given social and political contexts. The chapter briefly reviews past approaches to communication, governance, and development within the donor community at large and the World Bank, as well as among the social sciences. Next, a few key elements of Habermas's discursive, or dialogical, political theory are reviewed. Finally, a framework of tools and ideas for assessing communication challenges that face governance reform efforts is presented. Some of these tools are not dialogical in an immediate sense, including mass-mediated methods. However, the theory provides an orientation for the political analysis of communication that reveals the manner in which all forms of communication can be employed for democratic purposes.

The Centrality of Citizen Voice in Expressing Public Will for Development

Development work has often taken a narrowly technocratic approach to strategic as well as tactical program planning. The communication processes used in technical programs in the past have been more or less appropriate to these narrow purposes. Studies of communication and political development in early research on modernization adopted a purview that was in certain ways very broad (Lerner 1958; Pye 1963). One finds analysis of social, political, and economic changes over time and in relation to one another using complex theoretical frameworks. However, the design of communication programs was primarily done on a less complex basis in the spirit of advertising or public relations campaigns having the purpose of "diffusing" technical innovations (Rogers 1962, 1983). Project managers used careful message design, audience segmentation, and social marketing techniques with the aim of promoting effective publicity (Kotler and Zaltman 1971; Mody 1991; Andreasen 1994). These communication practices usually circumvented communities and citizens not only during program strategic planning, but also in most of the tactical planning and implementation phases of projects.

Communication scholars, field practitioners, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) moved steadily away from this diffusion paradigm of development between 1970 and the turn of the century in pursuit of sustainable and participatory paradigms for development (Salmen 1989; White, Nair, and Ascroft 1994; Jacobson and Servaes 1999). In place of "top-down" development communication planning, or at least in addition to it, advocates of the sustainable and participatory approaches advocated "bottom-up" planning. Communication

processes used in service of this participatory paradigm shifted from having an emphasis on message design to having an emphasis on dialogue between stakeholders. Much of this work was inspired by the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1968, 1973).

By the mid-1990s, elements within large donors including the World Bank had embraced a participatory paradigm, at least in part, and had started contributing to this sort of work (World Bank 1996). Alfred Stiglitz summarized this view in a 1998 speech: “I will argue that broadly participatory processes (such as ‘voice,’ openness and transparency) promote truly successful long-term development” (Stiglitz 2001: 221).

Many of the largest donors today profess the view that communities and citizens should be centrally involved in program planning whenever possible because they are most likely to understand relevant traditional knowledge and local past practices (U.K. Department for International Development 2006; Green and Chambers 2006; Pruitt and Thomas 2007). In other words, they know things. Communities and citizens should be involved also because they must “own” new programs if anticipated changes are to take root and operate on a sustainable basis. Communities and citizens themselves must operate not only as program beneficiaries but also as program partners.

A key element of these insights is the recognition that participation is precisely voice. It goes beyond narrow technical consultations between specialists and beyond periodic citizen plebiscites. Again, Stiglitz argues a view now widely appreciated: “Participation does not refer simply to voting. Participatory processes must entail open dialogue and broadly active civic engagement, and it requires that individuals have a voice in the decisions that affect them” (2001: 223).

On the ground, this is all still difficult. Governance reform faces demanding challenges resulting from the fact that social-economic change inevitably requires negotiation and compromise between competing stakeholders. Noble-sounding terms like *voice* and *good governance* earn their pay only when participatory and governance processes yield hard-fought gains in which perceived winners and losers are able to come to terms. But change is under way.

In sum, the Bank and the donor community at large have made progress in listening to stakeholders. Nevertheless, there still is considerable room for improvement. The shift toward full recognition of the importance of governance reform has only just begun. A more systematic theoretical explanation of the nature of voice could strengthen justifications for an emphasis on voice. Programmatic work could also benefit from additional methods used to analyze voice and participation in project design and implementation, in civil society organizations, and among publics. From a communication perspective, these new methods could be usefully added to message design, audience segmentation, and effects assessment, as well as other methods that have been successfully used for many years.

Public Will and the Public Sphere

Elsewhere in this volume, Sina Odugbemi argues the importance of public opinion for governance reform and poverty reduction, in part by reviewing classical political theorists. Political theorists today make similar arguments, which are being updated. Democratic political theory has recently taken a new interest in the role of public discussion in securing democratic freedom (Dryzek 1990; Cohen and Arato 1995; Benhabib 1996; Gutmann and Thompson 1996). Abstract studies of the balance of power between branches of government and behavioral analyses of citizen self-interest, which were paradigmatic in political studies during the middle part of the past century, have given way to studies of processes through which citizens actually provide input to governance. These studies ask these questions: What role does citizen speech play in the formation of public opinion? Who undertakes this speech and to what effect? How do social movements earn a place at the table?

From a media and communications perspective, this turn provides a much-needed update to post–World War II theories of press-state relations that were based on media ownership models. The definitive English-language analysis of this type was *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm 1963), which classified press-state models, including mass media generally, in relation to the kinds of governments in which these models could exist. For example, the “libertarian” media model, in which free speech was guaranteed by private ownership, could exist only within a democratic state, whereas a “Soviet” model was suitable for a communist state. For many years, the libertarian model represented the system that young democracies needed to provide the communication infrastructure required for successful democracy. It was essentially assumed in such models that as long as the government was kept away from press regulation, free speech would take care of itself. To this end, John Milton’s argument “Who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?”¹ has been interpreted to mean an encounter in the free marketplace of ideas. On the libertarian model, it is private ownership of mass media that is supposed to guarantee a market place of free ideas that will, in the long run, tend toward the truth.

Today, this analysis of press-state relations is considered by most analysts to be dated, naive about the effects of bottom-line priorities in media companies, and probably ignorant of the cultural complexity of human communication generally (Bates 1995; Nerone 1995). The criterion of private ownership is no longer thought to be sufficient in itself to guarantee the kind of public discussion democracy requires. Nor does the ownership model alone provide a means for evaluating exactly what the press must accomplish to serve democratic ends. Do stories that sell newspapers suffice? Is “man bites dog” news? What about ghastly disasters from localities around the world? This sort of reporting is a thin gruel for the information needs of a democratic citizenry in the twenty-first century—in any country. Is there a role for social responsibility in the

mass media? Does “civic” journalism have a useful role to play? What kinds of news coverage and what kinds of citizen voice are needed if there is to be public discussion worthy of the name?

Today, the most widely acclaimed analysis of these questions is that of German sociologist Jürgen Habermas (1989). Habermas’s analysis holds true to the democratic intent of classical political theorists, as well as earlier twentieth-century theorists like Dewey and Arendt. However, he intends to update this tradition with a theory of politics that is contemporary in philosophical terms. Habermas wants to justify intuitions regarding justice and rights in a way that is more culturally sensitive than earlier theory. In so doing, he also means his work to have a practical intent, that is, normative as well as critical value in terms of analyzing power.

The analysis of the public sphere by Habermas (1984, 1987) is rooted in a theory that analyzes human action, that is, communication, broadly speaking. Very briefly, it begins with the argument that the possibility of human speech rests on an assumption, usually unconscious, regarding reciprocal social relations that are made in every act of speech. It is the assumption that speakers presume of one another that each has an “orientation to reaching understanding.” This claim is counterintuitive in the face of common forms of deceit, manipulation, and simple bias. But it is also the assumption that all feel when deceived. For this reason, Habermas argues that an orientation toward understanding is the “telos” of human communication. Individuals do not always agree, to be sure, but speech of any kind contains a deeply underlying orientation toward agreement, even if it is an agreement to disagree, and even if it is an agreement that is abused. This telos is a “gentle but obstinate, a never silent although seldom redeemed claim to reason,” which is embodied in and operates through communication (Habermas 1979: 97).

In interpersonal relations, action oriented toward understanding is further defined in relation to “validity claims,” “speech conditions,” and interpersonal negotiation over validity claims through speech. In the course of everyday conversation, truth claims—that is, statements about factual matters—are commonly disputed, debated, and justified. Claims about shared values are subject to the same need for justification. Sometimes challenges to such claims are easily resolved. Other times, these negotiations are strenuous and painful. Sometimes they lead to impasse. But in all cases, these negotiations are made possible by assumptions regarding the orientation to understanding. To be clear, speakers may often be antagonistic during argument, but the act of arguing itself presumes the possibility of reaching understanding.

This standard of speech as action oriented toward understanding offers an answer to this recurring question: “Exactly what must the press accomplish to serve democratic ends?” The answer is that the press and media at large must facilitate action oriented to understanding in the public sphere. This theory suggests that action oriented to understanding should be used explicitly as a

standard against which to measure the distance, as Habermas (1996) puts it in one book, between the norms embodying our ideal of free speech, on one hand, and the everyday facts of speech, including lies, ideology, and disinformation, on the other.

In the so-called public sphere, the idea of action oriented toward understanding must also be understood in relation to institutional mechanisms that make possible the public negotiation of validity claims through speech. These institutions include newspapers, but they also crucially include public opinion organizations, civil society organizations, unions, specialized magazines, network news broadcasts, radio talk shows, public rallies, and more. Therefore, there is a link between action oriented to understanding through speech interpersonally and action oriented to understanding through mediated speech in the public sphere. This link constitutes a theoretical explanation for the intuition that individual citizens share whenever they argue that their voices should make a difference in the public world of political debate.

As will be shown, this approach to communication broadly conditions any consideration of the social processes needed to advance democratic governance reform. It also conditions consideration of the communication techniques considered likely to advance democratic governance reform.

The Structure of the Public Sphere

If one considers the public sphere to be an institutionalization of the means for action oriented toward understanding, then it follows in Habermas's terms that both have an "epistemic value." In other words, both interpersonal speech and public speech have value with regard to the pursuit of truth. This is Habermas's way of seconding John Milton.

When Milton penned his lines, free and open debate took place on street corners. The interpersonal and the public realms were closely interrelated. However, in the modern world, speaking openly on street corners is of little value. Citizen speech must be taken up in mass media, and then politicians must listen. All the public discourse in the world is of no democratic value unless it informs the deliberations of formal decision-making bodies. Habermas refers to "weak" or peripheral public spheres, where episodic talk takes place during everyday talk, and to core public spheres, where deliberative discourse follows formal rules associated with decision-making processes. He borrows the metaphor of a "sluice gate" to indicate the need for the wild and overlapping citizen discourses from the periphery, as he sometimes refers to them, to feed into government in the core of the political system (Habermas 1996: 356–58).

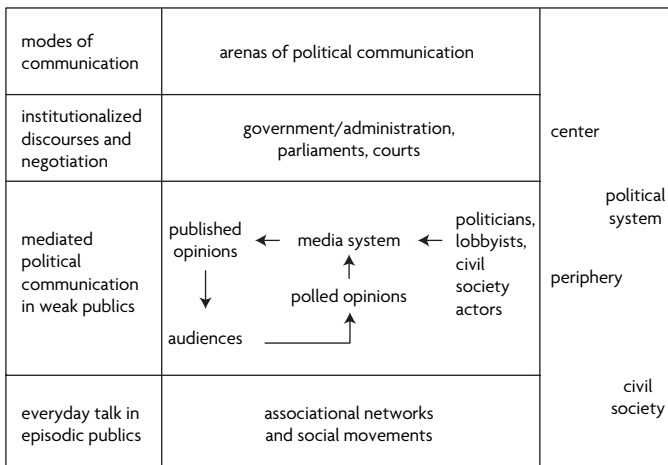
The picture this metaphor suggests is a complex one. Modern democracy requires stringent standards for public speech overall, creating an elaborate set of information flows if governance is to remain responsive to citizen interests. Most generally, there must be mechanisms to take up ideas, refine those ideas,

filter them, and feed them into formal political bodies such as legislatures or parliaments. The partial, fallible, and self-interested opinions held by each citizen or citizen group must be subjected to the corrective force of the opinions of others and of the many. Thus, citizen speech cannot become citizen voice unless the mass media process and transmit citizen speech into the political system. In the end, politicians must listen, but first this voice requires a functioning media system, and the system must perform this function regardless of whether media are privately or publicly owned.

Some recent work by Habermas (2006a, 2006b) details elements of the public sphere that are necessary to this process. Even brief consideration suggests that commercial ownership of media alone is not likely to satisfy the epistemic, or truth-generating, requirements of the public sphere.

Figure 3.1 indicates the structure of the public sphere. The right-hand column shows that the public sphere occupies roughly a middle position between civil society and the political system. The center column represents related arenas of political communication. Normal discussion between citizens can be seen as everyday talk in episodic publics. Social movements and associational networks such as citizen interest groups express a more organized and political form of discussion between citizens in civil society. The mediated public sphere is a still more organized sphere of political communication practiced by media systems but one that also involves politicians, lobbyists, influential civil society leaders, and, important to note, the public opinion industry and media audiences. The information and opinions generated between all these stakeholders in democratic communication must feed into institutionalized discourses among legislative bodies and courts in the core.

Figure 3.1. The Public Sphere as an Intermediary System



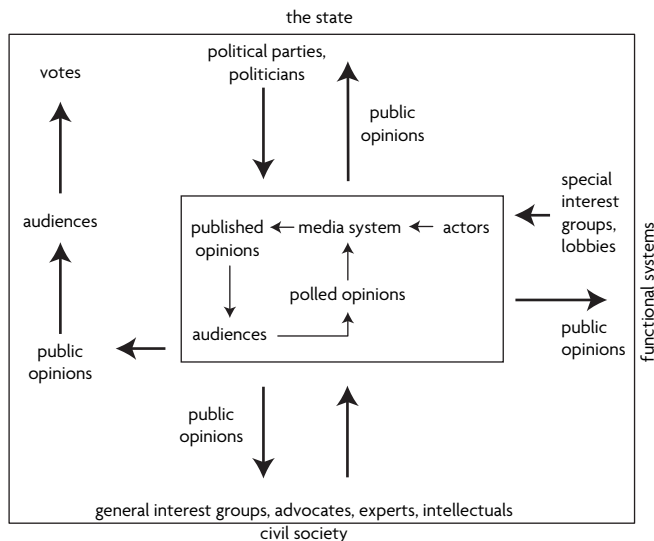
Source: Adapted from Habermas 2006b.

Figure 3.2 shows information flows in and out of the mediated public sphere in more detail. Input into media organizations comes from special interest groups and lobbies, as well as general interest groups, experts, and intellectuals. Input also comes from political parties and politicians who have more access to the media than do other stakeholders. Output from the media conditions public opinion by virtue of the way that media organizations select issues to publicize and choose pundits to analyze issues, and as a result of the amount of time devoted to covering various issues. The media, therefore, play a crucial role in taking up concerns expressed in the everyday talk among episodic publics and in fashioning public images of these issues for mass consumption.

Mass media have considerable power to select issues for public representation, thereby setting the agenda for public discussion, but they also respond to the pressures of organizations representing both special and general citizen interests. Published public opinions affect all the same groups that provide input to the media, thus forming a feedback cycle in which stakeholders attempt to affect dialogue in the mediated public sphere, expressing innately held interests while also responding to the mediated expressions of the interests of others. Therefore, the public sphere generates public opinion to the extent that both the mass media and public opinion industries are part of a single system.

All the elements portrayed in these diagrams must play their role if the public sphere is to serve effective and transparent governance. Needless to say, this stringent standard is not always met even in the most highly developed nations. Money and power disrupt the fair distribution of opportunities to

Figure 3.2. The Public Sphere: Inputs and Outputs



Source: Adapted from Habermas 2006b.

contribute to the great public discussion. Labor unions are left out or have too much access. Politicians have too much access to media or sometimes too little. Citizens may be active in demonstrating their interests, but be ineffective in getting their views into the press. In some cases, this may take place where a press exists but a functioning public opinion industry has not yet developed.

Public Spheres and Democratic Legitimation

One standard definition of the public sphere holds it to be a figurative space where private citizens discuss matters of common concern. This definition should not be taken to refer to a vague principle. The public sphere in practice comprises sets of processes including the discussion, analysis, and production of opinions by real people, as well as large-scale organizations and businesses. These opinions are selected, processed, and represented in limited or wide-spread ways. The opinions, in turn, are fed back to stakeholders who treat them afresh as input for further discussion and analysis.

It is an elaborate process no matter what the level of a society's development. Each of these processes of discussion, analysis, opinion formation, selection, processing, and distribution involves norms of free speech, as well as professional skills and legal systems. If these processes are intact, then the media to that extent will be able to serve the cause of transparency in government. A watchdog press will gather news that is processed for distribution to publics who are sufficiently informed to understand the significance of individual news reports and who have enough time to act on this information, at least in the modest ways that citizens characteristically do. Then the media will be able to fulfill the epistemic requirements of democracy. Milton's truth will emerge, at least periodically, from free and open encounters.

However, as stringent as this set of criteria may seem, there is an additional function that must be fulfilled. This is the function of democratic legitimation. Legitimation is a fundamental goal of governance reform and transparency. The legitimacy of democratic governments can be established only when governmental priorities, processes, and outcomes are transparent, meaning they are open to citizen scrutiny and evaluation. When citizens feel that governmental processes are devoted to satisfying their needs, they may then feel that democracy works. This feeling feeds back into their willingness to comply with law, meaning they believe that government and law can legitimately compel their lawful behavior.

Although complex, the connections between the public sphere, media, democratic legitimation, and voice are clear. Citizen attributions of governmental legitimacy and citizen motivations to comply voluntarily with laws and policies are obtained to the extent that the political will of the citizenry is taken onboard during legislative and policy deliberations. This political will is expressed first as public opinion in the public sphere. A political analysis of communication challenges for governance reform must, therefore, focus on identifying those who are stakeholders in any given reform program and must

find ways to facilitate dialogue through which differences can be expressed, understood, and negotiated. This, and only this, approach will lead to legitimate change in matters of democratic governance.

Political Analysis for Engaging Citizen Voice in Public Spheres: A Framework

Any attempt to use a political analysis of communication's contribution to governance reform must begin with efforts to be attentive to local needs and interests. At one level, this analysis may involve the assessment of social, cultural, and political conditions at large. At another level, it might require a study of institutional mechanisms. At still another level, it will require not only listening to stakeholders in the sense of keeping one's ears open but also actively pursuing engagement, dialogue, and debate. When stakes are involved, listening is seldom a simple matter. Politics are involved. This section presents a framework of ideas that can be used to begin the process of listening at all these levels, initially through research but also including local collaboration.

The World Bank's *Sourcebook on Policy Reform* defines political analysis as "look[ing] at the structure of power relations and often-entrenched interests of different stakeholders that affect decision making and distributional outcomes. Political analysis is built on recognition that political interests underpin many areas of policy debate and economic reform, challenging assumptions about the technical nature of policy making" (World Bank 2007a: 5). This definition lends itself to the view that reform efforts must be largely based on nontechnical planning processes that, in turn, are shaped by political contexts. According to *Tools for Institutional, Political, and Social Analysis: A Sourcebook for Development Practitioners* (World Bank 2007b), understanding a political context requires consideration of multiple societal levels, including the national sociopolitical landscape of institutional frameworks and interrelationships (macrolevel), stakeholder networks, and incentives/disincentives (mesolevel), as well as particular policy domains and their impacts on society (microlevel). From a reform perspective, gaining understanding of each of these levels requires taking stock of their unique aspects, as well as their overlaps and interrelationships.

Moreover, attention must be paid to the ways in which actors engage political processes at these different levels of analysis. Core components of effective engagement include gaining both a depth and breadth of actionable information at multiple levels, as well as the ability to communicate persuasively within various local, national, and global networks. In one's supporting the work of reform, it is necessary, in other words, to take stock of and to synthesize approaches and techniques for political analysis, including communication capacity.

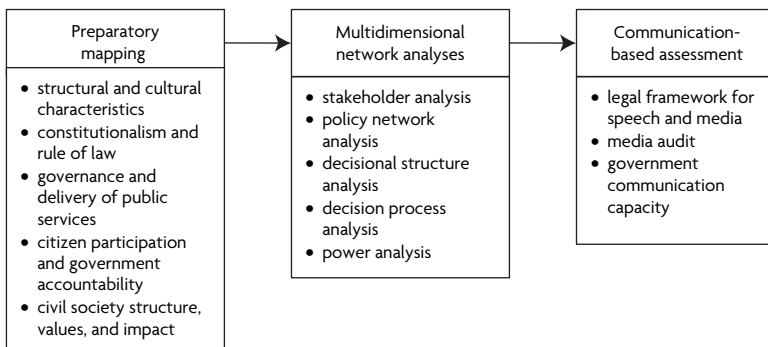
A review of recently developed reports, guidebooks, and manuals suggests that analysis of communication challenges can usefully be phased in the

following sequence: (1) a *preparatory mapping approach* of national socio-political and economic indicators and cultural anthropological characteristics; (2) a *multidimensional network analysis approach* under which customary stakeholder and institutional mappings are augmented by analyses of power relationships, as well as decisional structures and processes; (3) a *communication-based approach* to needs assessment exemplified in *Communication-Based Assessment for Bank Operations* by Mitchell and Chaman-Ruiz (2007), among other sources, which is useful for gaining an understanding of communication environments and the strategic challenges inherent in each. Figure 3.3 depicts these three approaches in the suggested sequence and lists each approach's components, which are elaborated below.

Phase 1: Analyzing Sociopolitical Environments

In *Mapping Political Context: A Toolkit for Civil Society Organizations*, Nash, Hudson, and Luttrell (2006) list techniques for systematically gathering information on national sociopolitical and cultural environments. (For a selected list of organizations and their associated techniques, see Annex A). Selections were made from this list for the present discussion, and techniques were broken down into their constituent elements. Efforts have been made to account for redundancies in crafting an aggregated master list of categories and indicators for preparatory mapping at the national level. The list is meant to serve as an analytical aid to help reformers decide what types of macrolevel information they require for particular change initiatives.

Although most of the information needed to carry out this mapping exercise can be gleaned from secondary sources, survey data, and other social scientific research methods, it is essential that information be validated with country and regional experts (especially in-country). The following technique for preparatory mapping includes five components: structural and cultural characteristics; constitutionalism and the rule of law; governance and the delivery of public services; citizen participation and government accountability; civil society structure, values, and impact



Source: Author's drawing.

services; civil society's structure, values, and impact; and citizen participation and government accountability.

Structural and Cultural Characteristics. Structural and cultural characteristics make up the big-picture environment within which reform work at any level takes place. Political, institutional, and cultural factors, as well as sectoral relationships, can manifest as either restraining or enabling forces at national, regional, and local levels. The impact of these factors will be forced on reformers by circumstances even if they are not analyzed deliberately. Reflection on them early on improves chances for effective planning and sensitive engagement with stakeholders.

Foundational Political Factors

- Is there a political community or an imagined national community? (See Anderson 1983/1991.)
- Does a national-level sociopolitical space exist for citizens to participate in the political community? What are the general characteristics of this space?
- To what extent does meaningful competition take place in the political system and in other arenas of society? Are competitive arenas accessible?
- To what extent are there elections, competition of ideas, free media, and a vibrant civil society?
- Are meaningful checks and balances present in government? Is competition allowed and institutionalized? Is competition fair? Is the political contest formalized, routine, and regulated by publicly accepted rules and norms?

Institutional Factors

- How strong or weak are institutions that enable the functioning of the bureaucracy, policy mechanisms, political parties, and civil society organizations?
- What are the bases of political competition and the composition of the political elite?
- Are ethnicity, gender, and economic background barriers to elite sector entry?
- How is power shared between the political executive, the military, the legislature, the judiciary, other levels of government, the private sector, and religious organizations?

Cultural Factors

- What are the society's widely held values, beliefs, and master frames?
- How have the history of state formation, political geography, geostrategic position, and embedded social and economic structures shaped the basic characteristics of the political culture?

Sectoral Relationships

- How would you describe the following: state–civil society relations; private sector–civil society relations; private sector–state relations?
- How would you describe citizen–state relations, including citizens’ acceptance of the state and recognition of state institutions?

Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law. Political factors, institutional conditions, and cultural values make up the big-picture environment or foundation for governance. But the essential means for arbitrating disputes during the give and take of reform is ultimately the medium of positive law. This medium manifests itself in constitutionally enshrined principles of governance, as well as formal institutions for the legislative crafting and enforcement of law. Here reside overlapping domains of social, legal, and political concerns that must be understood in relation to lawful practice.

Conventions of the Constitution

- What are the usages, customs, and understandings that supplement the constitution and help it to work?
- How embedded is the constitution in the institutions of government, in the private sector, and in civil society?

Political Consensus

- To what extent is there consensus on the fundamental rules of the game, and to what extent is the political contest played according to those rules?

Rights and Liberties

- Is there ordered liberty? Are politics bound by a rule of law?
- Are political, civil, and human rights provided and respected? Is there provision for physical safety?

Regulatory Quality

- What is the incidence of market-unfriendly policies?

Control of Corruption

- Are there effective efforts toward curbing the exercise of public power for private gain, including both petty and grand corruption as well as state capture?

Political Stability and Absence of Violence

- How high is the likelihood of violent threats to, or changes in, government, including terrorism?

Enforcement Capacity of the State

- What is the quality of contract enforcement?
- What is the sectoral scope of state enforcement capacity?
- How wide is the territorial scope of the legitimate monopoly of power?
- How is the monopoly of power enforced?
- Is there competition between and among various regulatory systems?
- How effective are efforts toward interstate conflict management?

Governance and the Delivery of Public Services. Formal law provides a framework for the protection of rights, enforcement of obligations, and prohibition of harmful activities. However, a great range of governance work takes place through less formal means, to the extent that bureaucratic and managerial capacities are in place and functioning well. This framework refers not only to the existence of institutions that are legally charged with providing services, but also to the extent to which those institutions are responsive to actual citizen needs and interests.

Quality of Governance

- To what extent do social institutions—both public and private—demonstrate a capacity to make and meet commitments, deliver reliably a minimum of social services, and be held accountable for their performance?
- What is government's bureaucratic and financial capability?
- What political resources are available during and in between elections?

Government Effectiveness

- How competent is the bureaucracy, and what is the quality of public service delivery?

Civil Society's Structure, Values, and Impact. Civil society is the least formal, most unruly, and most important social sector in relation to governance reform. Government institutions and practices exist in principle to serve the members of civil society. But as a matter of functional effectiveness, civil society provides the best measuring stick against which to gauge the effectiveness of economic and governmental mechanisms. Individuals and groups within civil society constitute an enormous storehouse of information and energy useful for governance, through self-governance. These same institutions and groups can provide the most economical means for social stability if they operate with the support of democratic governance mechanisms that serve the public interest.

Structure of Civil Society

- How diverse is civil society?
- Is civil society organized? To what level?

- Are there active interrelationships between organizations?
- What resources are available to organizations?

Values of Civil Society

- To what extent do civil society actors support the following: transparency of governance, tolerance of rival groups and positions, nonviolence, gender equity, poverty eradication, and environmental sustainability?

Impact of Civil Society

- How often does civil society succeed or fail in influencing public policy?
- Is civil society able to hold state and private corporations accountable?
- Is civil society responsive to social interests?
- Are citizens empowered by civil society?
- Does civil society meet social needs?

Citizen Participation and Government Accountability. Civil society is by definition separate from the state. However, the state is ultimately responsible for serving civil society's members. The role of representative political mechanisms, in association with the public sphere, is precisely to monitor the interests of citizens, analyze expressed needs, then weigh and balance conflicting needs against one another. The balancing act between citizen interests and government power illustrates the complexity of modern governance. Democracy embraces a high standard not only of principles but also of performance. Nowhere is it done perfectly, and incremental improvement should usually be considered the short-term goal of reform efforts.

Breadth and Depth of Citizen Participation

- What is the rate of voter turnout?
- Are citizens able to participate through activities of political parties?
- What is the quality of citizen communication with elected representatives?

Citizens' Expectations of the State

- Are there sufficient opportunities for citizens to express opinions?
- Do citizens have opportunities to participate in governance?
- Is the state responsive to citizen demand?
- What mechanisms are used to identify public needs?

Inclusion and Exclusion

- Are there problems of inclusion and exclusion?
- Are parts of the population formally excluded and disenfranchised from meaningful political, social, or economic participation?
- Are there formal guarantees of inclusion?

Accountability Mechanisms

- What are the key mechanisms for vertical and horizontal accountability?

Summary. The categories and components listed above are meant to provide change agents with an analytical framework and menu of options for studying the macro-sociopolitical and cultural characteristics of societies in which they plan to work. Such study can sometimes improve one's grasp of opportunities. At other times, it might explain only limiting conditions. Note that although this framework is a synthesis of several well-established political analysis tools, it is meant to be neither exhaustive nor exclusive. Reformers are encouraged to be selective in their use of this menu of options and to identify additional categories and components critical to particular change efforts.

Phase 2: Mapping Policy and Stakeholder Networks

A reform initiative is usually linked to some specific issue of concern to the public interest. Although the network analysis techniques suggested next should be tightly focused on a particular policy issue domain, the scope of stakeholder and policy networks can range from local to national to global contexts. These networks may be interlocking.

Stakeholder Analysis. Stakeholder analysis is a mainstream approach to understanding networks and can be a useful place to start. It is a technique that provides reformers with a picture of the interpersonal and organizational relationships surrounding a particular policy issue. According to Nash, Hudson, and Luttrell (2006: 27), it is carried out in the following three phases:

- Phase 1 (defining context): "Define the policy change and outline the likely consequences of such a change."
- Phase 2 (gathering data): "Identify, map, profile, and communicate with stakeholders."
- Phase 3 (analyzing data): "Identify the power, position, and perspectives of stakeholders. Stakeholders should be prioritized and analyzed."

Although stakeholder analysis can paint a vivid picture of the various players engaged with a policy issue, as well as their interests and capacities, it does not provide the reformer with information on two key considerations: relative power relationships and decision-making processes. To fill these gaps, change agents can carry out the following types of analysis: policy network analysis, decisional structure analysis, decisional process analysis, and power analysis.

Policy Network Analysis. Policy network analysis can be carried out at the local, national, or global level. "Policy networks" or "policy forums" are defined as "institutional settings for encounters between state and nonstate organizations, through their elites; importantly, these encounters establish exchange

relationships among the participants” (Maman 1997: 267). Communication plays an essential role in the functioning of these networks as policy filters and gatekeepers. Mintrom and Vergari (1998) argue that “network communications ... serve to screen proposed innovations based on merit” (128). Maman (1997) contends that “the networks of policy ... establish communication networks—a prerequisite for the exercise of influence” (280). In fact, Laumann and Knoke (1987) define policy networks as communication networks (cited in Maman 1997: 269).

Reinicke (1999) defines global public policy networks as “loose alliances of government agencies, international organizations, corporations, and elements of civil society such as nongovernmental organizations, professional associations, or religious groups that join together to achieve what none can accomplish on its own” (44). Because of their scope, these global networks can “sort through conflicting perspectives, help hammer out a consensus, and translate that consensus into actions its members will be more inclined to support and implement” (47). Legitimacy can be enhanced if large international organizations (often involved in building these networks) take a back seat and “lead from behind” once a network has been established, while encouraging smaller organizations with clear sectoral mandates to take on more prominent leadership roles.

According to Mikkelsen (2006: 21–22), the following steps should be carried out in conducting a policy network analysis. The same steps should likely be carried out whether the analysis is done at the local, national, or global level:

- Map the interpersonal and interorganizational structure of the policy domain, taking account of known relationships, experience, and research to analyze the advocacy coalition.
- Plot the main features of any rival coalitions.
- Determine relevant policy brokers and agency resources.
- Make sure this exercise is broad, inclusive, and repeated over time. The policy staff, volunteers, and sympathetic individuals should be requested to map their contacts, including the nature and extent of relationships.
- Include important characteristics of individuals in the analysis: skills, willingness to tackle tasks, policy preferences, and their additional contacts.
- Include contacts who may not be directly interested in policy, but may be able to contribute knowledge, expertise, or both.
- If possible, do this on a regular basis, ideally coinciding with campaign planning cycles.

This type of analysis will give change agents answers to the following questions:

- Who are the central network brokers? Who are the connectors?
- Where are relationships and linkages strong or weak?
- Is there a dearth of relationships in some areas of the network?

- Are parts of the network over dependent on particular individuals? Are there enough relationships to sustain critical portions of the network?
- Are too many network resources concentrated in one aspect of the policy domain?
- Is there need for more personal outreach?
- Are there untapped outreach opportunities?

In addition, performing a network analysis should include the following considerations:

- What is the decision structure of a policy network? (see next)
- What are the characteristics of network relations (tight or loose, consensual or conflictual)?
- Do you understand that external policy networks, composed of people from across the nation, are important for facilitating agenda setting, while internal policy networks, made up of people within the decision-making structure of government, are useful for both agenda setting and approval of policy innovations (Mintrom and Vergari 1998)? It is thus necessary to understand the ways in which decisions are made within those bodies.

Decisional Structure Analysis. Decisional structure analysis (Eulau 1969) focuses on the *membership structure* of rule-making bodies (e.g., supermajorities versus stable two-party competition) and their predicted impact on decision-making processes. In contrast, decision process analysis (Jesuino 1986) focuses on the *impact of procedural rules*, especially as regards leadership (e.g., mechanisms for strong versus weak parliamentary leadership), adopted by rule-making bodies. Eulau argues, “For all political activity, be it that of an individual or group, or even that of an ‘amorphous mob’ on the streets, is limited or constrained by the structure of the relationships that obtain in the group” (1969: 345). As discussed in Nash, Hudson, and Luttrell (2006: 24–25), Sida’s power analysis complements analyses of decision-making processes and structures by identifying power asymmetries, access to resources, and influence over politics—all key considerations to understanding the ways in which decisions are made in sociopolitical contexts.

According to Eulau (1969: 348), decision-making bodies can be categorized under the following three types of decisional structures:

- Unipolar—“All members nearly always vote together, although there may be an occasional deviant.” Countries with one-party political systems exemplify this type of structure (for example, China).
- Bipolar—“There is relatively permanent division between two factions, although there may be swing voters who from time to time shift between factions.” Two-party political systems exemplify this type of structure (for example, the United Kingdom).

- Nonpolar—“Does not exhibit any recurrent voting pattern; there may be minority cliques that vote together, but there is sufficient degree of shifting around that no single pattern repeats itself from one vote to the next.” Multi-party political systems exemplify this type of structure (for example, the Philippines) (Eulau 1969: 348).

In addition, each type of decisional has three dimensions (Eulau 1969: 349–55):

- Harmony and conflict—whether voting splits often or rarely. In highly conflicted environments, the feeling of friendship among like-minded decision makers is a strong motivation for voting in one direction or another.
- Integration or fragmentation—whether the body is strongly or weakly bonded (regardless of disagreement over policy). In fragmented bodies, “joint sponsorship of proposals” and harnessing the power of “opinion leadership” can help bring about a winning coalition.
- Permissiveness and constraint—the degree to which conformity to expected voting behavior is rewarded and deviation is sanctioned. The need for “respect among peers” is an implicit sanction that reformers can use to their advantage.

Decisional Process Analysis. According to Jesuino (1986), decisional process analysis can be categorized into three general types: directive leadership, consensual leadership, and emergent leadership:

- Directive: the adopted rules allow leaders to display directive behavior, and group members enjoy minimal participation in deliberations.
- Consensual: adopted rules require leaders to display “democratic behavior,” and group members enjoy maximum participation in deliberations.
- Emergent leadership: adopted rules do not specify particular people as leaders, although they do emerge in the course of deliberation.

These types of decision processes bring about differential outcomes in terms of group polarization (the tendency for subgroups to form and calcify into opposing camps). Polarization can help or hinder reform efforts depending on the findings of the network analysis—that is, in some cases it may be better for people to form strong coalitions, whereas in other cases it may be better to avoid strong coalitions and maintain supportive but weakly linked relationships.

Power Analysis. Power analysis focuses on power asymmetries, access to resources, and influence over politics (Sida, cited in Nash, Hudson, and Luttrell 2006: 24–25). It identifies holders and brokers, and it maps the distribution of power within networks.

Data gathered through analysis of secondary sources, interviews, and questionnaires include the following information:

- Who sets the policy agenda? Whose ideas and values dominate policy?
- Who gets what, when, and how, and how do formal institutions shape the distribution of costs and benefits?
- Who knows whom, why, and where? How do informal social networks shape the policy process?

The network analysis techniques described here can provide change agents with an understanding of stakeholders' capacities and interests, decision-making processes and structures, and power relationships. These analyses also make explicit the communication challenges and opportunities that reside within policy networks, especially based on the view that policy networks are essentially communication networks populated by stakeholders and decision makers of particular policy domains (Laumann and Knoke, as cited in Maman 1997: 269).

Phase 3: Communication-Based Assessment

According to Mitchell and Chaman-Ruiz (2007), communication-based assessment from a development communication perspective includes

gather[ing] information about stakeholders' knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, expectations, and practices that can tailor the design of the development initiative. This research can identify indicators for *ex ante* evaluation, analyze the social and political risks for the development initiative, and assess the capacity of government to implement and supervise the communication strategy... [T]he communication objectives are identified and probed further. This stage may also identify the areas where further and deeper public opinion research, both quantitative and qualitative, is required. (9–10)

Given this description, the authors provide a list of analytical areas that includes some of the techniques described earlier in this discussion, such as stakeholder analysis, as well as communication specific components. This section is a distillation of the communication-specific techniques of communication-based assessment into three primary categories: the legal framework for speech and media, the elements of a media audit such as access and reach, and government communication capacity.

Legal Framework for Speech and Media. Cross-nationally comparative information on media laws can be accessed on Reporters without Borders' Worldwide Press Freedom Index for 167 countries, including the existence of freedom of information laws, censorship, punishment for press offences, and monopoly and state regulatory bodies (http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=554). Freedom House also provides information on these matters, such as laws on freedom of the press, libel as criminal versus civil, judicial independence, freedom of information, government interests, access to sources, and censorship and self-censorship (see "Freedom of the Press 1980 to 2006,"

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=16&year=2005>). Also, the ICFJ's International Journalists' Network online database includes Journalists' Code of Ethics and Media Laws databases (http://www.ijnet.org/FE_Article/home.asp). Information on enforcement and rule of law can be taken from the first phase (preparatory mapping) discussed earlier.

Elements of Media Audits. Cross-nationally comparative information on access to broadcast and electronic and print media is available from the International Telecommunication Union (<http://www.itu.int/net/home/index.aspx>) and the World Association of Newspapers (<http://www.wan-press.org>), respectively. Where the necessary data are available, analysis of media audience segmentation can be carried out and juxtaposed onto the multidimensional network analysis. This approach will enable change agents to focus media strategies on population segments or organizations that are key to the success of the reform initiative.

Government Communication Capacity. Assessment of government capacity should include the following questions:

- What public media system exists?
- Is there a strong public service broadcaster?
- What kind of experience in communicating policies does a government or agency have?
- What are the policies for communication and media relations?
- Does any other agency revise the communication policies of the governmental agency under which the project or policy falls?

Communication-based assessments can be carried out in a regular, systematic manner to capture shifts over time. Gaining accurate and up-to-date information on communication environments and capacities will often be integral to successful advocacy for reform policies.

Summary

As noted, reform efforts must be based largely on nontechnical planning processes that, in turn, are shaped by political contexts. The foregoing section has been intended to indicate in a general way the various levels at which social, cultural, and political considerations must be taken into account and which stakeholders must be engaged. It also indicates analysis tools that can facilitate engagement.

It should be clear that understanding a political context requires consideration of multiple societal levels. From a reform perspective, gaining an understanding of each of these levels requires taking stock of their unique aspects as well as their overlaps and interrelationships. Moreover, it is important that attention be paid to the ways in which actors engage political processes at these different levels of analysis. Core components of effective engagement include

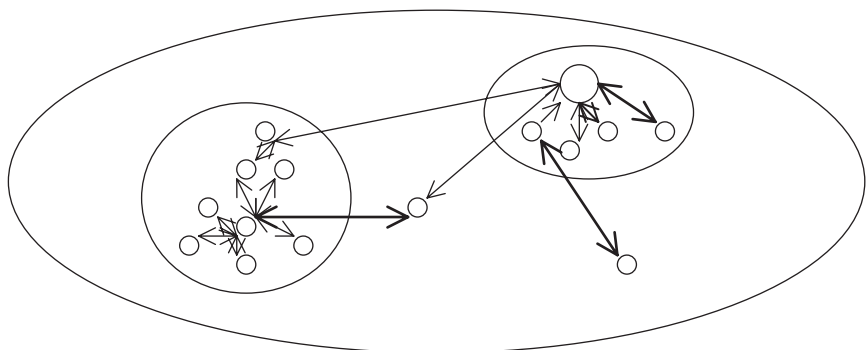
gaining both a depth and breadth of actionable information regarding the multiple levels enumerated above as well as the ability to communicate effectively within them.

Fully functioning communication environments enable bridge building between stakeholders and decision makers, facilitate decision-making processes, and can connect particular policy networks with larger macro-sociopolitical and cultural contexts. Figure 3.4 depicts a comprehensive view of macro-sociopolitical and cultural factors (from preparatory mapping), multidimensional network analysis, and communication-based assessment.

- *Preparatory mapping* makes explicit the context of a reform initiative (represented by the oblong-shaped field).
- *Multidimensional network analysis* makes explicit the relationships between actors and organizations (represented by the network of nodes).
- *Communication-based assessment* makes explicit the communication challenges between actors (represented by the linkages between nodes; thickness of lines denotes strength of relationship, and arrows denote direction of influence).

Finally, if the scope of the reform project or program is subnational, it is essential to keep in mind local contexts, including political, social, and cultural factors. There will likely be a need to focus on the closest matching local government level unit, such as provinces, Indian *Panchayat*, or Philippine *Barangay*. In the case of preparatory mapping, take note of local-level politics and particular anthropological information. In relation to multidimensional network analysis, do a stakeholder and network analysis in the local context. Focus especially on local leadership cohorts and participatory processes. Engage stakeholders in reasoned discussion. Be sure facts of the case are known. Listen to the concerns of everyone. And repeat these discussions, doggedly if necessary, until any disagreements that remain are real and are not based on misinformation or

Figure 3.4. Comprehensive View of a Reform Initiative Arising from Political Analyses toward Generating Communication Challenges



Source: Author's drawing.

misunderstanding. It may be wise for communication-based assessment to focus on the local communication environment and opinion leadership by conducting media audits. If doing a campaign, use formative research to test messages. Always pay attention to mechanisms in the route of influence, whether this be social (interpersonal opinion leadership), institutional (rules of the game), mediated (print, broadcast, electronic media), or a combination thereof.

Conclusion

Citizen voice has emerged as a high priority in recent development thinking. Many, perhaps most, of the large donors now accept the tenet that poverty reduction can be significantly aided by governance reform and that governance reform involves, in considerable part, listening to citizens. The big question remains: Exactly how can citizen voice be employed in governance reform? This chapter, which addresses this question at two levels, has argued that political theory today invests heavily in the idea that citizen voice is of consequence. Although many theorists have insights to offer, Jürgen Habermas's analysis of communicative action in the public sphere in particular provides a contemporary update to intuitions regarding justice that continues to spread globally. His analysis gives special attention to the workings of public communication among citizens in the public sphere.

Ideas such as citizen voice and the public sphere are not merely lofty values advanced by idealists. Lofty they may be, but insofar as they exist in the wealthier societies, as well as in some that may not be so wealthy, they are complex and very real. As a figurative space between civil society and the state where citizens meet to discuss matters of common concern, the public sphere is not a "mere" idea. Establishing a functioning set of overlapping social subsystems, it is anything but simple. Public spheres come in sizes small and large. In larger public spheres, such as national ones, it is clear that professional practices in journalism are required in association with well-functioning public opinion industries. Social norms encompassing all this must interlock with skills among the citizenry for news interpretation, discussion, and decision making.

Furthermore, public spheres do not exist in a vacuum. To put it one way, there can be no realm between the civil society and the state if there is no state. First, legal frameworks are necessary to establish rules of the road not only for politics, strictly speaking, but also for communication regulation and practices. Furthermore, discussion must be taken up from the everyday talk of citizens and then be directed into governments that listen, in general, and in specific cases of government offices devoted to the delivery of social services.

In the end, a political analysis that guides communication practices must understand economic and legal aspects of social change, as well as normative and social action processes. These analyses range across the topics treated earlier, including structural and cultural characteristics of society, conditions related to constitutionalism and the rule of law, the state of governance and

the delivery of public services, civil society structures, values, and impacts, as well as processes of citizen participation and government accountability.

Within given reform contexts, tools of social analysis have been developed in recent years that can assist reformers in scoping the opportunities and challenges facing individual projects. Network mapping and communication needs assessment are categories of work, each of which offers a number of specific tools. Most certainly, theory and analysis tools are of so much value only if conditions on the ground are arrayed against any possibility of meaningful progress. However, the theory and the tools both may help reformers know when this value is the case, as well as alternatively, when it is not. In such a case, they can help forge ahead toward much needed improvement in governance to serve the general citizen interest, which is poverty reduction.

Note

1. John Milton, *Areopagitica*, vol. 3, part 3. 1909. *The Harvard Classics*. New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 14.

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Annex A

In *Mapping Political Context: A Toolkit for Civil Society Organizations*, Nash, Hudson, and Luttrell (2006) list techniques for systematically gaining information from various political environments and provides detailed descriptions. The techniques used in the second part of this chapter, as well as content areas and methodologies, are listed below:

- The Governance Questionnaire (GTZ) focuses on the following dimensions: state-society relations, political system, political culture, politics and gender, economic policy and political framework of markets, and international integration. Data are gathered through the use of questionnaires.
- The Drivers of Change (DFID) framework focuses on dimensions of structure, agents, and institutions. Data are gathered through studies of secondary sources and through interviews and consultations.
- The Civil Society Index (CIVICUS) focuses on the following dimensions: civil society's structure, impact, environment, and values. Data are gathered from media reviews, stakeholder consultations, and community surveys.
- Governance Matters (World Bank Institute) is a cross-nationally comparable instrument. Data from existing measures of governance are gathered and aggregated.
- Democracy and Governance Assessment (USAID) gathers data through meetings with key representatives of society (for example, politicians, activists, researchers, NGOs, and donors), accessing secondary sources, and extensive consultations with people who have detailed knowledge of the national context.

Dialogues as Communication Strategy in Governance Reform

J. P. Singh

In 1999, the head of a civil organization called the Society for Social Uplift through Rural Action (SUTRA), which focuses on gender and equity issues, told me an interesting story about women's organizing, voice, and desire for official accountability. SUTRA is also a word with multiple meanings in Hindi ranging from "thread" to "cause" to "discipline." It is located in the Siwalik Hills in Himachal Pradesh, India. Subhash Mendhapurkar, the head of SUTRA, recounted an evening when several dozen women went to the district commissioner's (DC) office in the nearby town of Solan to protest the government's cordoning off land with barbed wire that these women had traditionally used for their cattle. The government's reasoning, rooted in preventing a tragedy of the commons so that not all the grass in the commonly held public lands would be eaten, was to let the grass grow and to plant young trees. The women were upset that they were not allocated alternative land and that the government did the cordoning by fiat rather than consultation. The DC heard them protesting and came out to greet them, but he announced that his office was not involved with the enclosures, and he directed them to the district forest officer (DFO). The women did not have time to go to the DFO, but Mendhapurkar noted that even though they did not get a change in the enclosure policy just then, it was enough for them to have come together in solidarity, to voice their collective strength through protest, and, most important, to rail at authority—in this case, any authority. It was the much needed consciousness awakening that allowed SUTRA to forge a sense of purpose and to move forward with determination.

This story is instructive at several levels but especially in pointing out how far we have come and how far we need to go in terms of thinking about effective development communication and governance strategies. In both the ground covered and to be covered, some deepening of our methods and analysis is needed. The story speaks to the importance of consciousness, solidarity, social organizing, protest, and demanding transparency and accountability from the powers that be. Everything from practical civil society and governance toolkits to theoretical analysis notes the importance and feasibility of locating such participatory social measures and ascertaining the power hierarchies within which they operate. But, as argued later, most of those measures find a rationale for social purpose within a group and then take account of mostly persuasive or monologic communication between that social group and others to effect particular outcomes. In the earlier example, the social group is SUTRA, and the monologues are the protests or the official response.

After acknowledging the importance of mostly one-way communication or monologues and the use of Internet and communication technologies to make them effective, this chapter turns to the possibility of dialogic communication, or democratic deliberations, that would allow for desired governance outcomes from both the perspective of society and that of its governors.

A few clarifications may be necessary at this point. Communication in this discussion is understood as any message conveyed from one actor to one or more other actors. Technology in the sense of an apparatus can range from word of mouth to the use of blogs for online organizing in these communications. For this chapter, monologic communication involves persuasive communication in which the “speaking” party attempts to alter the “listening” party’s stance, with little or no expectation of altering their own position. Dialogic communication is then communication in which both parties problem solve and arrive at mutually altered positions. The chapter suggests the need for sharpening political analyses that allow for recognizing the generation of voice and the political spaces within which voice may be heard and deliberated. Communication technologies can play a role in both cases.

This chapter suggests that monologues use technologies in strategic and instrumental ways to institute effective governance. At the heart of monologues lies the rhetoric of persuasion. The demands or solutions are pre-designed; strategic communication is, therefore, of the persuasive sort. Dialogues use technologies in transformational ways to generate hitherto unknown forms of effectiveness through consensus building and problem solving. Such dialogic communication is especially effective in the all-too-common case of resource-poor governments stymied by myriad societal demands and the need to help them find solutions and build legitimacy. Such cases have been called “dysfunctional states” in Singh (1999, 2006).

Effective Monologues

Monologues are understood in the political context here as voices of those making demands (individuals, civil society, interest groups) and as policy measures from suppliers (mostly governments). They are monologues in that either of these activities can take place on its own and often does so. However, even when done alone, neither voice nor policy formation is a small feat. The history of democracy and the role of development communication both underscore the challenges of securing both ends.

In the case of SUTRA, a group of hill women who had never undertaken any form of protest came together to find solidarity and purpose in their voice. The DC at least felt forced to direct them to the right authorities and may have taken note himself of their demands. What did not happen, of course, was any form of intervention from the DC to pick up the phone and call the DFO, who ranks lower than the DC in Indian bureaucratic hierarchies. Nor did the women have enough time to go to the DFO.

Both traditional and new media can be used strategically to achieve an effect in cases like that of SUTRA. Radio and television broadcasting still remain effective means of social mobilization and government accountability and transparency. In the traditional development communication models such as those of Lerner (1958) and Rogers (1983), radio was supposed to bring modernity to the developing world by awakening “traditional” societies to “modern” forms of communication. Although these models have been dismissed as being too instrumental and too unaware of structural constraints, they hurl people toward an unquestioned notion of modernity. Thankfully, the proverbial baby was not thrown out with the bathwater (Singh 2003).

Current conceptualization of the “capacity to aspire” relies on some instrument or another to make individuals and groups aware of their condition and aspire for a better life in the future. Appadurai (2004) accords special attention to the staging of rituals, and the SUTRA protest can be understood as such, in helping individuals acquire this capacity to aspire. Appadurai brings in Charles Taylor’s notion of “politics of recognition” in fostering empathy among unlike groups (Taylor 1992). In the earlier example, the DC distanced himself from the process while perhaps remaining somewhat empathic in asking the women to go yell at his colleague instead.

We have come a long way in thinking of traditional and new media in terms of voice, aspiration, social change, and government accountability and transparency. Radio was seen as one-way communication, and then along came two-way or interactive radio (sometimes in the form of call-in shows). Nevertheless, even in these newer forms, whether in the form of interactive radio or two-step communication modes in which an authority intervened to persuade social groups to adopt a communication message, the communication remained monologic. The desired message had already been crafted, and

governance was essentially about persuading people to go along with it and instituting behavioral and social change. It is no wonder that most of these development communication campaigns fell under the “social marketing” umbrella. Monologic communication fostered societal or official involvement, depending on the point of initiation, in predesigned messages, demands, solutions, or development interventions.

Technologies coupled with innovative thought and, where possible, permissible political context now allow us to move beyond traditional monologues aimed at society or officials alone. The governors themselves are brought into the spotlight, and notions of accountability and transparency inform all these measures. Falling into this category are most e-government initiatives ranging from providing information and services to answering questions and problems. However, estimates also show that most e-government initiatives are somewhat “dumb” in that they do not allow for interaction. A recent study using content analysis of nearly 2,000 Web sites in each of the three years covering the 2001–03 period in 196 countries concluded: “Most nations have progressed no further than stage one (billboards) or stage two (partial service delivery)” (Brown 2005: 141). The much touted e-government initiative taken by the government of Andhra Pradesh in India in making land records and registration available online would fall into these stage one and stage two categories. Radio and television shows that allow for administrators to be grilled and questioned are other examples. The BBC World Service Trust’s show *Sanglap* (Meeting) in Bangladesh is often cited as a success story in making bureaucrats and politicians answer citizen questions. Civil society report cards, videos of policy brutality, and Web sites aimed at information dissemination are other examples.

The scope of these activities need not be understood locally. Internet and communication technologies are particularly effective in cutting across territorial boundaries and providing instruments for transnational organizing. The Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), a nongovernmental organization (NGO) based in Mumbai, works through international organizations such as Slum Dwellers International to bring leverage to the pressure it applies on local officials (Appadurai 2002; Singh 2001). Information conduits are necessary, especially in agenda setting, decentralization of governance patterns, and exchange of best practices. Keck and Sikkink (1998) note the rise of transnational advocacy in which information exchange and persuasion play key roles.

For these initiatives to be effective, two things must be present: (1) voice must exist and be able to articulate the living conditions of the people and (2) the government must have resources to meet some or all of the demands made on it or must possess legitimacy to carry out its own interventions. The absence of voice would merely result in perfunctory exercises in stakeholder participation where either the stakeholders falsify their preferences or do not know their preferences at all (Kuran 1995). There are several critiques of such participatory governance in which the stakeholders are arbitrarily selected and

made to participate in essentially sanctioning predetermined governance outcomes. Conversely, media campaigns that raise expectations of a good life from a government unable to respond to these pressures merely raise the specter, to paraphrase Postman (1985), of amusing ourselves to death. Dialogic communication may be a way out of both dilemmas.

Dialogic Communication

The concept of dialogic communication, as a pedagogy of development, dates back to Paulo Freire, who locates its origins in consciousness awakening—a form of learning and knowing in which the subjects understand their historical circumstances and are able to name the world and themselves within it, thus finding a cultural voice. This necessary condition is for the oppressed to see their circumstances “as a limiting situation they can transform” (Freire 2000/1970: 49). The next step is dialogic communication, the sufficient condition, which entails problem solving informed by multiple or dialectical perspectives. This condition allows the actors to examine their life situation from multiple perspectives and to indulge in problem solving: “In this theory of action, one cannot speak of *an actor*, nor simply of *actors*, but rather of *actors in communication*” (129, emphasis in the original).

If one returns to the SUTRA example, the consciousness awakening is readily apparent in the solidarity and protest. However, the actors in communication seem to be the women among themselves, but not the authorities with whom they want to engage. In fact, the entire issue of grazing lands might have been settled more amicably if the women had been consulted in advance and perhaps after hard deliberation the government had arrived at a solution that took into account both the need for cattle to graze and the need to avoid exhausting the space for grazing. Instead, after the fiat of enclosure and protest, we find the DC merely referring women to another official instead of making any effort to open a space for dialogue.

Dialogic communication may be especially well suited for resource-constrained governments and bureaucracies to design public policy measures that can then find willing compliance and enforcement. In the case of SUTRA, what is there to prevent the women from cutting the barbed wire and feeding their cattle? Deliberation and problem solving might lead to solutions that accommodate both the grazing and environmental needs. Voluntary compliance may also be more forthcoming in deliberative measures.

What kinds of technologies can we use for ensuring voice and deliberation? As is often pointed out in participatory development exercises, people respond much more readily to problem solving when the particular issues find resonance and are interconnected with other issues in their lives (Singh and Hart 2004). It is hard for a household to think only of its water or electricity needs without thinking of food, education, or shelter or the complexity of the household’s lives in general. Although this process complicates discussions

of particular issues, there are, fortunately, several avenues for designing problem-solving situations, mostly centered around dramatization and representation. For example, this approach accounts for the ready reception and success of street theater in imparting HIV/AIDS education or that of socially conscious soap operas or telenovelas. Here people's lives are presented in all their complexity, and dramatization of particular issues is situated within this complexity rather than as a singled-out issue area. Increasingly, such theatrical performances encourage role playing and audience participation in "problem solving" the dilemmas of the issue in question.

Consciousness of one's circumstances and the ability to propose solutions lie in apprehending the totality of one's life rather than separating oneself from it. The great narratives of the postcolonial era—featured in stories, novels, films, television, advertising, and images—often present cultural identities in their entirety. But just as a storyteller might create an entire fictional world and then focus on one particular trait or issue for the denouement, people can use their cultural voice to design effective solutions around particular problems, albeit in the larger context of their lives.

Development practitioners often bemoan the fact that they are asked to deal with narrowly focused projects for their deliverables. Consciousness awakening or capacity to aspire, two concepts developed earlier, in the least speak to the development of cultural voices through communicative narratives that address the entire gamut and context of cultural identities. A focus on cultural identities in the plural is also necessary to avoid the trappings of static or too traditionally understood identities revolving around a singular axis such as patriarchy, nationalism, or essentialized ethnic or caste ties. Cultural identity narratives can be especially successful in presenting hybridity and dynamism, which are also needed for people to think their way out of the limiting situations of their lives. Role playing through communication media is an especially effective device in making everyone aware of the constraints and opportunities for action. If business and law schools can use case studies for role playing and problem solving, it is time that development practitioners caught up or quickened their pace in this direction. Many participatory development exercises already use some form of role playing.

Next let us turn to problem solving and deliberation in public affairs, especially situations in which governments with weak resources must meet a variety of heterogeneous demands. Such cases of what was called "dysfunctional states" earlier can be described as the modal form of states in the developing world. This dysfunction often leads to considerable messiness in designing measures, if not gridlock. Figure 4.1 illustrates this scenario, in which the public policy outputs can include clientism, corporatism, corruption, populism, or extremely messy democracy. Public opinion surveys in the developing world that showcase frustrations with democracy often speak to one or more of these outcomes. Can communication technologies play a role here? The answer is they already do.

Figure 4.1. Dysfunctional States and Societal Demands



Source: Author's drawing.

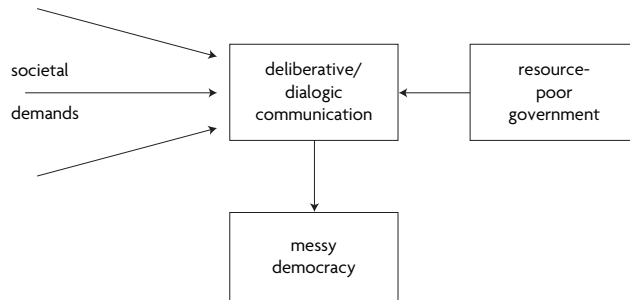
The entire gamut of communication technologies mentioned earlier may be repeated. In a more macrocontext, all democracies feature various communication technologies, including voting, referendums, public opinion surveys, and vibrant media. Obviously, what is missing is a deeper and deliberative democracy in which the citizens are allowed into public spaces for finding solutions on a continual basis. A few examples of such deliberation beyond communication technologies do exist, however. From citizen juries to forms of technology assessment, it is often the case that ingenious solutions are found through deliberation. However, these solutions are still a far cry from the electronic town hall democracy much touted in many policy and advocacy circles.

The trend may be toward such forms of deliberation. Civil society organizations often showcase their best practice stories using interactive media such as blogs, listservs,[®] and the Internet. Situations of problem solving or local adaptation in these stories are not hard to find. In the example of the program *Sanglap* mentioned earlier, perhaps role playing could be allowed in which citizens pretend to be the public figure after learning about the range of resources and constraints that the official faces. E-government initiatives, such as the ones mentioned earlier, are often critiqued for noninteractive features. One place to introduce interactivity would be in problem-solving discussions.

Interactivity need not mean further resource constraints on public officials so that they are answering an endless array of e-mails. Deliberation would mean finding solutions in which public officials and citizens are participating together to find solutions to problems. Especially at the local level, such deliberation could make the work of officials easier. Democracies always propose messy solutions. In the case of deliberation and dialogic communication, however, such messiness may decrease rent seeking and increase legitimacy, in turn making the democracy itself more functional (see figure 4.2).

We should also recall the case of governments that possess abundant resources but may or may not implement responsible public policy objectives, or a scenario in which the demands are homogenous (or unidirectional arising from either consensus within society or reflecting preexisting similarity in demographics), and the state has resources to meet these homogenous

Figure 4.2. Dysfunctional States with Dialogic Communication



Source: Author's drawing.

demands. The latter case is empirically extinct, whereas the East Asian developmentalist state may approximate the state with both resources and responsibility. Here again, crises of governance are not uncommon, and hindsight shows that the development itself may be extremely uneven though the overall growth rates are high (Singh 1999). Predatory states represent the case of resource-rich states unwilling to meet any kind of demands, often reaping the benefits of natural resources. The possibilities of communication technologies being used for social mobilization are endless in these cases. However, because of the nature of the state itself, deliberation may be unwelcome.

Conclusion

In moving toward dialogic communication, how can we use political analysis to guide communication strategy in governance reform? Our conclusion depends on whether the possibilities of dialogic communication are to be documented by the development practitioner, or implemented and articulated in the form of a development communication project or intervention itself. Table 4.1, which is suggestive rather than exhaustive in the measures it proposes, summarizes the political analysis that can be used for guiding communication strategy.

Documentation is by no means an easy task, but the practitioner must undertake this exercise prior to even suggesting any form of communication intervention. Information collected on the presence and absence of voice needs to detail the sociocultural complexity and power hierarchies in people's lives. Therefore, traditional social assessment techniques (Rietbergen-McCracken and Narayan 1998; Nash, Hudson, and Luttrell 2006) need to be combined with ethnography and identity narratives to reproduce the complexity of identity and the possibilities for voice.

Similarly, government officials may or may not be amenable to allowing for monologic or dialogic development communication interventions. In-depth interviews and knowledge of official or bureaucratic cultures may uncover the political spaces or issue areas within which these possibilities exist. It is revealing, for example, that *Strengthening World Bank Group Engagement on*

Table 4.1. Possibilities for Voice and Governance in Monologic and Dialogic Communication

Finding Possibilities	Documentation	Project Implementation or Articulation
For voice	Understanding the cultural conditions of “stakeholders” via ethnographies or cultural identity narratives or representations such as films, novels, music, images, and video Social assessment techniques	Monologic communication: Protests Social mobilization Making demands Dialogic communication: Staging rituals Role-play theater Soap operas on TV or radio allowing role playing and discussion Story telling
For governance	Elite interviews or consultation to find policy spaces in which deliberation might be allowed	Monologic communication (usually leading to transparency and accountability): E-government information (billboard) services Putting public officials in spotlight Dialogic communication (usually leading to deliberation and problem solving): Electronic town hall Citizen role playing Problem solving with government officials

Source: Author.

Governance and Anticorruption by the World Bank (2007) depended in large part on “multistakeholder consultations.” A wealth of literature now suggests that participatory reform depends on facilitative government action. Careful documentation would then reveal the extent to which the government officials are likely to be facilitative.

The articulation and project implementation discussed here do not discount the persuasive role of monologic communication in social organizing and finding voice or in making public processes transparent and accountable. However, a deliberative democracy involves citizens in problem solving. Communication technologies now offer several spaces for such deliberation; there is no “one communication technology fits all.” Deliberative communication can range from street theater to an electronic town hall featuring online deliberation. Communication media are such that human resourcefulness can lead to chains of expertise connecting various forms of communication media. Thus, a street performance by illiterate women can be instructive as a best practice to women across the world using other technologies in which civil society organizations, international organizations, or government officials step in to interconnect people. Perhaps Freire (2000/1970) was being overly optimistic, but he does articulate the humanistic possibility: “Faith in people is an *a priori* requirement for dialogue, the ‘dialogical man’ believes in others even before he meets them face to face” (90–91). As he goes on to note, “dialogue

becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence” (91).

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The Political Economy of Reform: Role of the Internal “Journalist”

Sumir Lal

The Making of Public Policy

This chapter is not a piece of academic research or scholarly analysis. Instead, at the request of the editors, I provide a personal account of how I, a journalist by training, introduced political analysis into the design of some key World Bank operations in India while I served as an external affairs officer in its New Delhi office during 2000–06 as well as an account of the approach I adopted.¹

This chapter begins with a basic question: How is public policy made in India? India is a democracy, and so the answer is apparently obvious and intuitive. Elected governments make policy. Parliamentarians discuss and approve the legislation required to make that policy operational. Economic and social lobbies and interest groups attempt to influence the outcome to their best advantage. Civil society and the media utilize the public sphere to keep the process accountable. The judiciary ensures the constitutionality of the measures being proposed. And everyone lives happily ever after.

But in India—and India here is just an empirical example; the same would hold true for any society larger than Robinson Crusoe’s—the truth, to quote Oscar Wilde, is rarely pure and never simple. The problem arises in the real-life practical complexity that underlies each of the steps enumerated above.

What is elected government, for example? In India, it is personified by the minister, who presides over the policy-making apparatus. As a participant in a parliamentary democracy, the minister is a politician who represents (1) an amalgam of interests composing his or her geographical electoral district, (2) the social (caste, linguistic, or religious) group he or she represents and is expected

to patronize, (3) the party's political strategies, and (4) the mercantile groups that bankroll the minister's political life and to whom he or she is obliged.

However, government in India—as anywhere else—is also the permanent bureaucracy. The senior bureaucrat in the ministry is a person of formidable experience in administration, is a master of procedure and precedent, is a rigid adherent to the precept that information is power, is usually someone of superior intellect to the more down-to-earth minister, and is a person with a marked preference for the perfection of minutiae over the momentousness of change. The bureaucrat runs circles around the minister; the minister retaliates through punitive transfers. No matter. In India, it is the bureaucrat who makes (or stalls) policy, and the minister who attends to the day-to-day hassles of office.

The bureaucracy is also the clerical cadre: a large, complacent, constitutionally safeguarded, politically affiliated body of men and women, jealously protective of their lifelong guarantee of employment and their health and retirement benefits. Is it their job to provide public services to fellow citizens? No, the concept does not exist. The ingrained idea instead is that it is they who are recipients of public service—from the government that serves them, and thereby the nation, by employing them and paying them well.

What of the parliamentarian? Like the minister, the parliamentarian represents a mix of geographical, social, and commercial interests. In addition, this person must display loyalty to the party leader or risk being disciplined, being denied a party nomination at the next election, or even being expelled from the House if he or she violates a party whip. Further, in the electoral district, the parliamentarian is patron of the specific political client groups that voted him or her to victory and, because of the bureaucracy's failures, is mediator (often for a fee) between citizen-petitioners and government service providers.

This last role puts politicians under intense pressure, for it is on their ability to bestow favors, distribute largesse, and extract as concessions from the system what it should ordinarily be providing that they will be judged by clients and voters. This role makes the politician live for the short term, prone to seeking rents, and apt to develop a vested interest in policies that increase the day-to-day citizen-government transactions in his or her district.

India—argumentative society that it is—is blessed with a vibrant civil society.² Caste and social networks, business and professional associations, activist and developmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), religious and charitable organizations—all inhabit the public sphere with a combination of self-important sense of high purpose, sharp self-interest, and a consequent well-developed facility for vocal expression and lobbying ability.

The public sphere itself is increasingly mediated by a fast-expanding, often raucous, businessman-owned and urban-middle-class-oriented media, both television and print. This sphere is supplemented by the growing and powerful phenomenon of the citizen-activist-journalist, who is able to connect with thousands of others through the Internet and cell phone and to mobilize, in an instant, thereby mutating constituencies around transient causes.

Let us not forget the judiciary with the well-regarded Supreme Court at its apex. On the one hand, the higher judiciary has played its role of conscience keeper well. On the other, it has often been accused of needless activism in matters that should be the prerogative of the executive. Down at the level of the ordinary citizen and firm, the courts are inefficient, corrupt, and clogged. What can be said for a system that has a current backlog of nearly 30 million cases?³

Just to make things a little more complicated, I must insert here the gentle reminder that the public sphere in India is not a single abstraction. There is the national or federal sphere; 28 state spheres; and thousands of city, district, and village spheres. There are cross-cutting linguistic, religious, and cultural spheres. The political class, bureaucracy, civil society, media, and judiciary are all divided up accordingly. Yet these spheres are not discrete. They overlap, blur, intersect, interact with, and influence each other, continuously changing their shape.

So we need to ask the question again: How is public policy crafted in India? Let us attempt the answer once more.

Policy change could be initiated by any of the players mentioned so far: a proactive politician or bureaucrat, an economic or social interest group well organized enough to have access to power, an activist judge prodding the executive to act, or a citizens' campaign that gains traction in civil society and the media. But most often, especially in matters related to economic policy, public service delivery, regulatory reform, public finance, trade, and other so-called matters of state, policy change is initiated by special interest groups acting in concert with sympathetic politicians and bureaucrats.

Things get murky thereafter. The multiplicity of stakeholders and interest groups in any matter of public concern in India means that even an apparently simple reform cannot be ensured a smooth passage through the system.⁴ The special interest group initiating the policy must first lobby the politician and bureaucrat. Once convinced of its merits, the politician must negotiate with his or her fellows and convince them, in turn, that none of their constituents will be adversely affected—or if they are, that new backers will be created by the reform.

By now, those likely to be adversely affected will have caught wind of the proposed change and will begin their own sequence of lobbying and cajoling. And so the process will go back and forth, often played out in the media and occasionally the judiciary (and if mishandled, the streets), with negotiation and compromise, obfuscation and inducement, delay and distraction, all figuring in the suite of tactics that will need to be deployed.

For most reformers, the political cost is not worth the effort and energy that must be invested in this process. So the first instinct of the initiating interest group, presiding politician, and implementing bureaucrat is to introduce change by stealth.⁵ Although the political class and media are suitably distracted by a religious or caste dispute, a foreign policy controversy, a business or sports scandal, or, these days, economic triumphs such as a record stock market

run or the Indian takeover of a major Western firm, that is the time to quickly pass a bill in parliament or to issue an executive notification.

But even this much-favored strategy is not necessarily a guarantor of success. An alert opponent could yet intervene after the fact through parliamentary melodramatics, the media, the judiciary, or street protest. Even if the reformers withstand all this and finally manage to enshrine into policy whatever incremental change has survived, the often larger challenge of actually implementing it remains. The lower bureaucracy, adversely affected interest groups, and political opponents of the presiding politician now mobilize to stall and dilute the new policy's intended outcomes on the ground.

Lest this seem too cynical a description, I should make clear that what I am describing is a legitimate political process—of citizens collecting into common interest groups, using political tools to get the state to deliver outcomes most beneficial to themselves, and negotiating deals and compromises with opponents. (Knowledgeable students of politics would find this description trite rather than cynical.) This thorough and ultimately just process is one that I profoundly respect.

The point I am making is that because of the Indian public arena's many players, many interests, and many layers, policy making in India is always a "two steps forward, one step back," never complete, ever ongoing exercise. It is, ironically, often very undemocratic—despite the long negotiations and apparent parliamentary, judicial, and media glare (federal or state level, as the case may be)—because the multiplicity of players and layers enables the creation of huge information asymmetries. So politician-bureaucrat-commercial alliances often can get decisions made that bypass entire groups of relevant stakeholders, who remain uninformed because they are illiterate, powerless, unorganized, not consulted, misrepresented, distracted, or some combination of these.

Enter the World Bank

Into this bewildering situation, let us introduce the foreign development agency. Foreign aid, of course, is not a very big factor in the Indian economy. In 2003, for example, the government of India told a host of smaller bilateral donors to deal directly with NGOs and academic institutions instead of bothering the bureaucracy with their small change and lengthy procedures.⁶ In that year, it prepaid a large portion of its bilateral and even multilateral debt. India's official assistance, therefore, comes mainly from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, with the significant bilateral aid providers now being Japan and the U.K. Department for International Development. The federal finance ministry is the primary counterpart for these organizations, but individual projects are implemented by line ministries, state governments, local governments, and federal or state public sector corporations, as the case may be.

The World Bank is India's largest lender, and India is the Bank's biggest customer, although what the Bank provides remains peanuts for India. Bank lending was 0.36 percent of India's gross domestic product in 2005, but here we are not concerned with that macropicture in which India, like other large economies at its level of development, borrows from the Bank as an option rather than a necessity. Our interest is in the specific investment or policy loan that the Bank is invited to provide to an individual government entity and the effects of the undoubtedly disproportionate weight of the Bank within that microsphere.

According to the global best practice, the lessons learned, and the donor community's intellectual wisdom of the day, the World Bank comes with what it believes are brilliant technocratic solutions to the country's development problems. It has a solution not just for how to build a road, but for the following: (1) how to manage and maintain it as well, (2) how to run a power or water utility in a way that is both financially sound and helpful to poor communities, (3) how to manage forests in a sustainable manner that will allow tribal communities to emerge from poverty, (4) how a fiscally strapped government should balance its finances so that it is solvent yet able to invest in infrastructure and human development, and (5) so on.

The World Bank is mandated to lend to and operate only through governments—a stipulation that borrowing-country directors on its Executive Board guard most jealously. Thus, the Bank deals mostly with ministry officials. Faceless technocrats meet faceless bureaucrats. The ministry needs funding. A loan is offered, the technocratic solution is proffered, a project is designed, prepared, appraised, approved, and implemented. It should be simple. In India it isn't. Time and again, the World Bank becomes an unwitting and usually naively unknowing participant in this political process. (World Bank staff members are explicitly barred from entering the political process of borrowing countries and genuinely believe that they do not).

The pathway to this process is almost inevitable. First, there is the strictly circumscribed, bureaucrats-only dialogue that the host government insists on confining the Bank to. This dialogue is combined with the Bank's own belief in the supremacy of its solution. As a result, there is a lack of up-front, truly open-and-listening consultation with relevant stakeholders by either the Bank or the government. To practical effect, the Bank's intervention—however well meaning—becomes no different from that of any mercantile special interest group that secretly lobbies the state to initiate a favorable policy change.

World Bank staff members, who are proud development professionals sincerely dedicated to their mission of alleviating poverty, believe they have better intentions than that. But the fact is their bureaucratic gatekeepers in India and their own intellectual certitude make the Bank's initial *modus operandi* nontransparent. (It is not my argument that every executive decision requires a prior consultation, or every Bank-government meeting needs to be held in the open. But, as we shall see later, to be acceptable and credible, fiscal,

governance, and utility reform initiatives in particular require their case to be made with the concerned stakeholders—ideally by the government—*before* they become policy.)

Then, as the Bank proposal is wrung through the Indian system in the excruciating manner described earlier, opponents of the government, detractors of the proposal, critics of the Bank, vested interests, and, eventually, of course, genuinely relevant stakeholder groups (on the basis of partial or distorted information) all belatedly sit up.

On those occasions that the proposal pertains to anything that affects conflicting interests—such as utility projects, fiscal or governance reform, forestry and water infrastructure projects, or projects with resettlement and environmental impacts—controversy follows. Motives are attributed, conspiracies are smelled, ideologies are assailed, and sovereignty is invoked. For all these groups, each with a different axe to grind, the Bank becomes a convenient whipping boy, a high-profile refractor through which to send political messages to their government. Typically, the Bank's technocrats and managers are genuinely confused as to why their perfectly logical, well-meaning solution that had poverty alleviation as its keystone should meet with such opposition.

Sometimes, though, the system responds not with controversy, but with something perhaps more frustrating and inexplicable—stubborn nonimplementation. When and why does a government refuse to implement something that it has agreed to? Is it inefficiency, low capacity, or that creature called lack of political will, whatever that might mean, that causes this to happen?

The Politics of Power Sector Reform

India had initiated liberalization reform in 1991, and by the mid-to-late 1990s, the reform arena had moved to the state level. Most of India's states were in bad fiscal shape with unsustainable deficits and bloated and inefficient public sectors, including underperforming, financially bleeding power sectors.

The government of India and the Bank had agreed that the Bank would support power sector reform as part of structural adjustment programs—as they were then called—in three states (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh) and as stand-alone operations in three others. The Bank had identified the hemorrhaging power sector as critical to fixing the states' finances. Further, it had decided that the best way to address the dysfunction in the sector would be to unbundle the monolithic state electricity boards into separate generation, transmission, and distribution entities; to privatize the distribution; to introduce regulation; to improve revenue collection through metering and antitheft measures; and to reduce the largely misdirected power subsidies that were being funneled to richer farmers in the name of the poor.

So far, so good. The unbundling occurred, and incipient regulatory regimes were introduced. But in state after state—even those led by gung-ho, reformist chief ministers—nobody moved on the agriculture subsidy issue, installing of

meters, and privatization. The reform became increasingly controversial, and there were violent demonstrations in Andhra Pradesh in 2000.

One day in 2002, a visiting Bank vice president from Washington and the Bank's then lead economist for India asked if I would put together a note to explain why in all the states, even so-called reforming ones, the agriculture subsidy issue had become the common stumbling block. "Isn't it obvious that undeserving big farmers are cornering the subsidy at the expense of the small? Can't people see that a financially sound utility will allow the state to extend electricity services to the poor? Why are even reforming chief ministers hesitant to implement power reform?" they asked. I was requested to write five to eight pages, due in a month.

I was neither an expert in the power sector nor a trained political scientist. Until that point, as part of my duties as an external affairs officer, I had been providing management with periodic political updates and analyses that, for example, explained headlines, put events in perspective, examined cabinet and bureaucratic changes, and gave early warnings. These were essentially journalistic exercises—timely, concise, and episode based.

Now I had to delve into something deeper: the underlying political economy of an entire sector. I proceeded in the intuitive, deductive way a journalist would. First, I read as much background as I could—in particular, literature that was critical of the Bank program. Much of this critique was ideological and knee-jerk, and I had to use the journalist's skeptical eye to sift out the issues of substantive concern. To understand the Bank program, I read the project documents and interviewed my colleagues who had been working in the sector in the different states. Their frustration with India's seemingly incomprehensible politics was evident.

This initial research allowed me to unpack the expression "power reform" into its constituent parts, to identify the stakeholders and interest groups affected, and to list the questions that needed answering. These activities were not rocket science. Who were the people affected, one way or another, by each specific reform? What was their position on it, and why? How committed were the politicians and bureaucrats charged with implementing the reform? What motivated them one way or the other?

I now embarked on a series of interviews and informal conversations with bureaucrats, political types, farm leaders, academics, journalists, NGOs active in the sector, power industry specialists, and others in New Delhi and various states. This was not a formal research exercise but was an attempt at understanding the underlying dynamics, and so I remained the journalist—not the excited reporter thrusting microphones into people's faces, but more the measured columnist, establishing a comfort level with my interlocutors, then conversing with them, usually in off-the-record settings.

My first draft—the five to eight pages initially requested—was barely able to delineate the issues and ended up raising more questions than it answered. The three energy sector colleagues who represented the internal clients for my

note provided insightful technical comments and asked me to delve deeper—that is, I got more than a month and the leeway to write 20 pages if needed.

My conversations and reading began to reveal several features:

- A lack of understanding (not only within the Bank, but also among India’s own impatient, proreform elites) of the gradual style in which India undertakes reform, which is a process that is deeply reflective of its negotiation- and compromise-based political culture and processes;
- A lack of public understanding of the reform’s rationale (in other words, there was no common perception of the problem to which the Bank was pushing the solution);
- The fact that “power reform” meant one thing to the Bank’s technocrats and quite another to the politicians implementing it;
- The fact that most of the so-called beneficiaries of the reform had no idea that such a program was being carried out in their name;
- The reality that the villainous big farmers who were hogging all the subsidies had some serious problems of their own, including the fact that they were “big” only relatively;
- The understanding that the big farm constituency was politically a holy cow; and
- The fact that the entry point to tackling the subsidy issue lay not in the power sector but possibly in the water and credit areas, which were at the root of the farmers’ insecurities.

I finally completed my 26-page paper in early 2003. It was an unpretentious, empirical piece that explained India’s peculiar reform method, pointed out the weaknesses in the power reform program that had led to the “lack of political will” my colleagues had found so frustrating, identified the key stakeholders and their concerns, and suggested openings and opportunities that reformers could pursue on the basis of these insights. In essence, my analysis made a very simple and, in retrospect, obvious point: that a technocratic solution alone did not make a reform program. To be politically feasible, reform had to be based, first, on stakeholder ownership of the problem, and then in negotiated solutions that addressed the genuine concerns of all interest groups, both poor and elite.

To my surprise, there was a large audience for the paper and its observations among my operational colleagues. No more than an informal, internal note (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVCOMMENG/Resources/finalpowersectorindiaebook.pdf>),⁷ it was sent to an initial distribution of about 20 Bank colleagues who worked on India, but it gained a life of its own as people forwarded it to others in different parts of the Bank working in a range of sectors. Several members of the team working on the 2004 World Development Report (WDR) on service delivery,⁸ one of the first major Bank reports to speak openly of the role of politics, were enthusiastic readers, for example, and a brown-bag seminar I addressed at the Bank’s Washington headquarters in April 2003 drew a standing-room-only crowd.

Most important, the paper influenced the thinking of the Bank's South Asia energy sector management. Four years after writing it, I was told by the Bank's incumbent energy sector manager for South Asia:

Your work on the political economy of power sector reforms has informed—and continues to inform—our re-engagement strategy on the power sector at the state level. Specifically, our focus is much more on the systems of accountability and efficiency, and less on eliminating subsidies, even mistargeted ones. On subsidies for power supply for agriculture, our focus is on improving the accountability of such subsidy flows and giving the farmer more bang for the subsidy buck, including by improving the quality of subsidized power supply.⁹

This was a time when “political economy” was becoming a buzzword within the Bank. The 2004 WDR put the *p*-word at the center of the discourse; within the Bank's India program, my work on the power sector succeeded in doing the same. Colleagues from different sectors now asked for similar inputs: some short and “just in time,” others more comprehensive and detailed. If my power sector note constituted a midstream analysis of political economy factors that were affecting the implementation of a sector-wide reform operation, the four notes I will now describe were different creatures. One took a very upstream look at potential risks to a specific project; the second was a broad, state-level sweep of risks and opportunities pertaining to a multisector reform program; the third—a background piece for an analytic report—summarized and drew lessons from the roller coaster political careers of three reforming politicians; and the last was an internally contested post mortem of a controversial water reform project from which the Bank had to withdraw.

Analyzing Political Risk

The forestry sector has always been a complicated one in India. Indigenous communities, grassroots activist groups, left-wing insurgents, timber mafias, commercial mining interests, wildlife and conservation enthusiasts, low-capacity forest departments, competing social and tribal welfare departments, rivalry between the Indian forest service and administrative service, colonial era land laws, intricate litigation, conflicting federal and state environmental legislation, overlapping jurisdictions of local governments and traditional community leaderships, and local political and power elites present a web of competing issues and interests. This is especially the case in the underdeveloped, forested, tribal, and mineral-rich state of Jharkhand.

The Bank was not new to this sector in India but had recently come away from a bad experience in the state of Madhya Pradesh, where it had become the target of bitter activist groups. Determined to get it right in Jharkhand when asked to prepare a participatory forestry management project in 2002, the Bank's task leaders introduced the concepts of communication and consultation very early in their dialogue with their state forest department counterparts.

Refreshingly, they began reaching out to the somewhat bemused local civil society and activist groups while the project was still in a concept stage.

I had played a role in initiating these contacts when, in October 2003, the task leader asked me for a note that would identify the main players and issues in the forestry sector in the state, their likely impact on the proposed project, and the risks and opportunities for the Bank and asked me to suggest a risk management strategy.

I proceeded as I had done for the power sector note, with the difference that now I was working on a future operation instead of an ongoing one. I met with knowledgeable and representative individuals in Delhi and Jharkhand, and I collected further material through a reading of relevant literature and through group interactions and interviews with stakeholder representatives afforded by my participation in Bank missions and workshops associated with the project.

To make a long story short (although the reverse is what occurred!), what was expected to be a brief 15-page delineation of issues ended up as more than 50 pages because of the range of factors that emerged and had to be flagged and analyzed. I divided the note, which was completed in January 2005, into three sections: a historical and political background of the newly created state that provided the context in which the project was to be set, a description of stakeholders and issues that have a direct influence on the Jharkhand forest sector and would have similar influence on the proposed project, and a summary of the risks identified in the first two sections with suggested mitigation measures. (The key suggestion was that the project should not be overdesigned, but should allow leeway for implementation and community participation arrangements to vary in sync with the local variations in social, legal, and governance situations.)

Because of the sensitivity of its contents, the note had a very restricted circulation within the Bank's project team and South Asia forestry sector management. In the end, the project did not go through because of other problems that were beyond its scope, but the note served a useful purpose while the team was active. Although any experienced forestry specialist would have been familiar with the issues it outlined, its value, from an operational point of view, lay in its "synthesizing the issues, organizing thoughts, and inducing objective and realistic expectations" (as a member of the Bank's Jharkhand forestry task team told me).

Simultaneously, another team at the Bank had me working on a paper on the neighboring backward state of Orissa, where an ambitious, multisector reform program was to be supported by a series of Bank development policy loans. The terms of reference for this note were sweeping: examine who within Orissa society stood to lose from the reforms and who stood to gain; what the motive force behind the reform program was at the time and what the chances were of reforms being sustained; how reforms should be sequenced; and how issues of caste politics, elite capture, and social equity could be addressed. According to the answers to these questions, the note was to look at the political

feasibility of some of the major proposed reform actions—particularly with respect to the election cycle—and to suggest key ingredients for a risk mitigation strategy.

Drawing on my by-now familiar journalistic style of inquiry, the note evolved in three stages: first, in March 2003, a short version titled “An Introduction to the Political Economy of Orissa,” which provided a background to the nature of Orissa society and politics, was placed in circulation among the World Bank and the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) Orissa teams. (DFID was a Bank partner in the Orissa operation.) Then, in February 2004, a first draft of the complete note was submitted. A final, revised version followed in May 2005 after allowing for intervening state elections and bureaucratic changes.

In the introduction, I explained that in the course of collecting the material, both at the time of the 2004 draft and even 15 months later during the final revision, a general lack of awareness and ownership in Orissa of the proposed reform program was apparent. Therefore, the paramount question was the second one, on the program’s “motive force” and sustainability. The note primarily focused on this issue and embedded an assessment of the state’s leadership in a broader contextual analysis of its political structure and culture.

The other objectives—how to identify winners and losers, how reforms should be sequenced, how to address issues of elite capture, and so on—which were issues of implementation and detail, were addressed in a preliminary manner. I broadly outlined the main players and potential sticking points in each sector and proposed a consultation framework that could guide reform champions in their negotiations with stakeholders.

Like the Jharkhand forestry note, this paper had very restricted circulation confined to the task team leadership and sector management. It motivated the Bank team and its counterparts in DFID and the Orissa government, however, to introduce the notion of strategic communication in the reform program. This is now an ongoing operation. I have since moved on, so I am not qualified to comment on how this has actually worked on the ground, but its inclusion in the agenda was a breakthrough in itself.

My next task was probably the most exciting to carry out. I was asked by this lead author of a report on reforming India’s public services to examine this question: “When does service delivery reform become politically sustainable?” I was to do this in the light of resounding election defeats suffered by three reforming state chief ministers during 2003–04. I was expressly told to be the journalist: interview the ministers and the people around them; then simply tell their story and draw out the lessons learned.

I thoroughly enjoyed the interview and information-gathering process as any journalist would when given such a juicy assignment—with a generous deadline and no word limit. I began the paper with a contextual analysis of the expectations that Indian voters have of their politicians and of the factors that generally determine Indian election results. I then selected a specific reform

that each chief minister had been identified with; reconstructed, through the interviews, the process by which they had been initiated and implemented; and assessed whether the reforms would survive the demise of the politician.

In the final section, I culled out the common features in the external circumstances and leadership styles of the three politicians. I then drew the lessons that could make a reform sustainable—that is, outlive its political progenitor. My conclusion, in a nutshell, was that, to be sustainable, a reform required five distinct ingredients: a politician to initiate it and provide backing, bureaucratic champions to implement the idea and manage the process, internalization of the changes by the department concerned, co-option or isolation of potential opponents, and creation of interest groups with a stake in the new system.

This draft paper greatly informed the lead author of the report on service delivery,¹⁰ but like the Jharkhand and Orissa notes, it remained confined to a very restricted readership list because of its overtly political content. I was not even required to revise it into a final form.

Last, I will mention an informal note I wrote for the Bank's South Asia regional management looking back at the Delhi Jal (water) Board (DJB) controversy of 2005. DJB, a government-owned monopolistic utility, provides middle-class areas of the city with intermittent, low-quality water—hardly any to slum areas—despite an overall, adequate supply of raw water. The Bank had been in discussion with the Delhi government since 1998 for a possible water reform operation, and the regional management approved the concept of what was officially called the Delhi Water Supply and Sewerage Project in early 2005.

The project, which sought to address the challenge of providing Delhi with an affordable, sustainable, and reliable water service by an efficient provider, was embedded in the reform principle of enforcing accountability by separating the roles of the policy maker, owner, and manager, and of creating transparent contractual relationships among them. It had five components: a 24/7 water distribution pilot in two zones of Delhi through a management contract to a private operator, investments in the trunk sewer network, special services to the poor, organizational strengthening of DJB, and preparation of a rollout plan for the entire city.

Controversy arose in July 2005 when a local NGO accused the Bank of unduly influencing the selection of the project consultant. The NGO then ran a skillful campaign—targeting opinion makers, political influencers, and middle-class residents—centered on four issues: the “privatization,” and especially the entry of foreign companies; the fears about tariff hikes; the Bank's role, and the alleged worldwide failure of the model it was “imposing”; and the lack of transparency and consultation.

DJB and the government of Delhi failed to counter this campaign, even though much of it was riddled with easily met factual and logical inaccuracies. In essence, the campaign was based on a single PowerPoint presentation; it could have been picked apart slide by slide, point by point. But the

government failed to do this, although the presentation floated around in the public domain for months. The Bank could defend itself only through the media because it clearly could not enter the ground-level political battle. In November, the Delhi government, which was facing other political pressures at the time, decided it no longer wanted the Bank loan.

My note—an entirely personal and unofficial take on the situation, written in December 2005—looked at the questions of the project’s political timing, quality of the Bank’s and DJB’s consultation effort, and reasons for DJB’s communication failures. It then addressed the larger questions of the challenge of transparency raised by India’s new Right to Information Act: how committed the client really was to this particular reform model, whether enough groundwork had been done to build a public climate for urban water utility reform in India, and whether the Bank should have been more aggressive about defending its position instead of leaving it to DJB.

This note received a mixed reception within the Bank—upsetting some colleagues who felt it was misinformed, but welcomed by others. Perhaps it had been written too soon after the events it described. Two years later, however, the points made in the note are beginning to be debated internally, especially as by now a couple of (as yet unpublished) academic case studies of the Delhi water project are in circulation.

The fundamental question raised by my note, although not stated so baldly, was this: “If the Bank had done an upstream political risk analysis, would it still have gone ahead with the project?” Or might it have first informed the public sphere with analysis about the unsustainable water situation in Delhi, and provoked a debate about the various available reform options?

Looking Back: What I Did and Its Value

I believe the basic value of all these analyses lay in the reality check that they provided my colleagues. Through my inputs, based on local knowledge, they were able to get a sense of the lay of the land, its topography and meteorology so to speak, including an awareness of how the Bank’s entry itself affected the dynamics within this landscape. This knowledge enabled them to be more sensitive, flexible, informed, and confident as they went about meeting their interlocutors and designing their programs.

I think the most important questions I asked as I did my field work were “why” and “what motivates.” The answers to these questions were what revealed the concerns, fears, hopes, and interests, or what my economist friends would collectively term the incentives, of each stakeholder group. Understanding the incentives brought to life and made comprehensible abstractions like “beneficiaries,” “project-affected persons,” “civil society,” “stakeholders,” “reform champions,” and similar ones that populate Bank operational documents. This understanding, in turn, made evident the futility of hinging the success of any reform program on a single champion,

as well as the necessity of consultation and communication. In sum, my colleagues were better able to appreciate the “feasibility gap” between a theoretical reform concept and what could realistically be accepted and implemented in a given set of circumstances.

I should clarify that my papers—fresh and unprecedented though they might have been—were marginal inputs to the particular operations they supported. Beyond improving the understanding—in the manner described earlier—of the individual colleagues who happened to have access to them, I make no claim to having changed the way the Bank did its business in India or to having contributed to any significant quality impacts in these specific operations. I am not being modest or pessimistic but am pointing to the realistic limitations of such work.

First, with the exception of the power sector paper, the notes remained confidential inputs to the individual task team leaders who commissioned them. This input reflects the tricky question that such overtly political analysis poses for the Bank, which is mandated to remain politically disinterested in the countries in which it operates, yet whose work, if it is to be feasible and locally sensitive, requires that it have a nuanced understanding of the local political economy. In the absence of an institutionalized mechanism in the Bank to absorb political intelligence, my effort was no more than a discrete, random, and transient one that quietly occurred in one corner of the institution at the initiative of the individuals who sought my services.

Second, understanding the local political economy is one thing. Finding a creative way to respond to it—through operation design, timing, and sequence—is another. Convincing the players in the system—primarily government counterparts—to undertake the necessary consultation, communication, and transparency measures required to engage with stakeholders is almost impossible.

A caveat here is that communication and consultation in themselves are not a quick fix that will preempt or eliminate problems. They are merely instruments. If deployed well, they can help build allies; channel useful inputs on design, timing, and sequence; create iterative feedback loops; and prevent disinformation from seizing the day. If poorly executed or reduced to cosmetic public relations, they can boomerang. This problem raises two questions that require separate discussion: one, who “owns” the reform—the government, which is the sovereign, or the Bank, which introduced the idea? And, two, to be meaningful, how far upstream in the life cycle of a project or a reform idea should stakeholder engagement begin, and who—government or donor—should provide the resources necessary to conduct a sustained dialogue?

Conclusion: Some Thoughts on Methodology

The formal literature on the political economy of reform derives certain conclusions on aspects of reform feasibility, and political and institutional processes, but only after rigorous analysis. In contrast, as is obvious from my

descriptions, my rather unsophisticated methodology was invented as I went along. Perhaps the value of this approach—what economists call “casual empiricism”—lay precisely in the fact that it was spontaneous, thereby allowing me to drill down into specific locales, and if calling spades by their given name, to indicate when emperors had no clothes, and to point to elephants in rooms.

My information-gathering process, it is clear, entailed identifying an appropriate set of interlocutors using preliminary research and then asking them pertinent questions through conversational interviews. If I take a step back to see how I was organizing myself, this general mental checklist guided my inquiries:¹¹

- Understanding the overall political context of the specific location, including party profiles and policies, current hot issues, chronic issues, and the local election cycle
- Identifying the key individuals in the decision-making structure—political, bureaucratic, and nonofficial—and their politics
- Assessing the overall capacity and quality of the bureaucracy
- Against this backdrop, looking at the implementing agency—individual counterparts as well as general staff—for its commitment to the operation, and its ability to relate to stakeholders
- Identifying relevant civil society opinion leaders, their role, and likely responses
- Investigating the presence or absence of critics and activists in the project location and sector (in the sector case: local, national, and international) and assessing the substance of their arguments and likely tactics
- Assessing the interests of local-level political and power elites in the project area
- Identifying the project stakeholder groups; their relationships with the state as a whole and with the implementing agency in particular, as well as with each other; and their traditional political behaviors
- Assessing the media environment
- Assessing the salience of the Bank’s or donor’s own reputation in the specific context
- Looking out for other issues particular to the project location and sector.

The last point—other issues—is not a throwaway one. It is this search for the particular that ensured my work was not formulaic, but was reflective of the specifics of each case. Further, the entire checklist does not come into play in every case, but permutations of it does, depending on the scope of the analysis being attempted and the stage at which the operation stands. Finally, when this information is gathered, not all of it needs to go into the final report. Much of it is for background to inform and provide perspective to the analysis. One must come to conclusions about what is of relevance to the decisions that management must make, must be up front with those statements, and must then marshal the data to back them.

In hindsight, I feel there is scope to add further value even when the approach is as informal as mine. On this point, I could categorize my work—the notes described here, as well as the numerous smaller ones I did—into four distinct categories: political updates, political backgrounders, political economy analyses, and political risk assessments. The first three are self-explanatory. The last requires some thought: what do we mean by political risk, and political risk for whom?

In the private sector, a well-established practice of political risk analysis has evolved since the 1970s, primarily to serve Western corporations intending to invest in poor and emerging economies. Associated with it is an entire branch of the insurance industry devoted to political risk coverage. This branch is led by, among others, the World Bank Group subsidiary the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, which provides coverage to encourage foreign direct investment in poor countries that otherwise would find it difficult to attract investors. Political risk, in this context, largely means governmental actions or other noncommercial, noneconomic events beyond the control of the investing firm that can affect the profitability of its investment. The risks can range from political instability in the country to violence, war, and insurgency and, to the expropriation of assets or outright nationalization.

Analysts in this field assess the probability of occurrence of each risk and the severity of the impact of that occurrence on the firm's operations. The product of probability and severity enables them to put a number to the level of risk, which the firm's management and insurer can then factor into their investment decision. Several specialized political risk-rating agencies have emerged as leaders in this field and publish regular country political risk ratings. In a related field, firms that rate sovereign debt also factor in political risk calculations. The attempt in most cases is somehow to translate the subjectivity of political analysis into the cool objectivity of a number. The numbers these analysts and firms provide are relative measures, which serve the useful purpose of helping insurers price their products and investors compare potential destinations. But other than being comparative snapshots in time, they have limitations.

As there is no comprehensive theory of political risk, each of those agencies has identified a fixed set of parameters, developed its own technique of assessing risks (ranging from statistical probabilities to subjective probabilities to regression analyses to subjective scores assigned by experts), and then has contrived a formula to transform the parameters into an overall figure. This is not the place to discuss the approach, but three points are clear: the raw data behind the numbers in most cases originate from subjective assessments, clients of those agencies must use their own judgment to rank the risks in a way relevant to their firm's unique business strategy and situation, and these numbers cannot anticipate or provide guidance when an actual

crisis occurs on the ground. Thus, even in the quantitative world of international business, political risk assessment and management, at its heart, remains empirical and very much a function of the knowledge, intuition, skills, and judgment of individuals.

So how does this apply to the work of the World Bank (or any development project, for that matter)? It does in two ways: first, there is a cue to be taken from the private sector's sensitivity to political risk and, second, in this there is a role, as we have just seen, for empirical assessment.

Judging from the value of my analyses to the operational colleagues who commissioned them, I believe all development and reform projects should systematically be informed by "journalistic" political risk assessments. I define political (that is, nontechnical, noneconomic) risk here not as one that affects profitability, but as one that could affect the *intended development outcome* of the intervention—which is exactly what my colleagues had in mind when they sought my help.

I contend that, unlike a profit-motivated commercial project seeking to insure itself against events beyond its control, "political risk" in a development project is largely in the control of the "investor"—because the risk can be minimized by evolving the proposed development outcome into a *choice* that most stakeholders can agree on (rather than the imposition it often becomes). Thus, I believe that if donor agency/development banks *and government decision makers* are put into the habit of assessing political risk (as I define it above) early in the life cycle of a development or reform operation, they will be forced to examine the viability of their own ideas and to become more consultative and inclusive in designing their project concepts and reform formulations.

Assessing risk is only one part of the process, of course; managing it follows. So the process as a whole has four stages: doing the analysis, receiving and interpreting it, devising a response, and acting on it. As my experience shows, an institutionalized system that encompasses this entire process has yet to emerge in the development community. My efforts during my service in the Bank's India office began at this starting point: to provide frank, empirical, political analysis that combined an external perspective with an insider's understanding of what was relevant to the particular operation.

Notes

1. The views expressed here are the author's alone and should not be attributed to the World Bank, any unit within it, its affiliated organizations, members of its Board, or the countries they represent. I am grateful to Adesinaola (Sina) Odugbemi for encouraging me to write this piece; to Rohitashya Chattopadhyay for research and other invaluable assistance; and to Shanta Devarajan, Dale Lautenbach, Brian Levy, and Edith Wilson for their comments on an earlier draft. Before joining the World Bank, I held senior editorial positions in leading Indian newspapers such as the *Telegraph*, the *Pioneer*, and the *Hindustan Times*.

2. I am obliged for the term *argumentative society* to the title of Amartya Sen's *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).
3. In 2006, the backlog in subordinate courts and state high courts was 24.8 million cases and 3.65 million cases, respectively. Reported in the *Times of India*, November 30, 2007. See <http://egovindia.wordpress.com/2007/11/30/judiciary-equally-to-blame-for-backlog>.
4. A rough definition of stakeholder as used in this essay would be as follows: individuals and groups who are affected by, or can affect, a given development project or operation.
5. The classic account of why Indian reformers prefer this strategy is in Rob Jenkins, *Democratic Politics and Economic Reform in India* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
6. In 2005, the government of India refined its guidelines to accept bilateral assistance only from the G-8 countries and the European Commission. Bilateral aid from other European Union countries is accepted only if the annual program is more than \$25 million and from others if it is in the form of technical assistance to build skills of Indians or if it is channeled through a multilateral agency project.
7. It has subsequently been published. See S. Lal, *Can Good Economics Ever Be Good Politics? Case Study of India's Power Sector*, Working Paper 83, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2006. A shorter version under the same title was published in the *Economic and Political Weekly* 40 (7) (Mumbai, February 12, 2005).
8. <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/EXTWDR2004/0,,menuPK:477704~pagePK:64167702~piPK:64167676~theSitePK:477688,00.html>.
9. E-mail to the author, April 2007.
10. http://imagebank.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2006/03/27/000012009_20060327084642/Rendered/PDF/350410rev0IN.pdf.
11. This checklist is relevant for World Bank or donor-funded operations being executed through government agencies.

Part II
Securing Political Will







Creating Space for Effective Political Engagement in Development

Matthew Andrews

Introduction

Most members of the development community, and especially those in multilateral and bilateral organizations, will agree that politicians are centrally important to development. Fewer agree, however, on how to ensure effective political engagement in development programs and reforms. It is questionable whether many practitioners or theoreticians even have clear ideas about what effective political engagement looks like. Terms like *political will* and *political commitment* lack clarity and operational import; it is unclear what they are and even more unclear how to foster them. This chapter attempts to shed light on why such a key issue is poorly understood and to suggest ideas for thinking about it.

The discussion reflects observations made in the literature on development interventions and from case studies of public sector reforms that the author has conducted in the last five years. The approach centers on weaknesses in a routinely observed implicit, three-dimensional “theory of doing development”:

- The basis of intervention is a technical policy idea, manifest in a policy paper produced by an external subject expert for implementation. (These products are quite standardized and reflect the generalizeability of economic principles and best practices.) Good technical policies will invariably foster development.
- Effective political engagement is evidenced by receptivity to the technical idea and support of its implementation. Development is fostered where good technical ideas are well received by politicians.

- Easily identifiable reform champions—in the form of the technical-ideas people and the political heavyweights supporting these ideas—are vital to effective implementation. Development is fostered in the presence of such champions.

Research suggests that these dimensions of how to conduct development are flawed. Similar technical interventions are commonly found implemented with similar political receptivity and similar presence of champions but with vastly different results. When one examines differences between interventions that seem more successful than others (although this is a guarded attribution of value, given the high variation in what constitutes success in development), a different model of development intervention arises. In terms of the three dimensions mentioned earlier, the new approach looks something like this:

- The basis of intervention is to create space in which the developing entity can identify, define, and solve its own problems. Reform, change, or growth space is manifest in organizations with acceptance, authority, and ability profiles that allow continuous and creative adjustment to the challenges of development. Reform or change space invariably fosters development.
- Effective political engagement is evidenced in organizations in which politicians (with big and little *p*'s, as discussed next) do what is needed to establish space: fostering acceptance of a creative and dynamic culture, authority structures that balance rule-based accountability with dynamic creativity, and the ability to do what needs to be done for progress to be made. Development is fostered where politicians use their influence and formal and informal interventions to create space for organizational evolution.
- Change occurs across networks, in which multiple people bring multiple talents and abilities to bear. The individual who connects nodes is the key to the network, but this individual is often not the one who has the technical idea or who is called the reform champion. That individual's skill lies in his or her ability to bridge relational boundaries and bring people together. Development is fostered in the presence of robust networks with skilled connectors acting at their heart.

This new model constitutes a major change in thinking about the way development is done, who should be hired by the development community (particularly multilaterals and bilaterals), what they should do, and even how they should measure developmental progress. One fundamental challenge is the departure from a protechnical and apolitical, aorganizational, asociological approach to doing development to one that demands strong political, organizational, and sociological knowledge and skill. In this model, technical abilities in economics and similar areas become a calling card for experts in relationships rather than the basis of their product.

Implicit here is the idea that external development experts have many comparative advantages in facilitating development, but their major advantage is in being able to bridge relationships and networks and to “connect” people. This connection far exceeds the technical comparative advantage they currently emphasize. If development experts were to play this connector role, a second fundamental challenge for their organizations would center on their product definitions and communication modalities. Instead of focusing on technical documents and largely monologic engagements with small groups of experts (in the Ministry of Finance, for instance), the network connector model emphasizes relational engagement and highly dialogic communication within multiple-player networks. An effective expert would be defined in his or her ability to bring players together around key problems, to suggest and resource solutions, and ultimately to see solutions set in place.

Experience in development confirms that many people already play this role. These people are seen to struggle for reward and support in organizational structures that are still overly technical, however. The “connector” role often is played at the margins of a more technical development intervention, often also characterized by weak political engagement. The purpose of this chapter is to contribute to a debate between the connectors and the technocrats, especially regarding the three core dimensions viewed as central to a current and proposed “theory of doing development.”

Dimension 1: Moving from Technicalities to “Change Space” in Development Dialogue

The author was recently in an African country that was being advised by a large international agency on social security reform. One person in the room laughingly asked whether the advice was centered on adopting a “three-pillar social security model”—what he understood as the technical order of the day from organizations like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and regional development banks. The government official laughed in reply that the technocrats were now touting a “five-pillar model”—apparently because of its success in a Latin American country. He complained that the international experts produced a proposal with little relevance to his country’s political, organizational, and social setting: “What if a five-pillar model really doesn’t make sense here?” he asked.

The government official commented that the technical advice did not help his country in its attempts to address the issues and that the international experts had all but ignored local ideas and concerns in developing their technical proposal. The bias toward technicalities in the development interaction seriously undermined political and organizational engagement with those who would ultimately lead the intervention.

This emphasis on technical solutions as the basis of development and development communication can be seen in just about any area. In industrial

policy, the solutions focus on advice about what a trade ministry should look like (often drawing on the “developmental states” and South Korean and Japanese experience, for example). Solutions also focus on what kinds of industries to support (advice that reflects experience of the East Asian tigers and other standouts). In public sector reform, common reform types are replicated everywhere—MTEF, PRSP, FMIS, performance management, and so on. The technical ideas are manifest in documents that emphasize their strong economic analysis and the relevance of the technical solution for the country at hand.

But is the emphasis on technicalities as the most effective route to fostering development correct? Recent work suggests not. In the field of sociology, authors routinely question the technical models of what works in development. With regard to industrial policy, for example, Woolsey-Biggart and Guillén (1999) emphasize flaws in economic growth models focused on critical technical factors and interventions (such as what kind of industry or product to support). They show how experience in the automobile sector in South Korea, Taiwan, Spain, and Argentina differed significantly because of noneconomic and non-technical reasons. In each setting, the “space” for components and assembly industries was different and reflected different organizational and sociological factors, particularly “institutionalized patterns of authority and organization” (722). These authors use the term *organizing logics* to refer to entrenched patterns of engagement in organizations and societies that “inform action and meaning” and “allow firms and other economic actors to pursue some activities ... more successfully than others” (726).

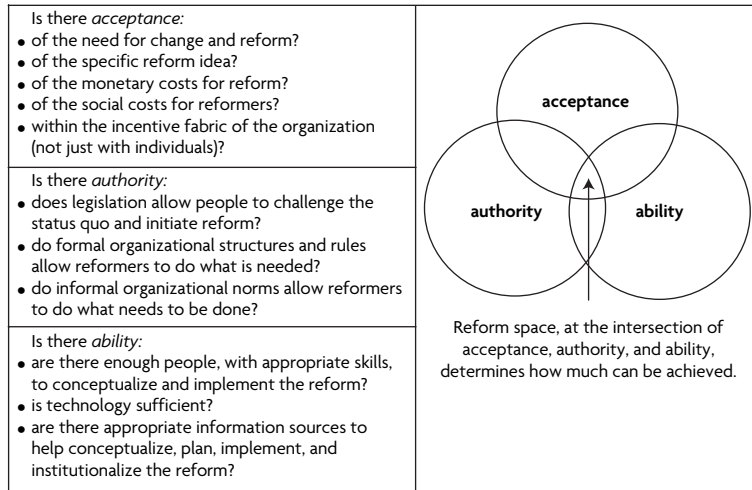
One of the conclusions taken from Woolsey-Biggart and Guillén’s work is that growth policy is less about the technical industrial policy solution and more about the social-organizational space in which the solution arises and is implemented. (As with many institutional theorists, they are pessimistic about developing space where it does not exist.) This conclusion is in keeping with recent work by development economists Dani Rodrik and Ricardo Hausmann, who decry the growth literature that argues for hard technical industrial policy intervention by governments in “picking winners”—industries on which to focus, for instance (e.g., the auto industry). They also criticize those calling for no government involvement at all. They suggest an alternative solution focused on government’s role in fostering growth-enhancing decisions by business. In discussing his ideas for effective “institutional arrangements for industrial policy,” Rodrik emphasizes creating governing structures that stimulate coordination, information sharing, and learning, primarily between firms in industries but also at the interface between firms and government (<http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~drodrik/UNIDOSep.pdf>). Hausmann and Rodrik call this proposed framework an “open architecture” in which government policy is less about making a technical choice about how growth should be achieved and more about allowing “potential areas of attention [to] evolve” by “creating [a] space” for such (<http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~drodrik/doomed.pdf>).

The present author has developed a similar focus on “space” creation as the key to public sector reform (see, e.g., Andrews 2004; Montes and Andrews 2005; Van Landingham, Wellman, and Andrews 2005; Ronsholt and Andrews 2005; Roberts and Andrews 2005; Hill and Andrews 2005). In observing government attempts to solve management problems with standard technical mechanisms, the same mechanisms have been found to have vastly different results in different settings. Medium-term budgeting failed in Ghana in the late 1990s, for example, but was of some success in South Africa at about the same time (Andrews 2004; Roberts and Andrews 2005). Financial management information systems were introduced technically in both Bolivia and Tanzania in the late 1990s but proved more limited in value in the former than the latter (Montes and Andrews 2005; Ronsholt and Andrews 2005). The technical solution also can become the problem itself. Bolivia’s new accounting system, created with little recognition of the informal relational logics in the country, forced many government bodies into holding two sets of books, for example (Montes and Andrews 2005), and Benin found performance incentives to be an unworkable solution to its human resource management problems.¹

In trying to explain these different experiences, the present author started looking at the organizational factors influencing each—something akin to Woolsey-Biggart and Guillén’s organizing logics—and found that those cases in which reform progressed the most seemed to have an organizing logic facilitating change, creativity, open thought, and new ideas much as would Rodrik and Hausmann’s open architecture. On the basis of these observations, a simple model was developed in which “reform” or “change” space is the crucial ingredient for public sector adjustment. This space does not seem random but exhibits a real organizational quality that emerges where three factors align—acceptance, authority, and ability (Andrews 2004). Space prohibits a full explanation of these factors. In simple terms, however, acceptance is required from sufficient stakeholders and within the institutionalized incentive structure of the need for change, the specific type of change proposed, and the cost of change. Authority to change must be forthcoming, as reflected in formal mechanisms like laws and procedures and in informal mechanisms like social norms. Ability must be available, in the form of people, technology, and information, to conceptualize and implement the change. Figure 6.1 shows a subset of these and other questions posed by the factors and the basic way in which the factors intersect.

The idea behind the model is that reform is facilitated by “space” in the specific organizational, policy, or governance context. This space is determined by the intersection of acceptance, authority, and ability—all focused in a generic sense on the idea that change and improvement are fairly constant in the development setting and thus need to be facilitated by the organization’s structure. Beyond a generic view, one can assess space in regard to specific interventions—space for a performance management system, medium-term budget reform, or internal audit adoption. The emphasis is not on these technical ideas, though,

Figure 6.1. Basic Ideas in the “Reform Space” Model

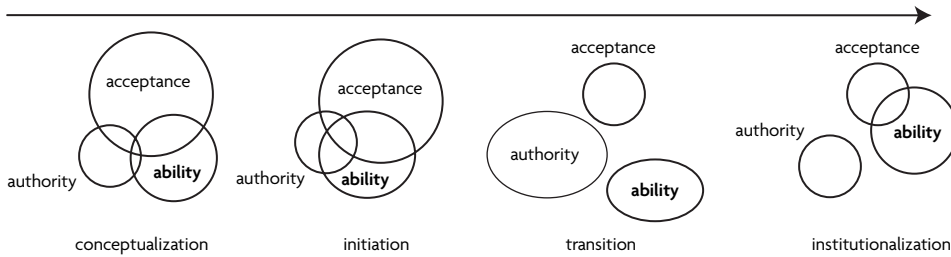


Source: Based on Andrews (2004).

but on whether organizing logics in the government in question stimulate acceptance of the change involved, authorize reformers to think of such ideas and then implement them, and facilitate the organization to enable itself at appropriate times and in appropriate ways as required by the change. Having one strong set of factors (political acceptance, for example) will not yield effective reform in the presence of weaknesses in the other factors (authority mechanisms and abilities, for instance).

The reform space allows or constrains the kind and degree of reform an organization can pursue. Bolivia’s information systems reform did not suffer from lack of central ability to implement it (a strong information technology unit existed) but failed primarily because the formalities of an electronic system were not accepted in a public sector structured largely on informal relationships (Montes and Andrews 2005). Tanzania’s information systems reform developed with the required acceptance and authority—from a broad spectrum of politicians and managers supporting the intervention to new laws and organizational protocols facilitating it—and matured slowly as users’ ability to carry it out was developed (ability reflected in staff that can actually use the system, for example, which still remains weak in the decentralized entities affected by the intervention; Ronsholt and Andrews 2005). Medium-term budgeting in Ghana was a failure in 1998 because apparent political acceptance was not matched by ability and was constrained by authorizing parameters in the law (Roberts and Andrews 2005). When reform demands emerged as budgetary and political costs (to build abilities and change laws, for instance), the initial political acceptance waned and reform faltered.

Space influences reform possibilities in different ways at different stages of the change process because reform needs are different at different stages and

Figure 6.2. A Stylized Presentation of Varying Reform Conditions across Reform Stages

Source: Author.

factor constraints are different. Figure 6.2 presents a stylized perspective of this that indicates that “factor” constraints may vary in the following stages (with the three circles in each figure reflecting generalized acceptance, authority, and ability profiles as in figure 6.1):

- Conceptualization (reform need is established; reform ideas are formalized)
- Initiation (reforms are introduced into the setting)
- Transition (new processes and rules embodied in reforms start to replace old, preexisting processes and rules)
- Institutionalization (reform processes and rules are established as formal and social norms).

Conceptualization is separate from initiation because these are distinct stages in all of the reforms I reviewed. Some reforms never get past conceptualization, which is generally done purely on paper and really does not require much space. Acceptance is usually very high at this stage (denoted by the large top circle) because it is about ideas, and most governments entertain ideas easily. Initiation involves some space and action beyond paper—some engagement over the change of a law or some piloting of a procedure, for example. One often finds much acceptance for reform in both of these stages and limited authority (laws, procedures, etc., still authorize older processes instead of new ones). More space is needed for initiation than for conceptualization, however, especially in terms of ability and authority—the circles must have grown to progress. There are many reasons for this, but—at the simplest—the expanded space is required because more entities are involved (pilot ministries are the most common). Figure 6.2 shows that, in many stylized cases, the necessary acceptance, authority, and ability does exist through initiation. However, the typical case sees reform space decreasing from here on out—and reform failing to progress as a result (note that the circles do not intersect in the latter stages of reform, suggesting no “space” for change).

There are many stories about why reform space fails to fit transition. The most common is that acceptance for real transition from old to new systems usually proves lower than earlier acceptance for dabbling in new ideas. Many

managers will accept reform ideas in concept and when they are being discussed in the arm's length context of new laws or in "other" pilots (usually those entities that are really accepting of the new idea). Managers are less accepting of the reform when it threatens their entrenched structures and begins to cost money and time. Many authors observe that weaknesses in ability to achieve reform are also emphasized in the transition stage as well—when preparatory training programs are often shown up as ineffective and new skills and abilities are shown to be lacking. In many cases, therefore, although governments work hard to authorize reform through approving legislation and similar measures (causing an expanded authorizing circle in the transition stage), they still find that reforms fail.

In many cases, governments respond to this kind of situation by tackling the factor most noticeable in its absence—ability. Attempts to rescue a nonprogressing reform by expanding training initiatives are common, and commonly unsuccessful, simply because institutionalization calls for levels of acceptance and authorization that are achieved only when organizational members successfully pass through transition. If managers do not learn that they can exchange one system for another and still manage—maybe even better—they simply will not accept the idea of fully institutionalizing the new system. It is too risky. Similarly, the authority needed for full reform institutionalization is different and more complicated than that needed for transition. A law in Bolivia authorized adoption of a new accounting system. The fact that informal management systems failed to accommodate the new system meant that it did not fully transition—and could not be institutionalized as the new *de facto* system. Transition organizations need to pass from one system to another for informal and formal authorizing mechanisms to even begin adapting.

Many development experts try to (metaphorically) "fit" technical interventions into governments. The reform space model suggests that this is the incorrect approach to doing development. Technical ideas are not the key; the space in which technical solutions are conceptualized, initiated, transitioned, and institutionalized is the key. Different space will produce different technical solutions—much like differently shaped holes accommodate differently shaped pegs. Many technical solutions are like square pegs in round holes (which simply do not fit!). One finds out this mismatch only in the transition stage in many cases, however, because that is where the true nature of space becomes evident. Ghana's 1998 experience, as already described, is a good example, but performance incentives were like this in Benin as well. The International Monetary Fund demanded that Benin's government develop these incentives because of a lack of performance in the core health and education sectors. The government conceptualized a new performance-based system and initiated it through a proposed law, but the law has been sitting in parliament for more than five years—a square peg in a round hole with no space to progress. In the meantime, government used the existing space to realize that staff performance was a real problem and conceptualized, initiated, transitioned, and

institutionalized its own staff-contracting model as a solution in both sectors. Although heavily criticized by many, this solution seems to have emerged from the space that existed and is having some positive impacts (more teachers in the classroom, for instance).

The basic message is that technical interventions of whatever sort in the development arena are truly less important than the context in which they emerge and are instituted. The basis of intervention should be to create space in which the developing entity can identify, define, and solve its own problems. Reform, change, or growth space is manifest in organizations with acceptance, authority, and ability profiles that allow continuous and creative adjustment to the challenges of development. Reform or change space invariably fosters development.²

Dimension 2: It's Not What Politicians Say—It's How They Build Space

The idea that reform space matters more than technical ideas has major implications for political engagement. In the prevailing technical model, political engagement (especially by external specialists) centers on a technical policy paper or proposal. Do the politicians like it? Do they indicate their acceptance of it? When it comes to a loan or project, will they sign off on it?

These questions are asked in largely static, monologic engagements that focus on documents and evidence. Technicians dominate proceedings. They conclude agreements in which governments commit to do X but that generally say very little about the organizing logics for getting X done. Often this political engagement carries the reform or idea through conceptualization and initiation, where there is a limited threat to the status quo or demand on the organizing logics. Many reforms, industrial policy ideas, and other initiatives, however, fail to get beyond this point. Why?

The second dimension of a revised approach to doing development suggests an answer: It's not what politicians say about technical ideas that matters, but how they build the space for ideas to develop and become reality. In particular, how do they foster organizing logics that allow space for learning and change, especially when one gets to transition phases in which established logics really do inform action and meaning and allow actors to pursue some activities more successfully than others (Woolsey-Biggart and Guillén 1999: 726)? In most cases reviewed by the present author, reform failed to transition from idea to practice precisely because political engagement did not focus on organizational space issues—technical ideas had no organizational footing. In the few cases where it did, reform progressed well, and examples emerge that show ways in which political engagement made the difference (Andrews and Turkewitz 2005; Ronsholt and Andrews 2005; Hill and Andrews 2005; Andrews 2004):

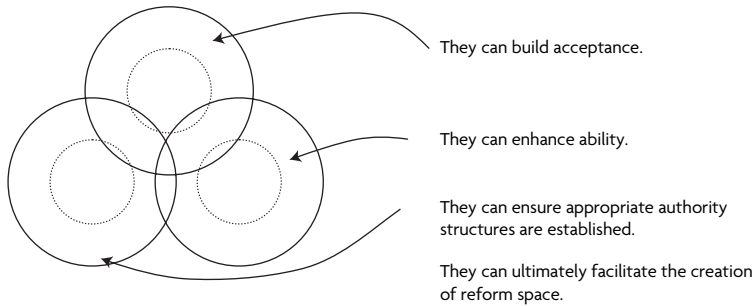
- Tanzania's top political leadership was outspoken about the problems it was addressing when the government embarked on its financial management

reforms in the late 1990s. They were open about the costs and time frame of the initiative. This openness showed mature acceptance of the need for change, its costs, and duration. Subsequent actions by political leaders to change laws that limited reform; to create new agencies needed to drive reform; and to fund new positions required by reform all contributed to expanded acceptance, authority, ability, and space. Tanzania's reforms are an interesting blend of better practice and Tanzanian flavor because of the space created.

- The government of the commonwealth of Virginia in the United States orchestrated a performance management reform through its Department of Planning and Budget. The department took its time discussing problems in the state with the agencies affected and worked with each agency to develop specific approaches to these problems. This approach fostered acceptance for the reform, which was further entrenched in steps the department took to foster central access to new abilities required by the change. The department also worked with other partners in the financial management process—accountants, auditors, and so forth—to ensure common use of new budget, reporting, and monitoring frameworks. This work minimized duplication and again showed budget users that reform was not just about more work but actually about new processes that would help everyone. These steps also fostered a coherent authorizing environment in which agencies knew that budget, accounting, and auditing authorities would be looking for the same things in the future. Multiple laws were changed over a 10-year period to further entrench the authorizing environment and to ensure reform institutionalization.
- South Africa adopted a tough deficit reduction strategy in the late 1990s, partly implemented through its medium-term expenditure framework. The national treasury fostered acceptance of the reform by pointing to the developmental constraint posed by the country's deficits, as well as a time-specific vision of government without such constraint. Getting departments to buy into the vision was vital to gaining acceptance for what was a tough reform. The treasury also engaged with departments directly to help promote abilities needed to move to a more focused, medium-term budget.

Building on these examples, figure 6.3 displays the idea of effective political engagement in reform and how limited acceptance, authority, and ability profiles can be augmented through effective political engagement. The smaller dotted circles in the figure show a limited political engagement situation—there is no reform space. The bigger circles reflect an effective political engagement situation, in which acceptance, authority, and ability are all expanded, and a reform space exists that can accommodate change.

In the simple model and in all of the cases described, the idea is simply that political leaders have leverage over some organizational constructs (laws,

Figure 6.3. What Politicians Can Do to Facilitate Reform Space

Source: Author.

budget structures, and volumes, etc.) and can thus influence organizing logics. The idea of the political leader is interpreted broadly here—to include presidents (Tanzania); government officials and bureaucrats (Virginia and South Africa); and, in other cases, private businesspeople and civil society leaders. Given the breadth of backgrounds from which leaders arise, the ideas promoted can travel beyond public sector reform into areas like industrial development, health care, and education. In all, political engagement that focuses on expanding space for change is vital to development.

The model prompts one to consider political engagement in a more action-oriented manner than is promoted by most discussions of political influence on development and reform. The emphasis is not on conducting a binary analysis in which one identifies whether political will exists or not, for instance. The emphasis is on assessing the nature of political engagement. No matter who they are, the issue is what they are doing. Figure 6.3 emphasizes the way political engagement can enhance space. Research also suggests that political engagement could be central in identifying space as it already exists. In all governments, enclaves are found that facilitate more reform than others, and often political leadership is responsible for creating and protecting dynamic enclaves. These enclaves frequently become the basis of ambitious demonstrations of what can be done through public policy and can be best identified through engagement with political leadership.

To conclude this discussion of the second dimension, one must see political engagement as needing broad definition and an action orientation. Effective political engagement is evidenced in organizations where politicians (with big and little *p*'s, as alluded to earlier and discussed later) do what is needed to establish space—fostering acceptance of a creative and dynamic culture, authority structures that balance rule-based accountability with dynamic creativity, and ability to do what needs to be done for progress to be made. Development is fostered where politicians use their influence and formal and informal interventions to create space for organizational evolution.

Dimension 3: Individual Champions Matter Less than Networks

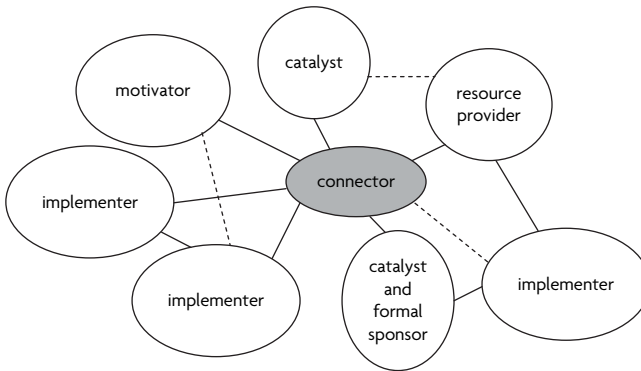
There are many constituencies to consider in all governance situations, which are characterized by formal and informal processes of election and influence. “Political leaders” can thus arise in many domains—political representatives chosen to leadership positions in a government’s executive, representatives in the legislature, judges in the judiciary, leading civil servants in the bureaucracy, and civil society luminaries. Some of these people are politicians with a capital *p* (by title) and others with a small *p* (without title). As already stated, political engagement requires engaging with the relevant parties at the relevant times.

One reason that a broad approach to identifying political leaders is promoted here is that evidence suggests leadership is more common in a multileader context than in a single-leader context. This finding departs from standard thinking about political influence. Instead of political leaders coming in the isolated form of individual champions, effective political engagement is often characterized by the presence of groups of political leaders supportive of reform—coalitions or networks of individuals spanning boundaries of organizations influenced by or potentially influencing reform.

The networks look different in different places—and even across different stages in specific reform cases. They tend to involve a mixture of strong and weak tie relationships between politicians with both big and small *p*’s (for example, ministers, mayors, and legislators, on the one hand, and career bureaucrats and civil society leaders, on the other).³ Often, the person identified by many as the reform champion (who headlines the reform in a political sense) is not always the most important agent in the network. Evidence from case studies shows that this role is played by someone described as a connector, broker, or resource linker in the network literature. This person sits at the center of relationships and basically manages constituencies whose engagement is necessary for effective reform (see figure 6.4):

- Although Tanzania’s president was the face of reform, it was up to individuals in the leading sectors to set up influential networks that actually established the reform and implemented it. It seems that the connector changed over time in some of the networks, played at some moments by key staff members in donor agencies who happened to relate well to stakeholders in multiple agencies. At other times, consultants working on the reform also seem to have played this role. As the reform matured, public expenditure review groups were set up to formalize network engagements.
- South Africa’s minister of finance was the face of its medium-term budgeting reform. The reform actually emerged from the active networks developed within the national treasury and the elaborate set of forums treasury officials created with sectoral, provincial, and local stakeholders to facilitate change. Treasury officials at various levels of the administration played key roles in these structures, thereby enthusing, enabling, and connecting stakeholders to promote reform.

Figure 6.4. Effective Political Engagement in Networks, Not Freestanding Individuals



Source: Author.

Figure 6.4 is a stylized presentation of what some reform networks look like, with a connector at the heart of the network bringing different role players together—through a variety of strong and weak ties (denoted by solid and dotted lines). It should be noted that the connector is often not the “formal face of the reform” and may not even be a primary beneficiary. This person may not even be the one who identified the reform need, conceptualized the idea, or provided the resources—but he or she is the one who brings all those people together. This truly political role requires someone with excellent relational skills and an ability to span organizational boundaries and convince other key leaders to do so as well. A model for this role is Thomas Magnum, the private investigator in the 1980s TV series *Magnum PI*. Although a silly metaphor for effective boundary-spanning leadership, the character exhibited the following attributes that are vital to connectors:

- He was well known, liked, and trusted, and he enjoyed high levels of social capital in his community. He also obviously interacted well with people.
- He was easily found—occupying the same social settings that many would normally frequent. He was unpretentious and never traded on the basis of qualification; indeed, he seemed to engage well with people of all types, spanning boundaries.
- He was open to questions about the status quo and attracted people with problems and needs. He was a very skilled communicator who was generally involved in multiple conversations at the same time.
- He had a close group of contacts who, in turn, had access to broad networks. By drawing on these contacts, he bridged boundaries groups set up between themselves. He was seldom the one with the resources, ideas, contacts, and so on, to resolve an issue. Resolutions emerged through the connections he enabled.

Many individuals play this role in development. There are also many development engagements that lack connectors, however. This is a problem because change occurs across networks, where multiple people bring multiple talents and abilities to bear. The individual who connects nodes is the key to the network but is often not the one who has the technical idea or who is called the reform champion. His or her skill lies in the ability to bridge relational boundaries and to bring people together. Development is fostered in the presence of robust networks with skilled connectors acting at their heart.

Implications for Development and Development Communication

If one accepts the discussion so far, it should be obvious that a new approach is required to the way development is considered. This requirement is pertinent, especially for strategies adopted to engage politicians in development. An initial change lies in realizing that politicians themselves need space to act—and maybe this is something external actors can assist with. Standard approaches exist for creating space that include providing quick wins in reforms, couching reforms in politically relevant terms, providing outside incentives to the political system (donors with funds, for instance), and applying outside pressure in the form of potential sanction. Case evidence suggests that these kinds of manipulation do not always yield acceptance—especially not sustainable acceptance and often not real action—in political leaders. Too many reform “champions” have the appropriate rhetoric in early stages of reform, influenced in the direction of reform by the kinds of devices listed, only to show no real action (in the ways suggested as necessary to promote real reform space). Ghana is the main example of this, where political acceptance was evident in rhetoric in 1998 and was designed to appease international donors, but lacked any substance beyond this.

Building sustainable and action-oriented reform acceptance in political leaders also requires paying attention to limitations of authority and ability that politicians may be sensitive to themselves. For example, if a politician feels he or she lacks the capacity to fully drive a reform once it begins, he or she may be reluctant to support the reform. It’s not that will is lacking, just confidence in the ability to impose such will. Promoting effective political engagement requires identifying where this action may be a problem and providing some kind of solution—administrative (providing new people), technical (training), or perhaps relational (introducing the politician to someone who can help him or her with the capacity constraint or provide needed resources).

Another example is politicians who accept the need and substance of reform but do not feel that they have the authority to act. Case evidence suggests that political leaders seldom act unilaterally, and politics (with both big and little *p*) is generally about working in groups and across constituencies to exert influence. It seems that individual politicians identify the limits to their own authority from these constituency groups and take positions only when they

sense enough authority to do so. This kind of behavior seems a valid explanation of why effective leadership appears to be more about networks of political leaders than individual “champions.” This is not to say that champions do not exist, but that they seldom if ever exist outside an established network of political leaders that gives them credibility, assigns them authority, and empowers their decisions in sponsoring and leading reform.

One of the primary ways that development experts can help establish effective political engagement is by fostering the networks that empower individual political leaders. Instead of being the technical expert who solves the reform problem, external development experts (working with multilaterals and bilaterals in particular) may be the ideal “connectors” in reform networks. This comparative advantage arises primarily because development experts are boundary spanners: they can access political leaders across organizations who often fail to engage with each other because of rigid formal boundaries (especially prevalent in many developing countries). Capacity to communicate is central to this kind of role, as is the related need to establish trust through communication. This kind of communication capacity is certainly in supply in the development community but remains a “second order” talent in comparison to good old-fashioned technical and analytical ability. Improved results in development require an about-face; communicative connectors are the most important resource in this domain and should be recognized as such.

Conclusion

This chapter suggests a new “theory of doing development” based on the following ideas:

- Reform or change space invariably fosters development. Development interventions should thus focus on creating space rather than effecting technical adjustments.
- Development is fostered where politicians use their influence and formal and informal interventions to create space for organizational evolution. Development interventions should foster active and broad political engagement.
- Development is fostered in the presence of robust networks with skilled connectors acting at their heart. Development interventions should thus stimulate networks, and development experts either should see themselves as the connector or should support the person playing this role.

The importance of this kind of approach was observed by the present author in research on managed competition in U.S. cities. Indianapolis had pursued this quasi-privatization approach in core service areas ranging from airport management to street cleaning with significant positive results. Similar service improvements were evident in San Diego, where academic articles had cited managed competition as contributing to reform. In fact, San Diego had prepared for managed competitions, but legislation limited the city from actually going

down this route. Yet the process of preparation yielded service improvements that mirrored those in cities with full expression of the technical reform.

A paper cowritten by this author (Andrews and Moynihan 2002) tried to explain the apparent paradox of a reform failure being credited with achieving its overarching goal of efficiency and effectiveness. It argues that “in both cases, implementing components of the overall managed competition reform fundamentally altered the preexisting governance process over service delivery. In preparing for managed competition, San Diego adjusted governmental capacity, raised managerial flexibility, and fostered incentives to measurably improve the performance of services. This preparation leads us to conclude that reforms do not have to work according to their original terms of reference to ultimately succeed in achieving their overarching goal: Creating competitive incentives is more important than creating actual competition” (282).

The final sentence could have been rewritten in the words of Woolsey-Biggart and Guillén: Creating space, with appropriate organizing logics, is more important than adopting a specific critical intervention. Or Rodrik and Hausmann could have been quoted, and it might have been said that San Diego fostered an open architecture that allowed its departments space to discover, learn, and change. Or it could have discussed how San Diego created reform space by instilling an acceptance for needed change, authority for departments to be more performance oriented, and ability to change technologies of production.

Whichever the chosen rhetoric or model, the idea is the same and is echoed in other cases the present author has reviewed since San Diego: creating organizational space will foster change. This idea is crucial to the entire logic and approach argued here, for a move away from narrow, technically defined models of development. If this idea is accepted, it allows for different thinking about political engagement as something shown in actions to expand space. It also requires thought about the space of political engagement itself—as a broad network of relationships rather than a narrow set of champions. With such thoughts, the development community may be able to clarify terms like *political will* and *political commitment*, stimulate these on the ground, and enhance development outcomes.

Notes

1. These are some of the observations made in a paper, “Civil Service Reform in Benin: Planned Failure and Opportunistic Progress,” by Martin Bratt, Jules Flynn, and Oana Cheta, unpublished paper, the Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, Mass.
2. Previous work spoke of a “space for ambition” in government, which is one way this idea could be conceptualized. The importance of ambition, risk, learning, and failure as key ingredients to development success are explicit in this model. It is assumed that having space allows risk and failure, for instance, as these are key for learning. Benin’s contracting has not been a resounding success in all facets, for example, but has allowed learning, and if properly expanded this learning could be the basis of greater success.

3. The strong and weak tie was introduced by Mark Granovetter in 1973. The idea is simply that some relationships are stronger than others. Evidence indicates that strong ties can be useful for some things, and weak ties may work for others. Weak tie relationships can be more creative than strong tie relationships, for instance, whereas strong ties could be more useful in situations in which an individual is looking for dependable financial assistance.

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Using Public Will to Secure Political Will

Lori Ann Post, Charles T. Salmon, and
Amber N. W. Raile

Introduction

How can political leaders mobilize public will to secure political will? This question has occupied policy makers and political scientists for generations despite being absent from the political lexicon until very recently. Securing political will is a complicated and challenging endeavor that involves securing public will, but one that is possible if enacted correctly through media gatekeepers, segments of the population, and politicians. Political leaders want to secure public will to solve problems and control situations. This chapter will focus on communication strategies in campaigns to secure political will from the initial concept to securing the desired change.

Shaping Political and Public Will

Public and political will possess the power to mold opinion and shape legislation. Campaigns that seek to influence public will are “organized, strategic initiatives designed to legitimize and garner public support for social problems as a mechanism for achieving policy action or change” (Salmon, Post, and Christensen 2003: 4). Public will campaigns focus on a particular topic with the goal of defining how it is perceived by the public and setting a specific policy agenda for how to address the topic. Political leaders, policy makers, and legislators may be targeted directly through these campaigns, or they may be indirectly targeted through their constituents. Either way, the goal of public will campaigns is often to target average citizens and political leaders, policy makers, and legislators to affect change through the political system.

In contrast, political will is demonstrated by broad leadership support for change, which often results in policy change. Hammergren (1998) characterized political will as “the slipperiest concept in the policy lexicon,” calling it “the sine qua non of policy success which is never defined except by its absence” (12). Although the term is ubiquitous among interest groups, exactly what *securing political will* means is rarely specified. Because of this general lack of specification, theorists and researchers often focus on aspects of government willingness or engagement and refrain from using the term *political will*. For example, Andrews (2004 and chapter 6 in this book) uses a three-factor model that characterizes *reform space* on a particular issue as the intersection of authority, acceptance, and ability on the part of involved groups. For this discussion, political will can be thought of as support from political leaders that results in policy change.

The imprecise distinction between public and political will resides more with who initiates the campaign—whether it is conducted bottom-up versus top-down. Change can occur in a given country through grassroots efforts that ultimately influence government policy—a case when public will drives political will. Many organizations (e.g., the Sierra Club, Coalition for Darfur) aim to create political will by affecting public will. The mission statement of RESULTS, a group dedicated to world hunger, is “creating the public and political will to end hunger and the worst aspects of poverty” (<http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=31>). Conversely, government policies can shape public opinion and actions (i.e., an example of political will driving public will). China’s one-child policy is an example of a government using communication strategies (among other techniques) to drive public will. Furthermore, how political will and public will are related may be shaped by the government structure in a given country. The premise of this chapter is that, at the very least, some of the same strategies that can be applied to mobilizing public will can be extended to securing political will. It focuses on a bottom-up process, in which public will is used to secure political will.

Interdisciplinary Models and Theories for Public Will Campaigns

Creating political will involves a complex interplay among individuals, groups, and the societies in which they are embedded. To influence public and political will, parties must appropriately define the issue, raise the issue’s profile, and drive policy implementation. Several theories and models inform how individual and environmental factors that shape public and political will can be addressed. Implicated by these theories are concrete methods for reaching out to political leaders, policy makers, and legislators. In general, public will can be used to secure political will by (1) identifying and defining issues for attention, (2) focusing attention on an issue, and (3) affecting policy on an issue.

Identifying and Defining Issues for Attention

Why are “poverty” and “hunger” perceived to be social problems? What do “poverty” and “hunger” really mean? Zastrow (2000) believes that social problems arise when “an influential group asserts that a certain social condition affecting a large number of people is a problem that may be remedied by collective action” (4). Key in the concept of social problem construction is the idea that social problems do not objectively exist; instead, both social problems and their meanings are constructed through interaction. The perspectives of both individuals and groups will shape the meanings of social problems, and various attempts to influence how the public views these problems can be competitive with one another. For example, different groups may have a stake in defining “poverty” as a local issue, whereas other groups seek to define “poverty” as a global issue. How “poverty” is viewed by the public, political leaders, policy makers, and legislators will influence the preferred response to dealing with it. Defining the issue of “poverty” can be of central importance in driving public and political will to address it.

On the basis of this perspective, social problem construction theory suggests three strategies for influencing public will. First, typification is defining the social problem and providing examples in a way that will resonate with the public (Salmon, Post, and Christensen 2003). The way in which a problem is typified may serve the agenda of the group rather than objectively portray the problem. For example, the problem of “poverty” is described by organizations like the World Bank as a global issue; they provide examples that present a global picture of poverty. Conversely, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) defines poverty as a U.S. issue and focuses in particular on children and families in the United States living below the poverty line (<http://www.povertyusa.org>). In both cases, the goal of this typification is to strengthen the group’s preferred definition of the problem, and the goal is often sought by focusing on the aspects of the position that have the most impact or the soundest argument.

Second, the use of numbers and statistics to demonstrate the gravity and effect of the problem can improve the quality of a group’s argument. Large numbers and dire outcomes will be more influential and are more likely to catch the attention of media, public, and politicians. Numbers and statistics are not static; unbiased indicators of a problem can be manipulated by those attempting to influence public will. Deciding which statistics to present is a form of social problem construction. In the case of poverty, because organizations like the World Bank and ONE¹ view poverty as a global issue, all statistics on poverty provided on their Web sites are global or include information on more than one country. Conversely, because CCHD’s focus is on poverty in the United States, the numbers and statistics it provides are restricted to that country. Not only which statistics are shared but also the manner in which research findings are portrayed can be used to advance particular

agendas. For example, Smedley and Smedley (2005) describe how groups seeking to emphasize racial differences represent research on the human genome to support their cause.

The third strategy is to tie problem typification to an obvious solution. For example, if poverty is typified as a global issue, the solution is a worldwide response. The World Bank, for example, works with governments around the globe to identify and implement poverty reduction strategies. Because the World Bank typifies poverty as a global issue, the organization's efforts to address the issue do not focus exclusively on one country but on addressing the problem worldwide. Put differently, a single country's ability to eliminate poverty would not constitute a solution given this type of typification. Conversely, if poverty is typified as a national issue, solutions are focused on a particular nation. The CCHD's focus on poverty in the United States results in concentration on addressing and resolving issues related to poverty within that country. Because the CCHD typifies poverty as a national issue, the solutions on which the CCHD focuses are limited to addressing poverty in the United States.

In conclusion, all these strategies serve to influence public and political will by bringing widespread attention to the problem and by offering a solution. The contribution of social problem construction is the recognition that problems can be defined in terms of a group's particular interests.

Focusing Attention on an Issue

Many theories and models address how an issue gains public and political attention. Agenda-building theory examines the process by which some social issues reach the level of public consciousness while others do not. This theory identifies two key principles for securing a place on the public agenda. First, the principle of scarcity notes that slots on the public and political agenda are limited; therefore, a cause must be positioned not only to resonate with the public but also to supplant other causes. Research on carrying capacity, or the number of slots available on the public agenda, supports this assertion (McCombs and Zhu 1995). Subjectivity is the second principle; the definition of the issue must be constantly redefined to keep it marketable and on the public and political agenda.

Building on these concepts, Cobb and Elder (1983) detail the process of agenda building. The process begins with conflict that results from the scarcity of resources and attention and from subjectivity of the information presented on particular issues. Conflicts vary in scope (number of people involved), intensity (degree of participant involvement), and visibility (awareness of conflict). Visibility is often determined by the scope and intensity of the conflict, both of which can be influenced through communication campaigns designed to demonstrate the impact of the issue. In addition to conflict, triggers and initiators play pivotal roles in agenda building. Triggers are events that can be linked to the conflict by initiators. For example, global warming has become a hot political

issue in the twenty-first century and has a worldwide scope made necessary by its label and driven in part by international treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol. Conflicting views exist over the effects of human activity on rising global temperatures, as seen on Web sites that demonstrate the intense involvement on both sides. For example, the Cooler Heads Coalition cautions that “the risks of global warming are speculative; the risks of global warming policies are all too real” (<http://www.globalwarming.org/node/538>). On the other side, Environmental Defense’s Web site asserts that “claims that fighting global warming will cripple the economy and cost hundreds of thousands of jobs are unfounded” (<http://www.fightglobalwarming.com/page.cfm?tagID=274>). Groups that argue that human actions can reduce the rate of global warming link recent triggers such as Hurricane Katrina or evidence from multiple sources (e.g., NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies and the World Meteorological Organization) that 2005 was the warmest year on record to their favored position.

As a conflict plays out, competing groups will continually redefine the problem until its scope and intensity gain sufficient visibility. Cobb and Elder (1983) note that the issue’s definition can be adapted along five dimensions—specificity (abstract to concrete), social significance (small to large scope), temporal relevance (short to long term), complexity (technical to simple), and precedence (new to old). In general, abstract, long-term, low-complexity, novel issues with a broad impact are more likely to secure a spot on the public agenda. Positioning an issue defined in these terms with a trigger event through an initiator can be vital to affecting public and political will. For example, both groups in the global warming conflict continue to position their problem definitions in ways that they hope will gain favor and secure public and political will.

Framing, closely tied to this process of redefinition and the concept of typification, refers to “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, or selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse” (Gitlin 1980: 7). Wallack and others (1993) note in their media advocacy approach that framing for access and content are both important. Materials that are framed for access are desirable to media gatekeepers and, thus, are more likely to gain entrée. For example, the ONE campaign has used this tactic, offering up celebrity supporters who participate in interviews in which they focus on the organization’s issues. Featuring celebrities gains access to the media and allows ONE to advocate for its cause. Framing for access can also explain how certain issues earn air time while others do not. For example, Tanner (2004) found that 90 percent of reporters said that health issue advocates who provided personal examples were more likely to earn air time; examples that came in sound bites were even better. Framing for content involves defining the social problem. This framing may include adoption of the group’s preferred terminology for discussing the issue and its problem construction. For example, *global climate change* is a broader term than *global warming* and brings to mind different aspects of the issue. Framing

research demonstrates the necessity of gaining access to the media and directing the public's attention to the problem in the group's preferred frame.

Ultimately, the media play a key role in directing and influencing public and political will. McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda-setting model builds on Cohen's (1963) observation that the media have a powerful influence on which issues gain the public's attention. Issue salience, measured by a rank ordering of public concern, is strongly correlated with press coverage according to McCombs and Shaw. Television coverage at a national level shows strong agenda-setting effects (Palmgreen and Clark 1977), but the effects are issue specific (Eaton 1989). Five to seven weeks of news coverage appear to be necessary to affect the public agenda. To demonstrate the role of the media in policy agenda setting, Denham (2004) outlined how *Sports Illustrated's* revelation of Ken Caminiti's use of steroid, which led to 231 newspaper stories, ultimately drew policy attention to steroid use and resulted in widespread drug testing.

As an issue and one group's preferred perspective on that issue become publicized through the media, Noelle-Neumann's (1974) concept of the spiral of silence comes into play. Central to this theory is the idea that media provide information to individuals about the majority opinion on an issue, thereby allowing individuals to determine whether their privately held opinions are shared by the masses. If their opinion is a popular one, individuals will be more likely to publicly express it. The spiral of silence occurs when minority opinions are not voiced, adding to the perception of the widespread nature of the majority opinion. For example, when groups such as Environmental Defense state that "there is no debate among scientists about the basic facts of global warming" (<http://www.fightglobalwarming.com/page.cfm?tagID=274>), this information is presented as the majority opinion of a group of informed experts. Particularly in democratic societies like the United States, a great deal of trust is placed in the opinion of the majority. Subsequently, Noelle-Neumann advises groups to engage in frequent, public expressions of opinion to create the impression that the opinion is widely shared, thus reducing the expression of opposing opinions and adding strength to the "majority" opinion.

Majority opinion on an issue can be especially salient in groups and in social networks. According to Salmon, Post, and Christensen (2003), social capital should be viewed as "a resource in the form of informal networks and a means to influence the public will" (20). Social networks can provide individuals with information about an issue. Those who carry influence and power within social networks can go beyond providing information to those in their network and persuade them to perceive a cause in a particular way. Having influence over a large social network also provides those influential individuals with more social currency to interact with groups possessing valued resources and the ability to affect change. Many organizations already recognize the influence and public profile that can be gained by leveraging social capital and are using it to pursue their goals. For example, the World Bank sponsored the Social Capital Initiative and the Local Level Institutions

Study to leverage the use of social capital. Results of these two programs include publicly available research and a social capital assessment tool for those who wish to use it to reduce poverty.²

Affecting Policy on an Issue

It is particularly the case in democratic societies that an issue that has gained sufficient attention from the public will likely be on the radar of policy makers. In political science research, policy agenda setting is identified as a key phase of the policy process (Hill and Hupe 2002; deLeon 1999). Downs's (1972) issue attention cycle explains the transitory nature of the policy agenda. Downs notes that "public perception of most 'crises' in American domestic life does not reflect changes in real conditions as much as it reflects the operation of a systematic cycle of heightening public interest and then increasing boredom with major issues" (39). The issue attention cycle has five stages:

- Preproblem stage (problem exists but is not widely recognized)
- Alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm (an event triggers widespread recognition of and desire to solve the problem)
- Realization of the cost of significant progress
- Gradual decline of intense public interest
- Postproblem stage (policy action has resulted in systems to address the problem, which is not necessarily solved).

The reasons given by Downs as to why a particular issue makes it to the level of the issue attention cycle, while others never earn attention, are closely related to social problem construction, agenda building, and issue-framing ideas.

The focus of Downs's issue attention cycle paper was on ecological concerns, particularly pollution. Downs (1972) asserted that, at the time he wrote the article, concern about pollution had gone through the first two stages of the cycle. Ultimately, policy changes like emissions standards were enacted and pollution moved into the postproblem stage. However, pollution is once again cycling through under labels such as "greenhouse gasses"; or a renewed focus on reducing emissions and improving air quality in developing countries; or the Kyoto Protocol, which is a reemergence that reinforces Downs's ideas.

Kingdon's (2003) multiple-streams approach focuses more specifically on explaining why governments address some problems but not others. The multiple-streams approach views the policy process as the dynamic interchange between three streams: problems, policies, and politics. Problems are closely related to public agenda setting and Downs's issue-attention cycle. Policies are the potential solutions to the issue offered by multiple constituencies. Politics include the national mood, pressure from coalition groups, and government composition. If all three streams align, the potential exists to make progress against a particular problem. For example, Odom-Forren and Hahn (2006) examined the potential for legislation on health care-associated illnesses (HAIs) applying the multiple-streams approach. The researchers concluded

that a window of opportunity for national action on HAIs has opened because of a convergence of the three streams. First, the problem of HAIs has gained increasing national attention and has been positioned as a patient safety issue with costs in terms of human life, health, and health care costs. Second, government organizations have offered specific guidelines for how to deal with the problem. Third, patient-advocate groups, health care groups, and government officials are taking an interest in the issue.

Putting It All Together

Although they apply a framing perspective, Saguy and Riley's (2005) examination of obesity as a social problem in the United States summarizes an issue that demonstrates the three concerns for securing public and political will outlined earlier: identifying and defining issues for attention, focusing attention on an issue, and, ultimately, affecting policy on an issue. The first two processes involve building public will, and the third results from securing political will.

Saguy and Riley assert that the issue of obesity has been picked up by two opposing parties—antiobesity groups and fat acceptance groups—who both define the issue quite differently. Antiobesity groups define obesity as an illness or epidemic caused by individual irresponsibility, bad behavior, or both. To support these claims, they present multiple statistics and medical research. Conversely, fat acceptance groups steer clear of the term *obesity* and define fatness as a body diversity issue. National obsession with fatness, in their estimation, serves as evidence of an unhealthy obsession with weight. To support their claims, fat acceptance groups cite evidence and statistics to demonstrate that fatness is genetic and not really the cause of health issues. Because of their different definitions of the social problem, each group offers competing solutions. Antiobesity groups recommend programs to reduce obesity and its associated health risks; conversely, fat acceptance groups urge acceptance and focus on actual health issues.

Because there are competing parties on this issue and limited overall capacity for health news, both parties engage in agenda building. Both emphasize the scope of the issue and use passionate advocacy to try to increase visibility for their cause. Overall, the issue of weight has gained nationwide prominence. In recent years, the antiobesity groups appear to be winning higher levels of visibility given the success of books like Eric Schlosser's (2001) *Fast Food Nation* and Morgan Spurlock's Oscar-nominated documentary *Super Size Me* (2004).

To gain media access, both parties employ different frames. Saguy and Riley identify four content frames: (1) fatness as body diversity, (2) obesity as risky behavior, (3) obesity as disease, and (4) obesity as epidemic. The media have predominantly picked up the "obesity as epidemic" frame and, to a lesser extent, the "obesity as risky behavior" frame. Saguy and Riley suggest that fat acceptance groups are in the minority. However, they argue that reframing

may help them to gain better media attention: “political traditions of antidiscrimination provide an opportunity for fat acceptance” (2005: 907).

In addition to the possibility of reframing, Saguy and Riley note that social capital has allowed fat acceptance groups to gain influence incongruent with their minority status. For example, two recent National Institutes of Health (NIH) pamphlets show evidence of fat acceptance frames of the issue. The researchers assert that this sway comes from Lynn McAfee, director of medical advocacy for the Council on Size and Weight Discrimination, who sits on NIH panels.

As a national issue, weight in the United States can arguably be placed in the third stage of Downs’s issue attention cycle. Some solutions in the form of policy have been enacted, and both the public and policy makers are beginning to recognize the challenges inherent in societal changes. For example, *Super Size Me* has been credited by some to be responsible for the removal by McDonald’s of its super-sized menu options. Many schools have succumbed to pressure to offer healthier lunches to students and to remove soda and candy machines from school premises. Because the issue still remains central on the agenda of many politicians, its course on the issue attention cycle appears far from over.

Challenges for Political and Public Will Campaign Planners

Throughout the process of securing political and public will, campaign planners face various challenges. Naturally, challenges will come from those attempting to frame an issue differently from those parties competing for a spot on crowded political and public agendas. However, the theories and models outlined earlier and the activities of identifying and defining issues for attention, focusing attention on an issue, and affecting policy on an issue face their own unique challenges.

Issue definition can be problematic. For example, Salmon, Post, and Christensen (2003) identify the shift of focus from changing the behavior of individuals to changing systems (like government structures) or societal norms as a barrier to public will campaigns. Considering Hofstede’s individualist/collectivist cultural dimension (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005), countries high in individualism may especially resist defining an issue as societal when it has traditionally been defined as an individual issue, as exemplified by the discussion of weight in the United States. Ethical use of statistics and research and their unethical use by competing parties can be another challenge for groups in this activity.

Methods for focusing attention on an issue may vary within and between nations. Within a particular nation, determining which frame will register with politicians is difficult. Political party, affiliations with lobbying groups, the state being represented, timing, and other factors may also affect political will. Between nations, the complications increase exponentially. For instance, media are presented here as playing an important role in policy agenda setting, but the media may play a different role across countries in setting the policy

agenda. The relationship between the media's agenda and the country's policy agenda tends to be quite reciprocal. Because most of the research presented here was gathered with U.S. samples, the findings may be limited to countries in which the media play a similar role. In countries such as China where the government has a high degree of control over the media's agenda these findings may not be applicable.

Hofstede's extensive research on differences between cultures suggests another concern for those looking at public and political will campaigns in other countries (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005). What may appear to be "unethical" or coercive from one culture-based perspective may be more acceptable within another culture. For example, efforts like China's one-child policy may offend individualists, like those in the United States, who feel that the government should not dictate family size. However, from the perspective of collectivists, like some in China, sacrificing some individual freedoms for the good of the whole may be viewed as reasonable. Of course, cultural acceptance does not excuse or explain truly reprehensible attempts to influence public or political will, such as assassinations or mass genocide. The point here is that one must be aware of his or her own cultural biases when preparing campaigns to affect public and political will in other countries or when evaluating existing campaigns in those countries.

Finally, tailoring campaigns to a global constituency of policy makers creates unique challenges. The theories and research presented here have been tested predominantly in democratic societies. The complex task of exploring the intricacies of differences in government structures will be left to political scientists; for the purposes of this chapter, governments can be classified as democratic or nondemocratic. Certainly, diversity exists within democratic types of government, and those differences will require different mechanisms to secure political will. However, the variation between democratic and nondemocratic governments may require radically different approaches. For example, in nondemocratic societies, Downs's (1972) issue attention cycle may not apply in the same way because public interest and will might have little to no effect on the government's policy agenda. In a similar way, affected constituencies in nondemocratic societies may have little to no opportunity to inform policies, and politics may take on an entirely different function, altering Kingdon's (2003) multiple-streams approach.

Conclusion

In summary, securing political and public will involves a complex interplay of factors. Many theories, models, and research studies can inform approaches to securing political and public will. Concrete suggestions for action can be derived from these somewhat abstract descriptions. Social problem construction shows us that problems can be defined in terms of a group's particular interests. Particular attention should be paid to typification of the problem,

using statistics to support that typification, and connecting a solution to the chosen definition of the problem. Winning a spot on the public agenda and political agenda requires passionate advocacy. Issues that are abstract, long term, low in complexity, and novel with a broad impact are more likely to gain attention. In some countries, media access is vital to mobilizing public and political will. Framing for access and content will improve chances of media exposure. Using informal networks can also help to gain supporters and widen recognition of the problem. Once an issue gains some traction and policy makers begin to focus on it, constant redefinition of the problem can help keep it on the policy agenda. Obviously, many approaches will need to be employed simultaneously to effectively secure and sustain political and public will.

Notes

1. The ONE Campaign is a U.S.-based, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that aims to create the political will to end extreme poverty and fight global disease.
2. See the World Bank's Social Capital Team-Social Development Department 2003 paper "Group Social Capital Assessment Tool (SOCAT)," <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTTSOCIALCAPITAL/0,,contentMDK:20193049~menuPK:418220~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:401015,00.html>.

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Organizing a Deliberative Participatory Process: What Does the Science Say?

Thomas Webler and Seth Tuler

Communication and Governance Reform

Good governance is the successful management of political and economic affairs.¹ The political aspects of good governance include making public decisions openly and solving problems competently. Good governance also requires that people in public service behave ethically and that fundamental human rights be guaranteed to all. In other words, the political dimensions of good governance are about nurturing a healthy civil society (World Bank 2000).

A sound civil society has an effectively functioning public sphere. The “public sphere” refers to all public places in which policy debates and public decision making occur. These venues are where interested and affected parties come together to express their values, preferences, and interpretations of competing policy alternatives (Habermas 1962), as well as situations in which people listen and learn. Parties consider others’ perspectives and interests and craft governance actions that are based on “satisficing” collective interests, not merely pursuing competing egoistic objectives or even the greatest good for the greatest number (Barber 2004; Dryzek 1990; Gutmann and Thompson 1998; Habermas 1996).

Paying attention to the communicative qualities of the public sphere is key to understanding the status of civil society and, therein, the quality of governance. Assessments by people of the quality of communication between the public and the responsible governmental parties are linked with perceived legitimacy for the decision-making process. People care about several attributes of communication, but they can be categorized under two main rubrics: fairness and competence (Webler 1995).

Fairness refers to the opportunity for all interested or affected parties to assume any legitimate role in the decision-making process. For a process to be fair, individuals and groups need to be free to make their own assessments of which policy debates to enter. Moreover, these determinations need to be informed with awareness of how decisions and policy-making processes may interest or affect them. Another critical part of fairness is outreach. There needs to be some degree of outreach by government agencies to bring people into the decision-making process so that they can represent their interests in the public debate (Andrews and Shah 2003).

Competence refers to the ability of the process to reach the best decision possible given what is reasonably knowable under the present conditions. This ability captures the second important quality of an effective public sphere: problems are actually solved. It is true that focusing on the communicative competence of the public sphere is somewhat removed from the policy outcomes that we truly care about. However, we must remember that those outcomes—those solutions to social problems—emerge out of the efforts of many policy initiatives. Focusing on the competence of communication in the public sphere is essential to understanding the effectiveness of civil society.

Although the principles of fair and competent decision making are widely promoted and there is much impetus for participatory reform, many questions remain about how best to achieve these principles in practice. In Western countries, involvement of local residents in collaborative and deliberative governance has been attempted (off and on) by regulatory agencies for decades. Out of these experiences, much has been learned about how to do this well. Yet, although most governmental agencies have a repertoire of techniques for involving interested and affected parties, it would be misleading to say that the challenge has been mastered. All countries are wrestling with how to involve interested and affected parties in governance appropriately. The demands of effective involvement are constantly changing with evolving contexts.

Certainly, participatory forms of governance have been attempted in nearly every realm of political and economic affairs. In topics ranging from forest management, marine protected area planning, oil spill response planning, energy corridor planning, education reform, health care delivery, to poverty alleviation, one will find failed and successful examples of participatory governance. Despite efforts at innovation in these policy arenas, questions remain about how best to involve interested and affected parties.

There is no shortage of literature advising those organizing participatory processes of what to do and what not to do. Researchers and practitioners studying participatory governance have come forward with prescriptive advice; their handbooks and case studies have yielded a plethora of principles for how best to engage interested and affected parties in a collaborative and communicative learning process (Bleiker and Bleiker 1995; Creighton 1992).

Most of these principles probably amount to sound advice, but they also have limitations. Process organizers need to understand the limitations and to appreciate the evidence and justifications that lie behind the principles. Because these principles are usually generated from individual case studies, it is not obvious that lessons learned in one realm are transferable to another. The contextual differences can be significant and make generalizing difficult. Someone working in the area of watershed management may be absolutely convinced of the importance of holding meetings in many different locations, for example, but this may prove to be completely unnecessary in another area of application, say, health care decision making about vaccination programs for children. It is not simply that there are exceptions to every rule, but we often are not sure if the advice available is the rule or the exception.

This chapter begins by exploring the evidence supporting claims about how best to organize participatory forms of governance. Advice can also be grounded in common sense, in personal experience, or in theoretical deduction. These are all important modes for making sense of the world, and they are each valid. The focus here is on the evidence provided by scientific research. The chapter then proceeds to present recent research that has investigated how broadly applicable some of this prescriptive advice is. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of how such advice informs the *craft* of good governance.

Insights from Prior Research

In spite of the vast number of empirical studies that have been conducted on participatory forms of governance, it is difficult to assemble a set of generalized findings of what works (Halvorsen 2006; National Research Council 1996; Webler and Tuler 2002). The fact is that nearly all the literature available on this topic takes the form of case studies. Generalizing from the specific cases requires a theory that does not yet exist. A great many variables affect the performance of participatory decision-making processes, and we do not understand how all these factors are connected.

The first step toward generating such a theory is to make comparative studies of cases. Fortunately, this area of research has been expanding, but comparative case studies are still very much uncoordinated endeavors because they suffer from a lack of standardization of concepts. This chapter argues, however, that this literature does provide a rich source of findings and hypotheses about what leads to “success.”

A dozen or so studies have compared multiple cases of participatory decision making. All are from Western industrialized societies, and most focus on topics of public participation in regulatory decision making.² Most of these studies seek to understand the factors that influenced the performance of the process, specifically inquiring how to achieve “success.”

Review of this literature on comparative case studies can be summarized in 10 findings. Before the authors discuss these, it is helpful to note that “success” is frequently defined by both outcome-related criteria and process-related criteria. Outcome-related criteria generally fall into one of three categories:

- Substantive policy-related outcomes (e.g., the problem was solved)
- Social capacity-related outcomes (e.g., stakeholders trust each other more)
- The degree of acceptance or satisfaction with the process and outcomes.

Process-related criteria tend to fall into two categories: fairness and competence (Petts and Leach 2000; Renn, Webler, and Wiedemann 1995; Tuler 2000). Both are related to interactions among participants (Eiger and McAvoy 1992). As described earlier, fairness has to do with giving people appropriate opportunities to participate; competence has to do with communicating effectively, sharing knowledge adequately, and making the best-informed decisions possible.

The first finding from review of the comparative case study literature is that procedural fairness is associated with broad representation of interested and affected parties and that broad representation can lead to acceptance of outcomes, creation of social capacity, and competent decisions. Legitimacy, credibility, and acceptance of outcomes are built, according to several of the reviewed studies, by encompassing a wide range of stakeholders in decision processes, including important nonlocal stakeholders (Aronoff and Gunter 1994; Bradbury, Branch, and Malone 2003; Carnes and others 1998; Cole and Associates 1996; Lampe and Kaplan 1999; Selin, Schuett, and Carr 2000; Williams and Ellefson 1996). Lampe and Kaplan (1999) found that it was important to include responsible elected and appointed officials for successful land-use conflict resolution. Nonlocal groups can help local groups develop a broader perspective about how their own hazard is related to others, which can lead to changes in demands, concerns, and strategies (Aronoff and Gunter 1994). Conversely, broad representation was also found to exacerbate conflicts in some instances. Bradbury, Branch, and Malone (2003) provided information that suggests that cross-cultural tensions can affect the ability to reach agreement. Leach, Pelkey, and Sabatier (2002) suggested one possible intervening variable when they write that communication and consensus building can be especially difficult in a watershed partnership because of the presence of both lay people and technical experts.

Second, these studies suggest that procedural competence is promoted by good leadership, coordination, and facilitation, which can improve acceptance, social capacity, and quality of the process (Bradbury, Branch, and Malone 2003; Cole and Associates 1996; Lampe and Kaplan 1999; Leach, Pelkey, and Sabatier 2002; Leach and Sabatier 2003; Selin, Schuett, and Carr 2000; Sommarstrom and Huntington 1999). For example, Cole and Associates (1996) found that onsite agency coordinators increased the ability of health agencies to inform and educate a community. Leach and Sabatier (2003) reported that effective facilitation helped generate new social capital in watershed management planning. Interestingly, Leach, Pelkey, and Sabatier (2002; Leach and Sabatier 2003) also

found that the existence of local leadership was *negatively* associated with getting agreement for restoration projects even if facilitators were used. They did not find significant results related to whether facilitators were full-time or part-time and whether a separate coordinator was present.³ Lampe and Kaplan (1999) studied the role of mediation in resolving land-use conflicts and found that they could enable reframing of issues and suggest alternative options for bridging differences. They found that mediators and facilitators had a positive influence on reaching outcomes that were accepted when they

- Understood and helped the participants to understand the “real” issues
- Were able to bring key leaders and officials into a process or to obtain their endorsements for the process (i.e., representation of and support from those with authority)
- Had a relatively high degree of substantive knowledge of the issues in addition to the strength of their process skills
- Were flexible in the face of complexity, so that, for example, revisiting issues and decisions occurred appropriately (in complex disputes “participants had to feel that they could go back and ‘cut and fill’ in order to secure a politically or institutionally acceptable resolution”)
- Adopted tested and politically viable ground rules.

Third, the quality and availability of information used in deliberation has several important effects. Information is positively linked to the level of acceptance reached, which is important to achieving competent decisions, and it mediates the formation of social capacity (Bradbury, Branch, and Malone 2003; Carnes and others 1998; Cole and Associates 1996; Leach, Pelkey, and Sabatier 2002; Leach and Sabatier 2003). For example, Bradbury, Branch, and Malone (2003) found that the competence of deliberation in a process is based, in part, on the disclosure and availability of information. Those researchers found that disclosure of information was vital to framing, selecting, and prioritizing issues. Leach, Pelkey, and Sabatier (2002) reported that the quality of scientific information available to a watershed partnership is positively associated with the level of agreement reached within the partnership. Carnes and others (1998) identified several indicators for whether stakeholders’ and the Department of Energy’s (DOE) understandings of each other improved. These indicators describe how improving understandings builds social capacity (and therein strengthens civil society).

Fourth, lack of conflict over substantive policy issues is positively linked to the level of acceptance reached. Stronger conflicts inhibit the ability to reach agreements or gain acceptance. Gericke and Sullivan (1994) suggested that higher visitation rates to national forest-lands lead to an increased probability of high conflict. This suggestion explained their finding that the degree of developed recreation had a significant positive relationship with the time spent on each appeal of a forest plan. Leach, Pelkey, and Sabatier (2002) found that in the cases they studied, on average, 28 percent of the stakeholders they queried agreed

or strongly agreed that “that scientists and engineers frequently clash with nontechnical stakeholders regarding the proper role of science and technology in managing our watershed” (665). They concluded that when stakeholders disagree on the extent and causes of watershed problems, they might also disagree about proposed remedies.

Fifth, agency missions, staff accessibility, and agency coordination influence the competence of decisions that emerge from a process and the level of acceptance achieved (Aronoff and Gunter 1994; Beierle and Cayford 2002; Bradbury, Branch, and Malone 2003; Cole Associates 1996). Studying the mission of agencies, Aronoff and Gunter (1994) found that when agencies narrowly address problems within their mandate, they can exacerbate stakeholders’ concerns about additional issues that are not addressed. In a study of accessibility, Beierle and Cayford (2002) discovered strong positive correlations between responsiveness of a lead agency (i.e., agency commitment to and communication with participants) and their aggregate measure of success. They furthermore noted that “low levels of responsiveness appear to foster perceptions of process illegitimacy and to lower trust” (51). Aronoff and Gunter (1994) reported that ambiguous communications are a feature of agency-community relations that can negatively affect the quality of outcomes.

Sixth, the scope of issues considered within a process can influence the competence of decisions and their acceptance. Bradbury, Branch, and Malone (2003) suggested that the more closely the scope of issues included represents the concerns of stakeholders, the more stakeholders feel their concerns are being addressed (which is related to the exacerbation of conflict when some concerns are not addressed). The issue of stakeholder expectations comes into play here. Cole and Associates (1996) found that unrealistic expectations among members of a community may lead to disappointment and distrust. They hypothesized that more realistic expectations of what can be achieved lead to more acceptance. Ashford and Rest (1999) also discovered that more congruence between actual and perceived roles and expectations led to more success.

Seventh, the quality of interpersonal relationships promotes reaching of agreement, enhancement of social capacity, and competence of decisions (Ashford and Rest 1999; Beierle and Cayford 2002; Williams and Ellefson 1996). Specific characteristics of interpersonal relationships (e.g., trustful, respectful, honest) are sometimes used as an indicator of social capacity. However, these characteristics are also discussed as variables that mediate the formation of social capacity. For example, researchers propose that the quality of interpersonal relationships can influence learning, networking, and channels of communication. Positive assessments of participants’ relationships with each other and with sponsoring agencies were observed to be associated with personal senses of satisfaction in a process and its accomplishments (Cole and Associates 1996). Selin, Schuett, and Carr (2000) found that willingness to compromise and negotiate among stakeholders was a significant explanatory variable for collaborative stewardship effectiveness. Bradbury, Branch, and

Malone (2003) reported that the quality of relationships between the agency staff and a community and among participants was more positively associated with the ability of the DOE to achieve its mission.

Eighth, trust, as a quality of relationships, is associated with the success of participatory processes, whether one is speaking of relationships between an agency and a community or among community members (Ashford and Rest 1999; Beierle and Cayford 2002; Bradbury, Branch, and Malone 2003; Carnes and others 1998; Cole and Associates 1996). Trust has been discussed in the literature as a variable mediating the ability of agencies and stakeholders to reach agreement and obtain legitimacy for a process, decisions, or outcomes. A variety of moderating process and context variables can contribute to the formation of trust. For example, Beierle and Cayford (2002) reported that “low levels of responsiveness appear to foster perceptions of process illegitimacy and to lower trust” in the institutional sponsors (51). Systems of accountability can influence levels of trust between an agency and stakeholders. According to Bradbury, Branch, and Malone (2003), a lack of accountability can lead to distrust and opposition. Cole and Associates (1996) reported that accessibility and continuity of the agency staff in a process facilitated better relationships between the community and the agency.

Ninth, the quality of the deliberation is associated with the effectiveness of outcomes, the competence of the process, and the participants’ satisfaction with the process. Duram and Brown (1999) found that two-way communication methods were rated more effective than one-way communication methods. Being able to communicate clearly tended to be positively associated with technically stronger conservation plans (Sommarstrom and Huntington 1999). Furthermore, the effectiveness of watershed councils’ actions and proposals were positively associated with the clarity of approach to issues, the role of science in decisions, the explicitness of criteria, the degree of openness in decisions, the degree to which approaches were opportunistic versus strategic, and the idea of whether “sacred cow issues” existed and were allowed to fester. Having information exchange (such as research results being widely available), having informed stakeholders, and having progress updates were key factors leading to success (Schuett, Selin, and Carr 2001). Beierle and Cayford (2002) found a significant relationship between (a) the quality of deliberations and their aggregate measure of success and (b) the motivations of participants and their aggregate measure of success. This aggregate measure includes two elements related to the competence of decisions: incorporating public values into decisions and improving the substantive quality of decisions.

Tenth, the type of mechanism used in a process can affect the level of acceptance (Beierle and Cayford 2002; Bradbury, Branch, and Malone 2003; Carr and Halvorsen 2001; Chess and Purcell 1999; Halverson 2001; McComas, Besley, and Trumbo 2006; Sommarstrom and Huntington 1999; Williams and Ellefson 1996). Gericke and Sullivan (1994) found that, as the proportion of small group forums increased, the time spent on each appeal of the decision on

a forest plan declined (an indicator whether the plan was accepted). McComas, Besley, and Trumbo (2006) studied the reasons people do (and do not) participate in public meetings about cancer clusters. The perceived utility of that kind of format was one key factor. Sommarstrom and Huntington (1999) found that conservation plans were technically stronger when local and scientific-technical committees were used during a plan's development phase. The frequency of meetings does not seem to matter as much as the quality of meetings. Duram and Brown (1999) reported no statistically significant relationship between the frequency of partnership meetings and the perceived effectiveness of participation. However, voluntariness does appear to be a factor. Williams and Ellefson (1996) found in their study that voluntary partnerships had participants who expressed greater satisfaction than mandated partnerships. One of the key factors seems to be intensity of interaction (i.e., small group meetings vs. public hearings). Bierele and Cayford (2002) found that more intense mechanisms for interaction increased the ability to resolve conflict among competing interests, to incorporate public values into decisions, and to improve the substantive quality of decisions. However, it is interesting to note that Beierle and Cayford (2002) also found that participants in intensive processes are not representative of the broader community. This finding raises the challenge of how to counter self-selection bias in more intensive deliberative mechanisms.

Conclusions and Caveats of the Literature Review

This review summarizes the findings of scientific studies of what features of participatory assessment and decision-making processes are associated with success. Although the review has been focused on studies involving multiple cases, similar observations can be extracted from reviews that build on the much larger empirical literature about specific cases (Chess and Purcell 1999; Frewer and Rowe 2005; Halvorsen 2006; Rowe and Frewer 2000; Webler and Tuler 2002).

Three important caveats should be kept in mind when considering these results. First, the studies are largely context-specific. Many focus on only one policy area, such as watershed planning along the West Coast of the United States or cleanup of contaminated government facilities that are part of the United States' nuclear weapons complex. Generalizing from these results to, say, a landfill siting process in Central Europe may not be justified. We simply do not know enough about how important these contextual differences are.

Second, a weakness associated with summarizing their findings is that researchers have often used different (and sometimes implicit) definitions for key variables. In several cases, aggregate measures of success are used that include elements of legitimacy, social capacity, or competence, but these measures do not always allow the specification of clear causal relationships between process variables, context variables, and specific outcomes.

Third, although the studies identify qualities of processes that do matter, they may not be the qualities that participants of the processes believe matter. People

may disagree about appropriate criteria for success—even within the same process. Recent research suggests that participants in a process may not all agree about which criteria are important (Bradbury, Branch, and Malone 2003; Branch and Bradbury 2006; Chess and Purcell 1999; Leach 2002; Leach, Pelkey, and Sabatier 2002; Webler and Tuler 2006). Furthermore, they may desire different kinds of outcomes (Bradbury, Branch, and Malone 2003; Carnes and others 1998). In fact, research by the authors of the present chapter shows that such differences are common. The next section will present what participants believe is an appropriate process. For any given individual in a given context, it was found that people focus on certain process features and outcomes more than others. People *presume* causal connections between process features that lead to achievement of different kinds of outcomes, and these presumptions differ widely.

Consequently, the studies do not provide, as a body of research, clear cumulative findings about variables that are important to achieving desired outcomes through public participation in environmental decision making. They do, however, provide important information about factors that are associated with achieving successful public participation. This review of multiple case studies summarizes most of the best studies done to date. Clearly, there is much more research to do.

Current Research on Participant Perspectives on Process

Over the past decade, the authors of this chapter have conducted several studies to understand what people believe would make a good participatory decision-making process for their situations and problems. In these studies to identify shared perspectives, Q method has been used (Brown 1986, 1996; Dayton 2000; Johnson and Chess 2006; Kalof 1998; McKeown and Thomas 1988; Niemeyer, Petts, and Hobson 2005; Stephenson 1953; see also www.qmethod.org).⁴ Q method is a technique used to understand what people think or believe about a subject. By interviewing people with unique points of view, Q researchers can reveal patterns in how elements of perspectives are related (see also Tuler and Webler 2006; Tuler, Webler, and Finson 2005; Webler, Tuler, and Krueger 2001; Webler, Tuler, and Tanguay 2004).

Case Studies

The authors of the present chapter hypothesized that people's preferences for process would differ with the content and decision context of the discussion. Therefore, case studies were selected in three different policy arenas: watershed management, forestry management, and radiation hazard management (see table 8.1). These are all policy arenas in which (1) deliberative approaches to planning have received much attention; (2) a variety of innovative approaches to public participation exist; and (3) effects on value dimensions are diverse, unequally distributed, and important to affected individuals. The authors also hypothesized that different kinds of participants would have different viewpoints,

so input was sought from participants with very different backgrounds, roles, and objectives. In each case, individuals were selected to participate in the study who were actively involved in the participatory process and who represented different points of view regarding the participation process. To help identify appropriate participants for the research, the authors relied on collaborators who knew their case well. A pilot study of a planning process for the Boston Harbor Islands National Park Area, where the research instruments were validated, was also included in the complete analysis.

Preferences for an Appropriate Process

Q researchers have participants sort statements related to an issue of interest according to their personal point of view. A Q method study usually involves a few dozen statements. Because the social perspectives are unknown, the study must supply statements that represent all key aspects of the likely perspectives on the issue. In this project, statements came from interviews conducted with participants in other studies (e.g., Webler, Tuler, and Krueger 2001; people in these cases were not interviewed) and from an extensive review of the academic and practitioner publications in the field. From these ideas, claims were extracted about important elements of public participation. More than 250 statements were winnowed down to a final set of 56 (see table 8.2). Ideas about both process and outcomes were included because people do not always evaluate the process independent of the outcomes that emerge (Chess and Purcell 1999; Tuler and Webler 1999).

Participants express their opinions by ranking the statements into categories (from -5 to $+5$), which is called a Q sort. Factor analysis is used to reveal patterns among how the different statements are related. The output of the factor analysis is a particular ordering of the statements, which is interpreted to come up with narratives that represent unique social

Table 8.1. Ten Case Studies for Assessing Participants' Views of a Good Communicative Governance Decision-Making Process

Policy Arena	Name of Case	Topic
Forest management	Finger Lakes National Forest, New York	Management plan
	Applegate Partnership, California-Oregon	Collaborative forest management
	Greater Flagstaff Forest Partnership, Arizona	Collaborative forest management
Watershed management	Morro Bay, California	National Estuary Program
	Dungeness River, Washington	Management plan
	Raritan Basin, New Jersey	Management plan
Radiological contamination	Rocky Flats, Colorado	Setting standards for cleanup
	Fernald, Ohio	Assessing public health risk
	Lawrence Livermore, California	Plutonium contamination
Park planning	Boston Harbor Islands, Massachusetts	Park area plan

Source: Authors.

Table 8.2. Q Statements and Their Ranking for Each Perspective

No.	Statement	Perspective			
		A	B	C	D
1	Set up a situation that encourages all participants to listen to what others say and to consider it carefully.	0	4	2	1
2	Use the best available science in the analysis.	5	0	1	5
3	Establish relationships that promote constructive collaboration among participants.	1	0	4	3
4	Acknowledge and explore uncertainties.	-1	0	-2	2
5	Develop a common language and understanding among participants.	-3	0	2	1
6	Reach out in a number of different ways through different mechanisms to different communities on different issue points throughout the process.	0	0	-1	2
7	Work to build trust among the different participants during the process.	-1	3	5	1
8	Hold meetings at different times and places so no one is excluded from participating.	-5	4	-4	-3
9	Have participants be courteous and respectful to one another.	0	2	4	0
10	Provide financial resources that enable people to participate effectively (e.g., travel, hire experts).	0	0	-3	-5
11	Have participants see beyond their individual interests to what is good for the larger community.	1	1	4	2
12	Understand that the process cannot be open to just anyone who wants to participate; participation has to be restricted in some way.	-2	-5	-5	-5
13	Have participants be accountable for what they say, sincere in their promises, and reliable in carrying them out.	0	0	1	3
14	Understand that the process gives recommendations to the responsible agencies, who then make the final decisions.	-3	-5	3	-2
15	Make sure participants have reasonable expectations about what the agencies are able to do.	2	-3	3	0
16	Make sure all important decisions are made according to consensus (including the agenda).	-4	3	-4	-4
17	Have participants attend meetings regularly and see tasks through to completion.	2	0	0	-2
18	Make sure it is clear under what conditions the process will end.	1	-4	-1	-1
19	Have participants be able to deal with complex technical issues.	-1	-4	-5	-1
20	Know that every recommendation is justified with evidence.	0	-3	-3	3
21	Make sure participants feel comfortable and safe at the meetings.	-3	1	3	-1
22	Make sure consensus is used to decide what rule is used to make decisions (simple majority vote, 2/3 majority vote, etc.).	-2	1	0	-1
23	Understand that clear ground rules govern how people should interact.	0	1	2	0
24	Make sure the responsible agencies respond in a timely way to all questions, comments, and requests.	2	1	0	0
25	Pay attention to the physical arrangement of tables and chairs at the meetings.	-5	-3	-4	-5
26	Understand that opportunity can't be an empty shell; not only must there be opportunities to be heard but also there must be some way for the public to see that the decision makers are listening.	-1	2	1	1
27	Discuss the values underlying people's opinions about the issues.	-5	-2	-1	0
28	Know the mechanisms for communicating to the broader public about what decisions are being considered and made.	1	2	0	-1
29	Validate all information to make certain it is correct.	2	-1	-3	2
30	Have participants who represent groups check in with their memberships regularly to ensure that they represent the members' views accurately.	-2	-1	0	-3
31	Make sure all people have an equal chance to put their concerns on the agenda.	-3	2	0	0

(continued)

Table 8.2. Q Statements and Their Ranking for Each Perspective (*continued*)

No.	Statement	Perspective			
		A	B	C	D
32	Make sure the process improves the participants' skills to participate effectively in processes like this (e.g., problem solving, conflict resolution, communication).	-4	-1	-2	-2
33	Know that the process has to be able to limit topics of discussion in order to avoid quagmires.	1	-2	-2	-1
34	Make sure the process improves participants' understandings.	-1	-1	0	2
35	Make sure the process requires unbiased and independent facilitation.	-2	1	-1	4
36	Make sure the process ends up enhancing the trust between the community and responsible agencies.	0	-2	2	4
37	Make sure the purposes and goals of the process are clear to all involved.	4	3	5	4
38	Ensure that the process does not make any preexisting conflicts worse.	-1	-3	-1	-2
39	Ensure that all participants have equal access to information.	1	4	0	2
40	Have all important stakeholders take part in the process.	3	5	3	1
41	Fully disclose all information at all times.	3	5	-2	3
42	At the end of the process, show a clear plan for how to implement the final decision.	5	-1	1	0
43	Have the staff involved be receptive to questions or requests for information from the public.	2	2	1	1
44	Make sure the process makes progress on solving the right problem.	4	-2	1	5
45	Get the right information.	3	-2	0	5
46	Have the process produce outcomes that are acceptable to me or my organization.	-2	-2	-1	-3
47	Have the process tap the knowledge and experiences of local people.	4	5	2	0
48	Have the process produce outcomes that are acceptable to the responsible agencies.	-4	-5	-1	-4
49	Understand that the process needs an effective leader.	5	0	5	-4
50	Recognize that one outcome of the process is a plan to ensure that the promises made are actually followed through and that organizations are accountable for their promises.	1	-1	2	0
51	Have adequate administrative support (e.g., funding, staffing) for the life of the process.	3	2	1	-3
52	Make sure the process is well timed to the responsible agency's window of opportunity to act.	0	-4	-2	-2
53	Ensure that there is adequate notification of meetings, comment periods, etc.	0	3	0	-2
54	Allow time to revisit issues and decisions, even if it means extending the timetable.	-2	0	-3	-1
55	Have participants be involved in deciding what studies ought to be done.	2	1	-2	1
56	Have participants be involved in deciding how studies ought to be done.	-1	-1	-5	0

Source: Authors.

perspectives. Social perspectives are understood to represent conceptual schema that are idealized. An individual may legitimately hold aspects of multiple social perspectives.

For instance, if one were using Q method to study people's preferences for climate change policy, one idealized social perspective might be found that promotes carbon trading and a second that promotes renewable technologies. Any individual's Q sort might correlate highly with one or the other of these social perspectives, or it might correlate moderately with both social perspectives (meaning the person feels that a two-pronged solution is the best), or it might not correlate with either (suggesting that the person has a totally different point of view).

Table 8.2 shows the score each Q statement received for each of the four perspectives. A +5 indicates the statement was strongly emphasized, whereas -5 means the statement was weakly emphasized in that perspective.

Results

From the 117 participants in the study, analysis produced four social perspectives about what is an appropriate public participation process. The 56 Q statements provided an adequate means for participants to describe their viewpoints. One measure of this adequacy is that, after each Q sort, the subject was asked if he or she could think of any additional elements that would be important that were not represented in the Q statements. None of the people who completed sorts suggested additional elements. A few people correlated with more than one perspective, but the vast majority of people were associated with only one.

The following sections describe the kind of process envisioned by each of the social perspectives. Numbers in parentheses refer to Q statements, as shown in table 8.2.

Perspective A: Science-Centered Stakeholder Consultation. This perspective describes a participatory decision-making process that is streamlined and task centered (37, 44) with a clear utilitarian focus on producing real progress on the problem (44). This utilitarian focus results in strong emphasis on features related to competence, sometimes at the expense of those that would promote fairness. The purpose of the process is oriented toward taking action (42) rather than on producing advice for a sponsoring agency (14).

Two of the primary ingredients to success are strong leadership (49) and good information and scientific analysis (2, 47, 45, 41, 29, 55, 24). Strong leadership is necessary to keep the process on track. Good information and scientific analysis ensure that competence is achieved through multiple features. The process should use the best available science for analysis, tap knowledge and experiences of local people, get the right information, and validate all information to make sure it is correct. In addition, participants should have voice in decisions about what studies to do, although it is not so important for them to be involved in deciding how to do them (56).

Although the importance of fairness is expressed by a strong emphasis on including all important stakeholders (40), the role of stakeholder participants is not broad or powerful. Instead, fairness is defined in terms of the ability to attend and to participate in discussions only. The purpose of involving important stakeholders is to ensure that all relevant and important information informs deliberations and decisions. Other than their role in providing data to inform the process, the only other important elements related to stakeholders are that they should attend regularly (17; so that progress is rapid) and that they be reasonable about what the regulatory agency can do (15; so that the process is focused on relevant matters). Both these features will help the process run smoothly. Moreover, there is little interest in other features often

associated with fairness, because they could delay the process or give stakeholders strong influence over outcomes, including using consensus (16, 22), allowing time to revisit issues (54), allowing participants to place topics on the agenda (31), exploring uncertainties (4), or discussing values (27). In keeping with a streamlined and task-centered approach, agency staff members are responsible for disseminating information (41, 43) and providing the administrative support for the process (51).

Perspective B: Egalitarian Deliberation. This perspective strongly emphasizes the criteria of fairness. It places much importance on empowering participants, and it reacts against dominance of the agency over the process. Features that empower participants are strongly endorsed, including access to the process (40, 53, 8), access to information (39, 41), encouragement of deliberation (1, 7, 26, 28), and power to shape the discussion and its outcome (16, 31)—each dimension associated with fairness. Conversely, features that would disempower participants are ranked low, including those that limit who can participate (12, 15, 19), limit topics of discussion (33), constrain the timetable (18, 52), or impose restrictions on outcomes of the process (48, 14, 20, 38, 46).

In this perspective, fairness is not ensured by independent or unbiased facilitation (15), strong leadership (15), and ground rules for interaction (23). Instead, key stakeholders can be relied on to participate meaningfully and effectively and to make decisions wisely. This viewpoint reacts against the governmental agency seizing control over the definition of the problem (hence the negative score for “solve the right problem”; 44) and manipulation of the process (e.g., through reliance on technical information that limits the public’s ability to be fully involved). Thus, although informed deliberation is important to this view (39, 41, 47), scientific analysis is not (2). Nor is there a central role for discussion of values (27) because disputes about values are not resolvable. These preferences sharply bound features that are often associated with competence.

Although Egalitarian Deliberation emphasizes empowerment of participants in a process, it reveals mixed emphasis on building social capacities of the participants. On the one hand, scant attention is given to improving understandings (5, 34) or skills of participants to engage in deliberative policy making (32), and even less emphasis on enhancing trust between the community and the agency (36). However, there is strong support for not making preexisting conflicts worse (38) and for building trust among the participants (7).

Perspective C: Agency-Centered Stakeholder Consultation. In this perspective, the purpose of the process is to give recommendations to the responsible agency, which will then make a competent decision (14). This approach is antithetical to having all the important decisions made by consensus (16). Yet there is a strong implication that, although the agency has the decision-making authority, the decision should serve the collective good, not just what the agency finds acceptable (48).

To ensure that deliberation does not get bogged down in arguments, this perspective seeks to promote trust among participants (7), build collaborative relationships (3), develop a common language and understanding among participants (5), and promote listening (1). For the process to work well, the participants need to exemplify certain characteristics. Foremost is that they be able to see beyond their individual interests to what is good for all (11). This approach helps move the process away from factionalism, toward a collective good that the agency can then pursue. For this same reason, participants should be respectful and courteous (9) and have reasonable expectations about what the agency can do (15). Just in case participants do not behave themselves, there are ground rules (23) and an effective leader (49), which, interestingly, is not the same as having an unbiased and independent facilitator (35). This process is led by the agency, whose strong leader outlines the goals clearly (37). The upshot of preferring these features that promote efficiency is to limit fairness.

The primary function of public participation here is to supply comment and feedback for the agency to consider when deciding what to do. In contrast to the Egalitarian Deliberation perspective, this perspective is not interested in making the process broadly democratic or empowering participants. Again, it does not emphasize features associated with fairness to as great an extent. Although it is important that all the important stakeholders take part (40), other features to improve access and outreach are not emphasized (6, 8, 10, 28). Nor is there concern for power imbalances among participants; there is little support for participants' ability to place topics on the agenda (31) or for consensus (16, 22), which are associated with a stronger notion of fairness.

Interestingly, this perspective does not place science and evidence in a central role. Instead of the process ensuring that competence is achieved, the responsible agency draws on other sources to ensure that its decisions promote the collective good; this approach may mean that political considerations can trump scientific evidence. Thus, this perspective disagrees that all recommendations need to be supported with evidence (20), because requiring that support would unreasonably tie the hands of the agency. As with the previous perspective, support does not exist for using the best available science (2). There is even less support for validating all information (29). Consistent with deemphasizing science and democratic empowerment, this perspective ranked very low statements about including participants in decisions about what studies should be done or how the studies should be done (55, 56). In a sense, competence is achieved at a different institutional level, and its meaning is broadened to include, for example, political considerations.

Additional features related to fairness and competence that would reduce the efficiency of the process are discouraged, such as allowing time to revisit issues and decisions (54), setting schedules to accommodate participants (53), depending on consensus decision making (16), or acknowledging uncertainties (4).

Perspective D: Informed Democratic Collaboration. This perspective envisions an ends-oriented process that makes progress on the central problems (44). Progress is achieved through a collaboration of key stakeholders and the sponsoring agency that engenders legitimacy for the agency to act. In this perspective, the agency seeks legitimacy for its decisions in two ways. First, high-quality information and analysis should inform deliberations; that is, the process should be competent. Second, trust between the community and the agency (36) should be established. On this point of trust, this perspective differs from that which is represented by Perspective C (Agency-Centered Stakeholder Consultation). Perspective C focuses on developing trust among stakeholders to promote efficiency rather than legitimacy. However, the effect in both perspectives is the same; trust is a means for reducing the power of participants and limiting aspects related to fairness.

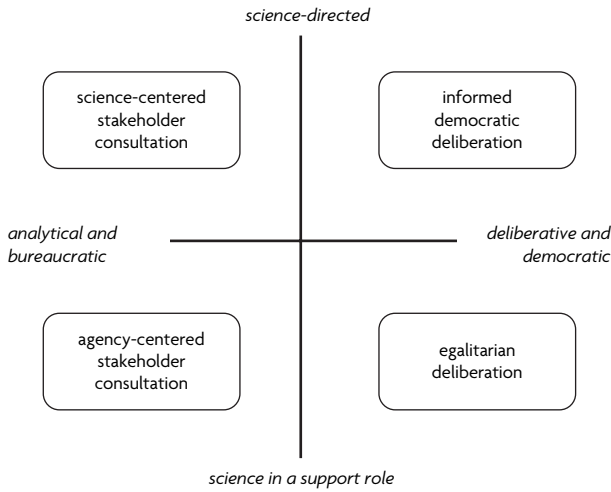
The central role of technical analysis is emphasized by the need to get the right information (45), using the best available science for analysis (2), justifying recommendations with evidence (20), and validating information to make sure it is correct (29). If one is to ensure cooperation among the participants and the regulatory agency, the information should be widely shared (39, 41). These features are all associated with a strong notion of competence. Although exploring uncertainties (4) was ranked higher in this perspective than any of the others, there was weaker emphasis on tapping local knowledge (47) or involving stakeholders in deciding what studies to do (55). In other words, for this perspective, competence does not rely heavily on the input of stakeholders.

Building trust among the community and the agency is addressed through independent or unbiased facilitation (35), establishing clear purposes and goals (37), endeavoring to establish collaborative relationships (3), sharing all information (39, 41), and being open to outcomes that are not necessarily those desired (48). Participants, including the sponsoring agency, are also expected to be accountable for what they say and do (13). Features, such as sharing of all information, promote fairness. However, many of these other features would seem to suggest a relatively weak emphasis on fairness that might impede the agency's ability to make progress.

Two features may threaten collaboration; thus, they are not promoted as part of this perspective. First, strong leadership runs the risk of alienating participants and leading to a lower sense of ownership over the process (49). Second, consensus endangers collaboration by giving participants the opportunity to dig in their heels and not compromise on their preferred outcomes (16). Moreover, a feature that might promote trust is deemphasized: adequate administrative support (e.g., funding, staffing) for the life of the process (51). This feature was probably minimized because people advancing this position were situated in agencies; thus, they took this belief for granted.

Finally, this perspective does not emphasize broad, democratic participation even as it seeks to build trust, which further underscores the limited emphasis on

Figure 8.1. Four Perspectives on Public Participation Process



Source: Authors.

fairness in this view. Features such as holding meetings at different times and places (8), adequate notification of meetings (53), providing financial support to enable participation (10), and expecting participants to check in with their membership (30) received low rankings.

Summary of the Four Perspectives

Figure 8.1 summarizes the similarities and differences among the four social perspectives on two themes: the role of science and the breadth of participation. These two themes were pivotal in distinguishing the perspectives. Two perspectives highlight the importance of science having a determining effect on the outcome—Science-Centered Stakeholder Consultation and Informed Democratic Collaboration—and they differ in their position about how broadly inclusive the process should be.

Both Agency-Centered Stakeholder Consultation and Egalitarian Deliberation give science a supportive (not determinative) role in the process. They also represent disagreement about how broadly inclusive the process ought to be.

Fairness and Competence in Deliberation

This framework for distinguishing the four social perspectives emerged out of the empirical data from the 10 case studies. On further reflection, theoretical justification is found for these dimensions. The present authors' previous research on fairness and competence as metacriteria for evaluating public participation sheds further light on the differences and similarities among these perspectives (Webler 1995; Webler and Tuler 2000).

“Fairness” refers to what people are permitted to *do* in a participatory process. When people come together with the intention of reaching understandings and making public decisions in a fair process, four *necessary opportunities* for action by individual participants must be available. Participants should have the opportunity to do the following:

- Attend (be present).
- Initiate discourse (make statements).
- Participate in the discussion (ask for clarification, challenge, answer, and argue).
- Participate in the decision making (resolve disagreements and bring about closure).

Inclusivity is fundamental to the concept of fairness. Attendance is primary; in every process, a decision must be made about who has a legitimate right to participate. This decision is often translated into the problem of defining the potentially affected population. Fair attendance may mean, for example, that meetings move from town to town to give people across a large region equal opportunities to attend. Or it may mean that some meetings are held on weekends and others during the day to give people who work different shifts equal chances to attend. Fair participation in agenda setting and rule making means that all involved have the same opportunity to initiate discourse and to participate with others in the discussion. For instance, someone should be able to raise a new agenda item and be able to engage in discussions about the agenda and the rules. Fairness in the discussion and debate refers to making sure that everyone has an equal chance to make his or her voice heard and to shape the final decision.

Competence, in dialogue, refers to the construction of the best possible understandings and agreements, given what is reasonably knowable to the participants at the time the discourse takes place. It is conceptualized as two basic necessities:

- Access to information and its interpretations
- Use of the best available procedures for knowledge selection.

Once information has been brought into the discourse and interpreted, competing assertions need to be resolved. To produce competent understandings and judgments, a process must ensure that the best rules and procedures are used to gather, evaluate, and select knowledge. For many situations, time-tested methods for gathering information and constructing knowledge have been developed, and it is reasonable to expect that people should use these methods when selecting and using information and knowledge. For example, scientific knowledge is scrutinized according to criteria that are well established.

In other words, the role of science is fundamental to the concept of competence. However, competence is not dependent on the appropriate use of

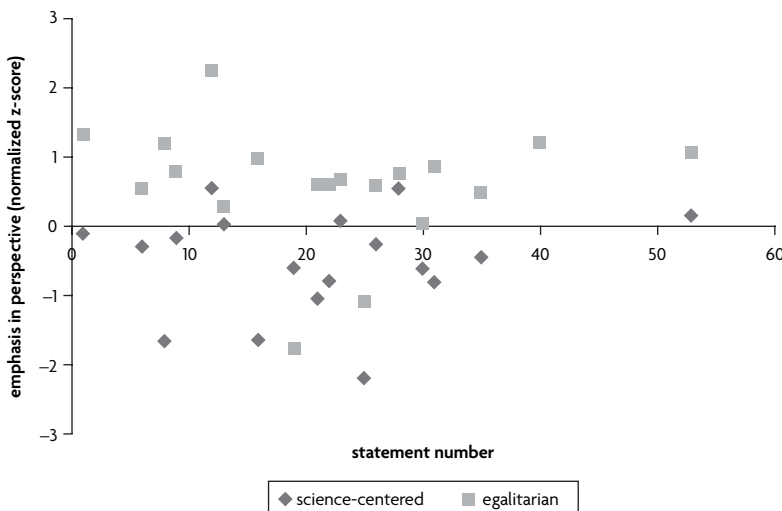
scientific knowledge only. Access to information can mean bringing in outside experts (factual claims), ensuring that all relevant interest groups are represented (normative claims), or simply making certain that people have the opportunity to get in touch with their own authentic desires and concerns (expressive or subjective claims). Courts have established criteria that determine the admissibility of certain statements. These criteria are designed to eliminate statements that are often unreliable (such as hearsay), inaccurate (such as out-of-court statements), or prejudiced.

Fairness and competence are concepts that establish a normative theory of what public participation in Western developed democracies should be (Coenen, Huitema, and O’Toole 1998; Renn, Webler, and Wiedemann 1995; Rowe and Frewer 2000; Webler 1995; Webler and Tuler 2000). This theory and our empirical findings combine to yield sophisticated insights for practitioners to consider when designing or implementing a communicative participatory process. These insights build on and elaborate the observations that emerge from the literature review.

The findings that emerge from the 10 case studies contribute insights because the Q statements can be associated primarily with either fairness or competence and because they are based on the practical experiences of participants, sponsors, and practitioners. By considering the way that their preferences for features related to fairness and competence are ranked in each of the social perspectives, we can better understand how different people emphasize these two important qualities and what they expect will work best.

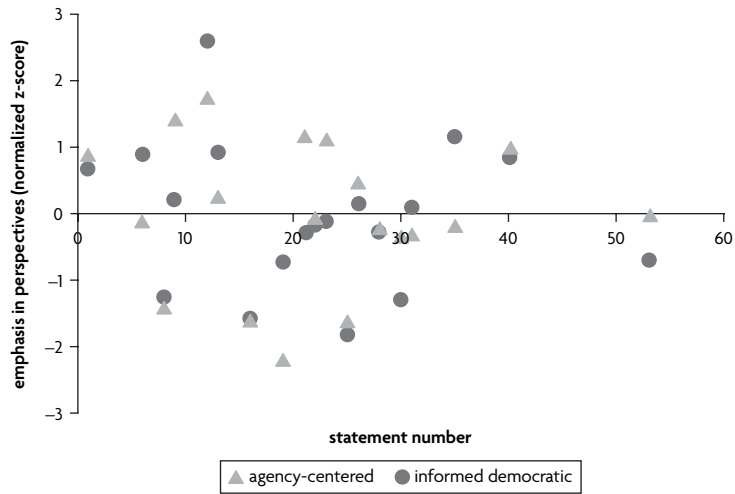
Figures 8.2 and 8.3 compare the social perspectives on the theme of fairness, and each figure compares two perspectives (for simplicity). The *x*-axis is the set of statements related to fairness (see table 8.3). The *y*-axis is the relative

Figure 8.2. Fairness in Perspectives A and B



Source: Authors.

Figure 8.3. Fairness in Perspectives C and D



Source: Authors.

Table 8.3. Q Statements Related to Fairness

No.	Statement
1	A situation should be set up that encourages all participants to listen to what others say and to consider it carefully.
6	Participants should reach out in a number of different ways through different mechanisms to different communities on different issue points throughout the process.
8	Participants should hold meetings at different times and places so no one is excluded from participating.
9	Participants should be courteous and respectful to one another.
12	The process cannot be open to just anyone who wants to participate; participation has to be restricted in some way.
13	Participants should be accountable for what they say, sincere in their promises, and reliable in carrying them out.
16	All important decisions are made according to consensus (including the agenda).
19	Participants should be able to deal with complex technical issues.
21	Participants should feel comfortable and safe at the meetings.
22	Consensus is used to decide what rule is used to make decisions (simple majority vote, 2/3 majority vote, etc.).
23	There are clear ground rules that govern how people should interact.
25	Participants should pay attention to the physical arrangement of tables and chairs at the meetings.
26	Opportunity can't be an empty shell; there need not only be opportunities to be heard but also be some way for the public to see that the decision makers are listening.
28	There are mechanisms for communicating to the broader public about what decisions are being considered and made.
30	Participants who represent groups check in with their memberships regularly to ensure that they represent their views accurately.
31	All people have an equal chance to put their concerns on the agenda.
35	The process requires unbiased and independent facilitation.
40	All important stakeholders are taking part in the process.
53	There is adequate notification of meetings, comment periods, etc.

Source: Authors.

importance of each statement in that perspective. The purpose of the figures is to convey visually how helpful the concepts of fairness and competence are at distinguishing among the perspectives.⁵

Figure 8.2 compares the first two perspectives on fairness. It shows that Egalitarian Deliberation clearly gave much more weight to fairness than did Science-Centered Stakeholder Consultation. It makes intuitive sense that people concerned with power relationships would emphasize fairness. But why would people ascribing to Science-Centered Stakeholder Consultation place little weight on fairness? Two reasons were uncovered. First, they perceived fairness as unnecessary to emphasize, because, in their experience, the basics of fair process are commonplace and could be taken for granted. Individuals whose personal perspectives were close to Science-Centered Stakeholder Consultation tended to be professional scientists. They also tended to have less experience with collaborative decision making. The second reason is that they perceive some of the qualities of fairness as contradictory to their prerogative for efficiency. Both adding to the agenda or going back over items that were supposedly “finished” enable the process to be drawn out longer than expected.

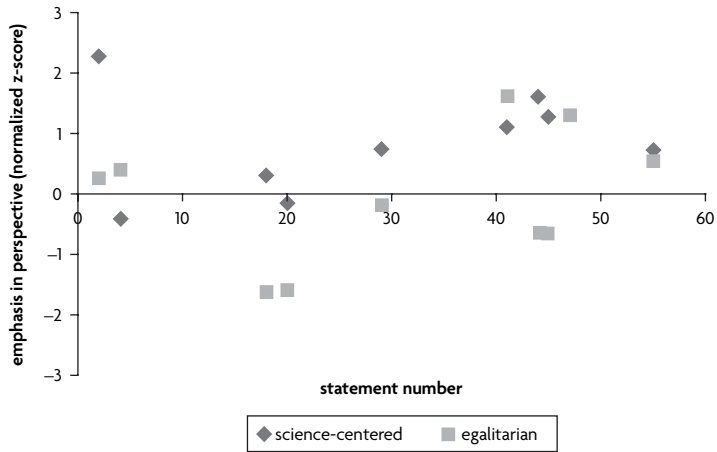
The distinction between the other two perspectives on the theme of fairness is not as discerning, as suggested by figure 8.3. Both Agency-Centered Consultation and Informed Democratic Collaboration gave similar emphasis to the statements having to do with fairness. Although statements related to fairness were not always ranked in the same manner, many statements from this index were ranked positively in each perspective. Both these perspectives believe it is important to promote listening, open dialogue, and inclusion. Conversely, these perspectives promote different ideas about who ought to be included. There is disagreement about the importance of having independent, unbiased facilitation, mainly because the Agency-Centered Consultation approach felt it was appropriate for the responsible agency to facilitate. Despite broad support for ideas of fairness, neither perspective comes close to emphasizing fairness as much as the Egalitarian Deliberation perspective.

The theme of competence is also helpful to distinguish the perspectives. Figures 8.4 and 8.5 compare the social perspectives on competence. The *x*-axis is the set of statements related to competence (see table 8.4a).

Figure 8.4 shows that statements relating to the competent use of science and information are helpful in distinguishing Science-Centered Stakeholder Consultation from Egalitarian Deliberation. Although there are some points where Egalitarian Deliberation ranked statements on the competence index as high or slightly higher than Science-Centered Stakeholder Consultation, these points are features that also contained aspects of equity or empowerment. For the most part, Egalitarian Deliberation placed less importance on the science involved.

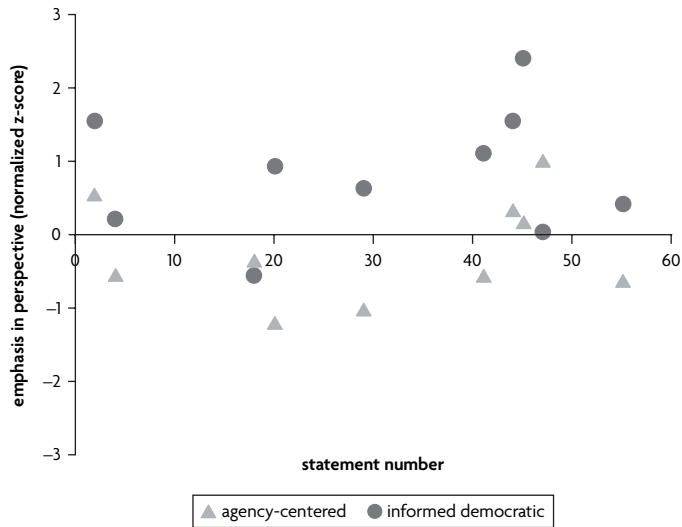
Figure 8.5 compares Agency-Centered Stakeholder Consultation with Informed Democratic Collaboration. It shows a similar pattern with the previous figure. In this case, Informed Democratic Collaboration strongly emphasized

Figure 8.4. Competence in Perspectives A and B



Source: Authors.

Figure 8.5. Competence in Perspectives C and D



Source: Authors.

the importance of competence in the decision-making process, whereas Agency-Centered Stakeholder Consultation gave it much less importance.

Interpretation of the Evidence: Prescriptions for Organizers

These findings add a unique contribution to the literature review of multicase studies. They report that different participants have different ideas of what makes a successful process. As shown in figure 8.1, these differences emerge in large part from how people think about the role of science and the breadth of

Table 8.4a. Q Statements Related to Competence

No.	Statement
2	Use the best available science in the analysis.
4	Acknowledge and explore uncertainties.
18	Make sure it is clear under what conditions the process will end.
20	Make sure every recommendation is justified with evidence.
29	Validate all information to make certain it is correct.
41	Have a full disclosure of information at all times.
44	Have the process make progress on solving the right problem.
45	Get the right information.
47	Make sure the process taps the knowledge and experiences of local people.
55	Have participants involved in deciding <i>what</i> studies ought to be done.

Source: Authors.

participation. These preferences are aligned, in part, with preferences for features related to procedural fairness and competence, as shown in figures 8.2–8.5. Up to this point, the emphasis has been on how the perspectives differ with respect to important features in a process.

There are also many similarities. A closer look at the similarities among the social perspectives reveals insights that can inform concrete advice for practitioners and participants on several different aspects of process design. The following sections present this advice. These insights are compatible with—and reinforce—the findings that emerged from the literature review.

Inclusion, Exclusion, Outreach, and Paying for Participation

First and foremost, it is certain that who is invited and who is excluded is an extremely important consideration for participants involved in decision-making efforts. As suggested by the literature review under the theme of representation, who is included has direct consequences for the perceived legitimacy of the process, the creation of social capacity, and the quality of decisions. Three statements in this study addressed who should participate. Two suggested it would be acceptable to limit who participates in some way (12, 19), and these were ranked negatively in all perspectives. However, they were not ranked consistently low across all four perspectives. Science-Centered Stakeholder Consultation ranked them near the middle of the scale (highlighted boxes in table 8.4b). Another statement asserted that all important stakeholders need to be included (40), and this statement was ranked positively in all perspectives. As mentioned above, however, these perspectives expressed some different ideas about who is an “important” stakeholder. These findings suggest wide agreement, but not consensus, on the importance of the process being open to anyone who wishes to participate.

The evaluation literature is replete with advice that openness is important (Sabatier and others 2005; Shindler and Neburka 1997), but no studies to

Table 8.4b. Q Statements Related to Who Should Participate

No.	Statement	Perspective			
		A	B	C	D
12	The process cannot be open to just anyone who wants to participate; participation has to be restricted in some way.	-2	-5	-5	-5
19	Participants should be able to deal with complex technical issues.	-1	-4	-5	-1
40	All important stakeholders are taking part in the process.	3	5	3	1

Source: Authors.

the knowledge of the present authors exist that systematically examined causal links between limiting participation and the legitimacy or substantive outcome of the process. However, the data suggest that some people believe that limiting participation may be necessary or desirable; that is, they believe there is a causal relationship between careful exclusion or inclusion of stakeholders and the quality of outcomes. Theories of communicative action (Habermas 1984; Webler 1995) and theories of deliberative democracy (Dryzek 1997; Gutmann and Thompson 1998) reinforce the importance of inclusiveness in decision processes. Organizers face important decisions about who to include in the process and that there are legitimate justifications for preferring some participants over others (by their degree of affectedness, for example).

Advice for practitioners follows from this evidence:

- In deciding who is included as a participant, practitioners should err on the side of inclusiveness. Although there may be individuals who will tolerate or promote a more exclusionary process, others will feel strongly that inclusivity is a prerequisite for a good process.
- If limiting participation is necessary for logistical reasons, then the selection process should be designed in collaboration with the parties most directly affected so that it is widely seen as fair and legitimate.

Outreach is a point on which there is a wider spread of opinion within the four perspectives, as shown in table 8.4c. Two of the statements addressed this issue. One advocated reaching out to different audiences in different ways (6), and the other recommended holding meetings at different times and places (8). Neither statement was universally supported.

Table 8.4c. Q Statements Related to Outreach

No.	Statement	Perspective			
		A	B	C	D
6	Participants should reach out in a number of different ways through different mechanisms to different communities on different issue points, throughout the process.	0	0	-1	2
8	Participants should hold meetings at different times and places so no one is excluded from participating.	-5	4	-4	-3

Source: Authors.

It is commonly recommended that ensuring full representation of important stakeholders requires reaching out to as wide an audience as possible and making access as easy as possible. This priority principle was supported by only one of the perspectives: Egalitarian Deliberation. Most participants felt that there were more important things to focus on than reaching out or moving meetings from place to place. This priority was true even in the case studies of watershed planning, where the geographic scale might lead one to expect that moving the meeting might be perceived as necessary. Of course, this may be an artifact of the fact that people were studied who were already participating, thus they did not experience either of these obstacles.

Based on the available evidence:

- Organizers should be aware that some participants will be very sensitive to meetings being equally accessible to all. Moving meetings from place to place may be a critical issue for some participants.
- Paying participants to attend a meeting or reimbursing their travel expenses is another suggestion common in the prescriptive literature (Dienel and Renn 1995). No studies are known to the present authors that have demonstrated the importance of this process feature on perceived legitimacy or fairness. The data in this study suggest only weak support for such a relationship in two of the perspectives (table 8.4d). In the context of these American case studies, paying people to attend is not supported.

Table 8.4d. Q Statements Related to Paying Participants

No.	Statement	Perspective			
		A	B	C	D
10	Provide financial resources that enable people to participate effectively (e.g., travel, hire experts).	0	0	-3	-5

Source: Authors.

Influencing the Agenda

In theory, allowing participants to shape the agenda is an essential component for participation, because it guarantees that people will be able to protect their interests (Dahl 1989; Webler 1995). Evidence from the empirical research literature is mixed about the relationship among scope of a process; power to affect the agenda; and achievement of legitimacy, improvement of social capacity, or improvement of the substantive outcomes of a process (e.g., competence). Studies do suggest, however, the need to match participants' perceptions of their roles and their actual roles (Ashford and Rest 1999; Cole and Associates 1996). For example, violations of expectations can affect the trust of community participants in government agencies.

The present study suggests that people can have very different expectations about their roles in agenda setting and timetables. The study included a statement about allowing people to put their concerns on the agenda (31), another about the acceptability of limiting topics of discussion in order to

avoid quagmires (33), and a third about letting people revisit earlier agenda items even if it means extending the timetable (54) (table 8.4e). Once again, the authors found variation among the four perspectives. The Egalitarian Deliberation perspective gave the strongest weight to empowering participants, whereas the Agency-Centered Consultation and Science-Centered Stakeholder Consultation approaches gave weaker scores to statements on this theme. This perspective suggests that organizers will need to strike a balance between making the process too responsive or too restrictive, as well as encouraging a match between participants' expectations of their roles and their permitted roles.

Table 8.4e. Q Statements Related to Shaping the Agenda

No.	Statement	Perspective			
		A	B	C	D
31	All people have an equal chance to put their concerns on the agenda.	-3	2	0	0
33	The process has to be able to limit topics of discussion in order to avoid quagmires.	1	-2	-2	-1
54	Participants should allow time to revisit issues and decisions, even if it means extending the timetable.	-2	0	-3	-1

Source: Authors.

Consequently the following advice is offered:

- Organizers should walk a fine line between making the agenda too open or too closed. On the one hand, the agenda needs to address accurately the legitimate interests and concerns of participants. It also has to keep the focus within the legal mandate of the governmental agencies involved. On the other hand, leaving the agenda too open makes the process vulnerable to stalling tactics or delays that place hardships on other participants. It is recommended that organizers work collaboratively with a representative planning group to ensure the agenda is reasonable and complete and then to allow limited reconsideration of the proposed agenda at the start of the process.

Listening and Speaking

There is overall support from empirical evidence and in much of the theoretical literature for the importance of a process encouraging respectful listening and speaking. As suggested by the literature review, how people listen and speak, their sincerity, and their respect toward others are important to the formation of relationships conducive to open, collaborative deliberation (see also Tuler 2000). They are important for reaching authentic and informed understandings and for building agreement and cooperation.

The Q study included several statements related to the quality of people's speaking and listening—how they relate to each other (table 8.4f). Little emphasis is given to features related to listening and speaking in the Science-Centered Stakeholder Consultation perspective (A). On the other hand, there is more consideration of how to ensure these aspects of communication in the

Agency-Centered Stakeholder Consultation perspective (C), perhaps because there is more recognition that input from a wide range of stakeholders about the issues is important and that expertise (i.e., science) will not be the final arbiter of decisions. This is also one reason that listening and speaking are valued in the Egalitarian Deliberation perspective.

Thus the following advice is for organizers who should commit clearly to establishing an atmosphere of mutual respect, listening, and nonpunitive speech. This commitment is best done by exemplifying such behavior and by making clear to all participants, even visiting experts, that disrespectful or derogatory remarks will not be tolerated.

Table 8.4f. Q Statements Related to Listening and Speaking

No.	Statement	Perspective			
		A	B	C	D
1	A situation should be set up that encourages all participants to listen to what others say and to consider it carefully.	0	4	2	1
5	Participants should develop a common language and understanding among participants.	-3	0	2	1
9	Participants should be courteous and respectful to one another.	0	2	4	0

Source: Authors.

On occasions, an important part of establishing relationships conducive to successful outcomes is paying attention to the location of the meeting or the physical arrangement of chairs and tables during the process (Halvorsen 2001; Tuler and Webler 1999). Although the statement “Participants should pay attention to the physical arrangement of tables and chairs at the meetings” (25) received weak support in all of the social perspectives, it was important to some individuals. People most often will have a customary way of coming together, and the organizer should be cognizant of local conventions. In unusual circumstances, for instance, meeting in an unfamiliar location, under unfamiliar circumstances, or under conditions of conflict, participants may wait for the organizer to take the initiative.

Under these circumstances, then organizers should weigh the costs and benefits of hierarchical versus egalitarian arrangements of seating and choose what is most appropriate. They should seek local input on this decision.

For people to participate effectively, they need to feel safe about speaking their minds. Theory and evidence support the claim that people engage in self-censorship when they fear reprisals such as social isolation (Hayes, Glynn, and Shanahan 2005; Noelle-Neuman 1974). In many case studies, the question of self-censorship has not been examined. Many scholars may presume that citizens in “mature” Western democracies are accustomed to speaking up in controversial situations, although there is much evidence to the contrary (Mansbridge 1980). In this study, participants reacted very differently to the statement about participants being comfortable and safe in meetings (21) (table 8.4g).

One way to compensate for this possibility is to have clear rules for interaction (23) and to have a facilitator who enforces those rules (35). The importance of independent, unbiased facilitators (or mediators) in a process is underscored by much research, as discussed earlier. Again, our perspectives revealed very different opinions about these matters, suggesting that there is no black-and-white principle to follow here. Instead, organizers of a process must seek to match participants' expectations and perceptions with actual roles and requirements. The ways that existing conflicts can inhibit the ability to reach

Table 8.4g. Q Statements Related to Rules for Interaction

No.	Statement	Perspective			
		A	B	C	D
21	Participants should feel comfortable and safe at the meetings.	-3	1	3	-1
23	There are clear ground rules that govern how people should interact.	0	1	2	0
35	The process requires unbiased and independent facilitation.	-2	1	-1	4

Source: Authors.

agreements or gain acceptance for agreements is evidenced in the available literature. Positive assessments of participants' relationships with each other and with sponsoring agencies (and facilitators) were observed to be associated with personal senses of satisfaction in a process and its accomplishments.

Thus, the following advice is offered:

- In circumstances where people have limited history of working together, where there are existing animosities, or where this process is likely to be highly controversial, it is wise to establish clear ground rules for interaction and to have present an unbiased facilitator who will ensure that the rules are followed.

Influencing the Decision

Whether or not to use consensus when making decisions may be highly controversial. The literature on collaborative decision making suggests its necessity. Yet there is no agreement on the use of consensus that emerges from a review of empirical research literature on public involvement. A few scholars have pointed to the dangers of consensus, such as its tendency to sometimes quell discussion and discourage open expression of opinions (Bradbury, Branch, and Malone 2003; Coglianese 2003; Peterson, Peterson, and Peterson 2005). Another claim is that consensus can lead to "watered down" agreements.

This study included two statements about the use of consensus. It was found that some people see consensus as a protective device for minority opinion whereas others see it as irresponsible because it would make collective action impossible. In the theory of discourse ethics (Habermas 1991), consensus must be used to select the method by which decisions will be made. For instance, the group may consensually decide to make its recommendations by majority vote, or two-thirds vote, or any other arrangement.⁶ In this study, this statement on

using consensus to decide the rule to use (22) received more support than the blanket statement about using consensus for all decisions (16)(table 8.4h).

Table 8.4h. Q Statements Related to Influencing the Decision

No.	Statement	Perspective			
		A	B	C	D
16	All important decisions are made according to consensus (including the agenda).	-4	3	-4	-4
22	Consensus is used to decide what rule is used to make decisions (simple majority vote, 2/3 majority vote, etc.).	-2	1	0	-1

Source: Authors.

On the basis of this study, it is recommended that ensuring that the most important decisions are made by consensus is a reasonable starting place. Whether to switch to another principle of deciding should be taken up as an agenda item of the full group at the earliest phase of the project.

Organizers can safely presume that participants are not going to be satisfied with merely making recommendations to a governmental agency. They want to play an important—and clear—role in the process (Ashford and Rest 1999; Bradbury, Branch, and Malone 2003). This idea is included in one statement in the study (14) and received support from only one perspective, Agency-Centered Consultation, which was a perspective held by many agency staff and managers, but no activists. Therefore this insight is offered:

- Organizers should be clear about how the process will lead to a final decision. At one end of the spectrum is having the participants make a consensual decision; at the other end is having the participants make one or more recommendations to a governmental agency, who then decides.
- Both of these extremes will most likely be unacceptable to all participants. The appropriate answer lies somewhere in between.

Accessing Information and Knowledge

A strong lesson that emerges from available research literature is that the quality and availability of information used for deliberation are positively linked to the level of acceptance reached, are important to achieving competent decisions, and mediate the formation of social capacity. This lesson is reinforced by theory (Webler 1995; Webler and Tuler 2000). Competence is best achieved when every participant is able to take part in the process of determining what claims are valid. Two arguments are commonly made for ensuring everyone involved has access to the information available about the topic at hand. The first is a functionalist argument for effective participatory decision making. It claims that everyone needs access to the data that informs the decision because this access will lead to the best outcomes. This is the “two heads are better than one” argument. In this viewpoint, even people who are not experts on the topic are capable of learning enough to be able to engage in

a thorough discussion about policy actions. This view is at the core of the Danish consensus conference approach, for example. The goal is not necessarily to get everyone to have the exact same knowledge, but people should have enough knowledge to vet assertions and claims that others make. The second argument that is made concerns power and equity. It asserts that information sharing is important to help counter coercion or intimidation that is based on knowledge inequalities. This sharing is the “knowledge is power” argument.

Participants in this study responded to five statements about access to information, and their responses revealed strong support for both of these arguments (table 8.4i). The Science-Centered Stakeholder Consultation perspective valued information sharing because it was presumed to lead to higher-quality decisions. The Egalitarian Deliberation perspective valued it as a way to empower all participants. The Agency-Centered Consultation perspective (C) showed some sensitivity to sharing “all” information, partly because those ascribing to it realized there are instances when proprietary information cannot legally be shared.

Table 8.4i. Q Statements Related to Knowledge and Information

No.	Statement	Perspective			
		A	B	C	D
39	All participants have equal access to information.	1	4	0	2
41	There is full disclosure of information at all times.	3	5	0	3
43	The staff involved are receptive to questions or requests for information from the public.	2	2	1	1
45	Get the right information.	3	-2	0	5
47	The process taps the knowledge and experiences of local people.	4	5	2	0

Source: Authors.

According to these findings, theory, and empirical research findings, the following are recommended:

- Organizers should adopt a strong policy that information should be widely shared and available to all participants, provided it is legal to do so. Information may come from expert sources (such as reports and studies) or from local knowledge sources (via testimony or documentation). Regardless of its origin, information must be accessible to all participants, and it must stand on its own merits.
- Multiple methods for making information available should be adopted. They may include handing out copies of reports, placing reports in a central depository, making oral presentations at meetings, or providing community groups access to experts who can answer questions as they arise.

The Role of Science and Analysis in the Process

Clearly, scientific analysis plays an important role in decision-making processes about environmental risks and social policies, but, as figure 8.1 shows, there can be disagreement about whether science should support or determine outcomes

or decisions. This issue is raised often in the literature on multi-attribute utility analysis (Renn, Webler, and Johnson 1991). In the present study, it was found that both the Science-Centered Stakeholder Consultation (A) and Informed Democratic Collaboration (D) perspectives argue for strong roles for science. The other two perspectives—Egalitarian Deliberation (B) and Agency-Centered Consultation (C)—both argue for a supportive role for science. The Egalitarian Deliberation (B) perspective is concerned that science is frequently aligned with government and big business (through funding systems). It is concerned that science can be used to legitimize a policy preference, and therefore it seeks to minimize its influence over the decision making. The Agency-Centered Consultation (C) perspective does not fear the influence of science, but rather

Table 8.4j. Q Statements Related to the Role of Science and Evidence

No.	Statement	Perspective			
		A	B	C	D
2	Use the best available science in the analysis.	5	0	1	5
20	Every recommendation is justified with evidence.	0	-3	-3	3
29	Validate all information to make certain it is correct.	2	-1	-3	2

Source: Authors.

blanket expectations that every decision should be strongly supported by a scientific rationale. After all, this support would unduly tie the hands of the agency, which may choose to act even if the science is not fully clear.

Consequently, organizers should be aware of the following:

- All participants want the decision to be informed by good scientific analysis and sound data. However, they do not all agree that the decision should be driven by science. Some will want to keep open the option of making choices that are not considered “scientifically optimal.”
- We recommend that organizers and participants clearly acknowledge points at which scientific consensus is strong and points at which it is weak. Where consensus is strong, the process ought to adopt the recommendations that follow from the analysis, deviating only when a compelling argument can be made. Where consensus is weak, the process ought to rely on a mode of democratic deliberation and choice.

Conclusions

Governance reform must pay attention to the communicative qualities of collective decision making in the public sphere. Participatory forms of governance are being tried at all levels of government, in a broad array of policy domains, and in virtually every area of the world. It is true that there have been no studies that systematically compare the value added by participatory processes (over traditional decide-announce-defend approaches). However, the experiential

evidence argues that processes that genuinely seek to work collaboratively with citizens in open and honest communication, where decision makers listen *with* citizens and come to mutually agreeable decisions, will lead to competent decisions. In other words, they lead to good governance; in so doing, they also help to build and maintain a healthy civil society.

Experience also suggests that organizers face a difficult challenge. Everyone involved in a process, from local residents, to representatives from nongovernmental organization and corporations, to government agency staff, comes with his or her own perceptions, presumptions, concerns, experiences, and agendas. Organizers must weave their way through them to construct a process that best meets the needs of a particular situation.

In other words, designing and running a participatory governance process is a craft, reinforced by knowledge, skill, and experience. Proclamations of “universal” rules should be greeted with skepticism. Conversely, participatory processes that focus on specific policy choices should be guided and informed by recent scholarship, experience, and theory. This chapter has reviewed lessons that can be extracted from existing literature on participatory forms of risk and environmental assessment and decision making. The heart of the chapter featured the present authors’ recent comparative study of 10 case studies of participatory decision-making processes in the United States. The processes spanned four types of policy arenas, and the study involved 117 active participants. The case has also been made for using the concepts of fairness and competence as general principles for gauging the success of participatory communication.

These results support the claim that fairness and competence are effective measures of communicative processes. But they also reveal that what participants understand by “fair” or “competent” is not identical. Underlying all perspectives is a general belief in the importance and desirability of processes being fair and competent, but there are important nuanced differences that come into play for certain people in specific contexts. An important lesson is that competence and fairness are both principles that need to be negotiated in an adaptive, learning process for good governance.

One thing is sure. We know that a great deal of work goes into crafting, researching, and evaluating action alternatives. Every situation is different and must be carefully diagnosed, and the design must find a way to build on agreements about process features and balance disagreements. These agreements can be achieved only by means of clear communication and by attending to the specific conditions imposed by the “real world.”

Notes

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- material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the National Science Foundation or the Coastal Response Research Center.
2. We use the term *public participation* to refer to a broad array of processes and mechanisms that are based on involving stakeholders and other interested and affected parties in decision making about environmental hazards and resources. Many terms have been used in the literature in addition to *public participation: collaborative resource management, community involvement, partnerships, collaborative initiatives, stakeholder participation*, and so on. All of these are included under the umbrella term *public participation* in this chapter, while recognizing that they can also make important distinctions about the form and purposes of involving stakeholders and publics in decision making.
 3. Analysis not fully discussed in their chapter suggests that stakeholder facilitators who were trained and hired formed the worst combination of traits.
 4. The method and the protocol we used in this study are discussed in more detail in Webler and Tuler (2006).
 5. To portray the importance of fairness and competence in the figures accurately, it was necessary to invert the scores of statements that were worded in the negative.
 6. In an interesting Swiss case study in which one of the present authors participated, this is exactly what the group did. The organizers proposed consensus for a landfill siting process, but the representatives complained that, because it would be politically impossible for them to vote for a landfill in their community, siting could be done only by majority vote. In the end, one community was selected to host the facility, and the recommendation was accepted by the state government.

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Part III

Gaining the Support of Public Sector Middle Managers





Governance, Stakeholder Involvement, and New Communication Models

Stanley Deetz and Lisa Irvin

Corporate and organizational social responsibility, as well as productive and responsible development, are increasingly seen as requiring the rethinking of governance processes. Globalization, interdependence, environmental sustainability, success of grassroots programs, acceptance of pluralism, and numerous social and regulatory changes have called attention to the issue of governance. From this point of view, systemic organizational failures and negative social consequences are not created by bad leaders but by governance structures and consequent decisional processes that preclude creativity and enable the exaggerated representation of some values and interests at the exclusion of other equally important ones (Deetz 2007; Kuhn and Deetz 2008). Partiality in representation leads to social and ecological harms, suboptimal resource utilization, and slower positive development.

Traditional governance models that have given decisional prerogatives to organizational leaders have counted on some combination of stewardship, regulation developed in political processes, and constituent group pressures to advance broader representation and creative choices. Each model, however, has become less effective in providing guidance for a variety of well-documented reasons. “Free trade” agreements in particular have institutionalized interest advantages built into decisional processes and reduced politically based social value intervention. The building of models beyond managerial capitalism and governmental regulation seems essential.

Stakeholder governance models offer the potential to provide social and economic benefits to broader populations while increasing the viability of existing organizations (Donaldson and Preston 1995). Stakeholder governance

focuses on bringing a diverse group of people and interests affected by decisions into the decision process. Sometimes these programs provide expanded social and economic benefits, and evidence clearly supports the contention that no necessary contradiction exists between doing good and doing well. Research on stakeholder collaboration in the governance process still remains fairly underdeveloped, however, and actual programs of stakeholder involvement in governance and decision making have shown mixed success. Limited stakeholder inclusion, strategic management of stakeholders, and co-optation of stakeholder involvement by managerial groups often limit the effectiveness of these programs. Conversely, benefits are not always shown, even when these difficulties have been overcome.

A serious, often hidden, problem in the research on, as well as the actual practice of, stakeholder collaboration has been the lack of serious attention given to models of communication used in decision processes. The communication conceptions and practices—which might appear to be benign—have a tremendous effect on the success and viability of stakeholder governance programs. The form and practices of participation, not just its existence, matter, and communication is an integral part of any form of participation. Having a right and place to say something and having a process to impact decisions in a positive way are often very different. This approach will be developed in this chapter by looking at alternative understandings of communication, democracy, conflict, and dialogue.

Special communication conceptions and practices are necessary for stakeholder involvement to produce the innovations and creativity necessary for broader value inclusion with social and economic benefits from new models of governance and decision making. Often these conceptions and practices differ greatly from more standard corporate communication models and from widely shared conceptions of deliberation and democratic expression used in the public sphere. Stakeholder involvement has little positive effect as long as it is tied to these established conceptions and practices.

This chapter will look initially at the growth of the stakeholder governance processes that have been developed to involve wider publics and to create greater social responsibility in decision making. Then it will consider different types of communication conceptions and practices used in stakeholder governance processes. It will contrast dialogue and collaborative participatory democracy with strategic management and various conceptions and practices based in liberal democracy. The chapter ends with a discussion of the practices and benefits of collaborative participatory democracy.

Native actors and supportive professionals most often use communication views that are focused on strategic interest expression and adversarial processes, but, at best, only occasionally support processes focused on similarity, consensus, and finding common ground. Contemporary communication theories can improve stakeholder governance by working against these processes and

by showing how requisite diversity, distributed expertise, and contestation coupled with the ability to discover creative options can sustain mutual commitment and mutual accomplishment of interests.

The Growth of Stakeholder Governance Processes

Various types of interorganizational arrangements, many of which are referred to as partnerships, alliances, or multiple stakeholder groups, are emerging in numerous contexts as a method of negotiating diverse interests, goals, resources, and knowledge in decision- and policy-making processes. Such organizational relationships do not rely primarily on market or hierarchical forms of authority or control but rather on a commitment to realizing and negotiating innovative solutions to complex social problems collectively.

These arrangements are frequently conceptualized as a direct and purposive response to the increase of problem complexity, the institutional interdependence and interconnectivity, and the growing dissatisfaction with centralized decision making in public and private organizations. Such configurations consist of multiorganizational and other interested parties who convene to solve problems, resolve conflicts, and create innovative courses of action that cannot be effectively conceptualized or executed by single organizations.

Direct stakeholder involvement and interorganizational collaboration are connected to numerous beneficial and important effects for participating organizations and wider communities. As an innovative practice, these governance arrangements are linked to higher-quality decisions, knowledge creation, development of social capital, creative problem solving, economical resource sharing, and embracing diverse populations and perspectives.

Stakeholder collaboration has been discussed for its relevance and innovations in areas related to science and technology policy, public administration, environmental communication, adaptive land and resource management, risk communication, deliberative democracy, participatory forms of governance, community-based planning, alternative dispute resolution, organizational behavior and change, and sweeping reform of government institutions. Concurrently, collaborative arrangements are becoming more frequent, as they expand into numerous contexts, and are connected more and more to high-stake decisions and policy such as corporate environmental policy, local planning and public administration, federal resource management plans, education policy, and workplace diversity.

One of the central and most extensive uses of stakeholder collaborations has been in public land use. Similar to the practice in other countries, the future direction of public land and resource management in the United States increasingly resides in the decisions and activity resulting from collaborative interorganizational arrangements. Adhering to executive orders and legislative acts, U.S. federal agencies (for example, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land

Management) primarily responsible for land and resource use management are encouraging public and private organizational representatives and stakeholders to settle disputes, negotiate policy alternatives, and craft resource management plans through collaborative commitments and configurations.

These changes represent a fundamental shift in decision-making authority and processes that is reflective of social, economic, global, and political demands placed on organizations to respond at a level of sophistication appropriate to addressing contemporary challenges and changes. The institutionalization of collaborative interorganizational forms of decision making is one such attempt to isomorphically adapt, respond, and change.

Collaborative community-based planning is emerging perhaps most explicitly in land and resource management and policy as an organizationally mandated change within public decision-making organizations and as an arrangement capable of resolving long-standing adversarial relationships between parties with conflicting interests. The growing trend toward collaborative governance in environmental planning and administration is referred to across academic disciplines as comanagement, community-based conservation, collaborative resource management, and partnership governance.

These forms of collaborative governance share a goal of decentralizing environmental decision making. They rely on the creation of “collaborative spaces” in which multiple actors join together to shape, make, and implement public policy and assume an interorganizational design. These configurations will continue to emerge in numerous contexts as a strategy to address environmental complexity and interconnectedness through innovative problem-solving methods, knowledge-generative processes, and transformative approaches to conflict resolution.

These various programs have taught us much about where and how collaborations have worked and where they have been limited. They provide partial models of collaborative governance and show the potential in advancing public interests. But their growth has not often been matched by development of best practices and optimal outcomes. Focusing in a general way on what is hoped to be achieved in these arrangements gives us a way to assess the relative success of different processes.

The value of collaborative governance depends on the need demonstrated across private and public organizations for high degrees of *creativity*, *commitment*, *compliance*, and *customization*. A high degree of diverse participation is the only way to produce each reliably—and especially all at once.

Innovation and creativity are well known to be central to the value of high-end products necessary for the competitiveness of developed nations. They are also central for innovative production and transformation of everyday working processes. Much future development will require making existing technologies and practices affordable. Tremendous creativity is required to combine this with natural resource competition and ecological change. Members on the

front line of the business or life activity—workers who actually make the product and service providers that are in direct connection with publics—are often in a better position to innovate and improve processes. Diversity and distributed expertise are necessities for this creativity.

Much discussion has been given to increasing employee commitment in the workplace. With the increase in the centrality of social and intellectual capital, most companies know that their most important assets go out the door at night. Getting them to come back is important. But the value of commitment is broader than this. Keeping customers is often far less expensive than getting them. Maintaining industries is less expensive than obtaining new ones, and so forth. Commitment is increasingly dependent on being part of decision making. Decisional involvement correlates positively with different dimensions of commitment affecting, for example, productivity, recruitment, and retention.

Following rules and compliance to standards are increasingly difficult in contemporary organizations and communities. Voluntary compliance based on legitimacy of authorities and ordering principles declines with the reduction of perceived legitimacy. Surveillance often gets compliance where legitimacy is reduced, but surveillance is difficult with professionalized and localized dispersed work. Increased surveillance as well often further reduces legitimacy and evokes numerous forms of resistance. Given the cost of control and surveillance, especially in knowledge-based and service organizations, coordination through shared values and personal commitments is often more effective than supervision. Participation increases legitimacy and promotes coordination.

Finally, higher-valued products often result from customization. Localization, globalization, and acceptance of difference, however, make product and service customization more than just a high-end issue. Local customs and tastes make mass-produced items and uniform services that are differentiated on the basis of price less interesting than items that are differentiated on the bases of relevance and fit. Customization requires diverse group and value inclusion.

The significant question remains: What kinds of collaborative processes best accomplish these goals together? Looking at existing programs suggests that talking about collaborative governance without talking about theories of democracy and communication is common but ultimately limiting.

The Issue of Communication Processes

Communication processes in collaborations and communication concepts in governance generally receive little discussion. One reason is that people carry into interactions powerful native theories of communication that are accepted as obvious and unproblematic. This leads to a belief in a kind of “instant” democracy, a “field of dreams” where, if you bring people together, good things will happen. Despite the reoccurrence of failures in meetings, especially public

meetings, the problem is not seen as arising from weak communication concepts and processes. In fact, the attempt to talk about communication may itself be considered undemocratic. The difficulty in “native” theories arises from person-centered conceptions of meaning and experience, which lead to strategic and liberal democratic forms of interaction (Deetz and Radford forthcoming; Heath 2005; MacDonald 2004).

Strategic and Liberal Democratic Forms of Interaction

With the gradual social dominance of instrumental reasoning processes, the emphasis on strategic communication even in collaborative spaces should come as no surprise. Although strategic thinking may be required to implement democratic forms of communication, strategic communication aimed at managing or changing the positions of publics ultimately works against creativity, commitment, compliance, and customization, especially when advanced by more dominant groups.

Many managers and interventionists approach relations with others knowing only processes of strategic communication. Within organizations, most managers’ approach to communication grows out of specific concepts of hierarchy and control. Business schools often require public speaking, presentation, and message design skills rather than listening and negotiation skills. “Leadership” training is still primarily conceived in the form of directing or taking charge of others (Calás and Smircich 1991; Chrislip and Larson 1995). Similar preferences exist in public administration and society at large. Theories of control, persuasion, and motivation are treated more centrally than cooperation, facilitation, and group creativity. Even the renewed interest in ethics in schools of business and public administration directs attention toward the individual’s character and compliance rather than normative ideals in communication. “Corporate communication” is often simply another term for strategic communication. Directives and gaining compliance characterize the communication relation to internal groups, advertising, and public relations characterize that to external groups.

Such communication conceptions and skills clearly cripple rather than aid participation in most cases. Dominant groups’ relation to stakeholders in even collaborative contexts is often focused on managing them. In their lack of alternative experiences and training, dominant—as well as less dominant—groups may be unwilling to give up the strategic defense of known interests to engage in interaction processes in which they might accomplish their interests, both known and unknown, better. Differences are seen as problems rather than the basis of creativity. Creative collaboration requires a leap of faith that may not be given without considerable incentive or pressure. In the face of pressure, most people concede to democratic processes such as open discussion, public meetings, and hearings. As we break down hierarchal models in these cases, we still maintain the centrality of strategic communication, only now more evenly dispersed and “democratic.”

Not all forms of democracy are alike, and native intuitions and skills may not be entirely positive (Deetz and Simpson 2004). Anyone who is a member of most organizations will hear many more complaints about how meetings seem endless and frustrating than about the lack of opportunity to participate. This reaction results from the inability to participate well, not just from the limited nature of participation tasks. Often the problem of meetings, and communication more generally, results from the borrowing of liberal democratic communication models from state processes with the concurrent humanist commitments to representation and consensus rather than more participatory communication models committed to diversity, conflict, and creativity.

Most organizations and collaborative relationships do not resemble state democracies. As Kerr (2004) argued, they lack “accountability of the governed, right of participation, free exchange of information, and right of representation” (81). But even if these principles could be ensured, common views of democracy and communication used for state processes were never designed to accomplish the type of participation that the promises laid out above can deliver. Common native understandings are largely based on an Enlightenment conception of “liberal democracy” as institutionalized and advanced by western state institutions.

Barber (1984) provided one of the more complete analyses of the consequences for state practices and decisions given this view in contrast to more participatory forms of democracy. Although he focused more on issues of structure and representation than forms of communication, his initial distinction between liberal and participatory democracies is instructive to understanding the limits of productive participation, even when it is desired. As he showed convincingly, liberal democracy is better designed to keep people safely apart rather than productively joined together.

Liberal democracy is central to the justification of contemporary forms and institutions of communication. The weakness of its communication conceptions may partly account for the poor regard people have of political processes and the general cynicism around public decision making in many societies. Unsurprisingly, an eighteenth-century model of democracy and communication—based on different conceptions of human experience, forms of power, and contexts of decision making—does not work well in a twenty-first-century world. No other social science, nor the practices they engender, could survive its eighteenth-century models.

Even in countries such as Denmark, Germany, and Sweden with strong codetermination models and structures, the communication model and practices may be fairly traditional and may greatly reduce the impact and benefits of participation. In most cases, these processes are based in liberal democratic conceptions of people, meaning, and communication. This model is seriously flawed as a way to approach collaboration.

The temptation in stakeholder collaboration to import liberal democratic concepts and practices into new settings is not surprising. Native liberal

democratic communication concepts and practices have been largely treated as unproblematic. When this is done, however, the focus is usually on developing participation *forums* and higher levels of involvement based on representation with uneven consequences for decision processes. Much of this results from dominant Enlightenment, person-centered conceptions of communication that overlook critical aspects of interaction processes in which meanings and interests are produced. The production of personal meanings in communication is overlooked with attention given instead to their expression. Having a “say” is seen as both necessary and sufficient. The focus on having a say overlooks the complexity of meaning and decisional processes beyond voting and may become a strategic attempt to increase loyalty and commitment or decrease resistance rather than seeking genuine decisional input (Deetz 1992; Deetz and Radford forthcoming).

Having a say is a necessary but not sufficient condition to meet the desired outcomes of stakeholder collaboration. Sufficiency requires in addition *voice* and an inventive decisional process. The lack of voice even with appropriate forums results from the constrained decisional contexts, the inadequate or distorted information, the socialization and colonization activities, and the solicitation of “consent” where stakeholders “choose” to suppress their own needs and internal value conflicts (Deetz 2003; 2007). Overcoming these problems requires a collaborative constitutive view of communication based in conflict rather than in person-centered, consensus-oriented models of communication. A collaborative interaction process opens challenges to existing positions, enables that which has been assumed as fixed to be reformed in light of open differences, and provides a collaborative rather than adversarial approach to differences.

Thus, not only are community and organizational leaders hesitant to include stakeholders in crucial decisions by disclosing information, sharing power, or granting autonomy, but also they lack the concepts and skills necessary to do so even if they were so inclined. Clearly, most leaders lack the critical skills of democratic communication necessary for coordinating divergent interests, let alone the ability to facilitate interaction that can lead to creative mutually satisfying outcomes. This lack certainly influences, for example, their perceptions of the cost of participation, how those costs compare to control costs, and the likelihood of economic viability.

Critical Dialogue

What interaction models overcome these limits? Several models exist that arise with the increased use and discussion of team decisions, dialogue, and forms of participation generally. Often, however, these alternatives have not been theoretically or empirically investigated and have been presented in a vague, unproblematic way as simply “democratic” communication or “dialogue” (Isaacs 1993).

Critical theories of communication originating primarily from Habermas (1984) revived discussion of communication in public decision making

during the past 40 years. The description of an ideal speech situation provided a heuristic for determining the minimal conditions for stakeholder involvement in decision-making discussions. Most of these discussions are familiar. At a minimum, we might expect reciprocity of opportunity for expression; some equality in the ability to express well; the setting aside of authority relations, organizational positions, and other external sources of power; open investigations of stakeholder positions and “wants” to ascertain their interests more freely; open sharing of information and transparency of decision processes; and the opening of fact and knowledge claims to redetermination based on contestation of claims and advantaged modes of knowledge creation (for example, accounting processes; Deetz 1992). In general, power relations are seen as limiting, except where power enforces positive practices. In general, the orientation is toward mutual understanding and mutual decisions rather than strategic self-interest. And, as well, little is fixed from the outset because what is built together is prized over preexisting beliefs and attitudes. Of course, rarely are all these conditions met; thus, some limits must be accepted or overcome in the dialogic process.

Such concepts have been developed by Forester (1989; 1999) for public planning processes and by Varey (2002) for constituent involvement. Much of this work is directly applicable to stakeholder decision making, and other scholars have shown how organizational talk can be analyzed to discover the retention and protection of hidden values and ideology (for example, Fairclough 1992; Hardy, Lawrence, and Grant 2005) and the presence of various forms of discursive closure (Deetz 1992; Thackaberry 2004). From a somewhat different perspective, Pearce and Littlejohn (1999) show how to develop communication processes for engaging even moral conflicts where deep cultural differences produce what would appear to be intractable conflict. Barge and Little (2002) demonstrate how a Bakhtinian conception of dialogic communication can help develop contingent and situated practices that enhance responsiveness to conflicting stakeholder values.

Dialogue as a mode of participatory democracy focuses on understanding: Do I get it? Can I see the world you live in? The conception of dialogue as used in this chapter focuses on understanding across our differences. It begins with a fundamental reciprocity. In recognizing that you inhabit a world and I inhabit a world, I recognize your granting me the right to mine, and I in turn grant you a right to yours. We will not treat *a* world, *the* world. I am a good person; you are a good person. Now what? When we give up trying to change the other, then what do we do? Talk in dialogue aims at exploring how the world makes sense to each participant. Many of the successful public dialogues have taken this approach (for example, www.deliberative-democracy.net, www.thataway.org). We often have as an outcome respect and tolerance that did not exist before, and we learn to give opportunity and space for others to share a common world.

All these appropriations and developments align reasonably well with the hopes of mutual understanding and dialogue but give less advice toward collaborative mutual creative decision processes, or toward investigation of deeper social formations and the politics of personal experience. The conception of representing external groups and interests places real constraints on what is negotiable (see Lange 2003 for a summary of findings on environmental stakeholder collaborations).

Critical theories have been useful because they identify the key problem as the nature of the discussion itself rather than the profiles of the participants. But Habermasian concepts of communication, like theories of dialogue advanced by Isaacs, and others, are based more on finding common ground and a deeper prior consensus than in producing a future beyond current cultural constraints (Deetz and Simpson 2004; Isaacs 1993). Further, most of these theories are aimed at participants understanding each other rather than their needing to make decisions together (this is developed in Benhabib's 1992 critique of Habermas's ideal speech situation). Critical theory alone does not offer a theory or practice of dialogue embracing difference and facilitating decision making on the part of stakeholders (Wolin 1996; Young 1996).

Collaborative Communication and Mutual Decisions

Different types of conflict and contestation are likely to increase both in and between societies as the world experiences greater cross-national contact, continued immigration, ecological consequences of global warming, water scarcity, population growth, and greater parity in national economies. Some of these items appear to be intractable conflicts. Intractable conflicts are unusually intense and are most often destructive, protracted, and deeply rooted. "Intractable" means that these conflicts seem to continue despite the need for reconciliation and after numerous reasonable attempts for resolution. Intractable conflicts most often surround irreconcilable moral differences, high-stakes distribution of resource issues, and conflicts over domination or "social pecking order" (see the work by Guy and Heidi Burgess at www.beyondintractability.org). Conflicts around abortion in the United States have an intractable quality, as well as questions of water rights in the Rocky Mountains and the West. Conflicts like these, which produce contestation in deep and significant ways, are likely to increase and are very costly to individuals and the world community.

Collaborative communication concepts and practices give us better ways to talk about these conflicts and to intervene in them. Such concepts show how difference can be transformed into productive relations. Rather than difference leading to contestation that leads to destructive conflicts, difference can lead to creative options that are mutually beneficial.

Collaboration shares the reciprocity expectations with dialogue but aims at creative mutual decisions rather than understanding. Even if difference is

present, challenging existing means of experiencing, certain forms of talk are required to turn differences into productivity. Advocating a difference may give it a space, but only collaborative talk can give it a consequence. Liberal democracy gave us representation, deliberation, and voting as a decision model. Such a model suggests that talk can get it right, or at least that we can compromise on our differences. Collaboration provides ways to live productively with difference.

Many authors have discussed collaboration and the possibility of win-win solutions (Fisher and Ury 1981; Gerzon 2006; Ury 2000). Different collaborative processes have been very successful, especially in situations with conflict over limited resources. Environmental and land use collaborations have been most instructive. Many so-called collaborations in our society have not practiced collaborative communication, however. The manner of talking, not just the agreement to be involved, matters greatly. This section builds on these authors' work to create collaboration through the understanding of free and open communication, focusing mostly on situations involving limited resources. Appropriate concepts and practices of communication are required to move beyond mere mutual understanding to making quality decisions together. Research by MacDonald (2004) and Heath (2005), as well as Lange's (2003) summary of environmental collaborations suggest a few basic insights.

Collaborative versus Strategic Orientation

Collaborative communication works from a different perspective than does adversarial and strategic communication. Gray's (1989) work on community collaborations is very helpful in analyzing this. Table 9.1 identifies basic differences in orientation based on her work. In many cases of bargaining, mediation, and public deliberation, individuals enter with strategic goals and an interactional orientation to winning. The presence of fixed positions and

Table 9.1. Strategic and Collaborative Communication

Strategic Communication	Collaborative Communication
Members are adversaries. Speaking comes from a position or outcome to be accomplished. Interaction becomes polarized around positions.	Members are joint problem solvers. Speaking comes from an outcome to be accomplished. Interaction focuses on identifying complex interests.
Continued interaction narrows available options.	Continued interaction broadens available options.
Facts are used to support positions. Participants seek winning arguments. Definition of problems is accomplished before meeting.	Joint search is used to discover facts. Participants seek workable options. Definition of problems is a joint achievement.
Final responsibility for decisions rests with others.	Final responsibility for decisions rests with the group.

Source: Authors.

choice options that are limited to ones that preceded the discussion rather than an orientation to mutual invention reduces creativity and the possibility of mutual satisfaction. A collaborative interaction process reverses these tendencies by using difference and mutual search as a means of invention.

Representation and Who Is at the Table

Every decision-making event evokes concerns about who is to be part of the interaction. Our moral concern with reciprocity similarly always directs us to consider who should be included. But the question becomes more difficult when the number of people who might have an interest in the outcome grows to a large number. Who has a stake, and how many can be at the table are important questions.

We have always known that democratic societies are too large and complex to have direct citizen decision making. The solution was representation, which has filtered into most of our decision-making contexts. Representation, however, hides, rather than solves, the problems of structural and systemic distortions in meanings and position development. It assumes that current meanings are fixed and completed. Further, representation does not ensure that the differences are present needed to identify distortions and hidden interests and to push us to creativity. Not least, representation is always beholden to external groups and known positions that themselves are not able to grow in the interaction. Collaborative talk tries to overcome these limits.

Collaboration Aided by a Concept of Requisite Diversity

Do we have the differences present that most dislodge commitment to existing positions and give the greatest chance for creativity? The increased complexity of a problem requires increased diversity. The question is not whether one or hundreds share the position but rather what the difference is that might make a difference. The legitimacy of a decision in this case does not rest on representation—that all have had their say—but on reciprocity—that all differences contribute to the possibility of an emergent solution. The quality of the emergent solution or decision in terms of its ability to meet human needs is of key interest.

Requisite diversity cuts across the arenas of living. For example, distributed knowledge and different forms of knowing are essential. Many companies and medical clinics have turned to team work groups knowing that good decisions require multiple forms of expertise and that decisions reached in team meetings can better meet complex needs. Implementation of decisions often requires having different community connections and understanding how diverse constituent groups think. But for team decisions and any sense of difference joined together to be of value, special forms of collaborative talk are essential.

Problem Talk and Outcome Talk

Much of the time when people meet to talk, they talk to solve problems. The way each person defines the problem is important to this dialogue. Collaborative talk

aims at *outcome* talk rather than *problem* talk. Individuals working with *appreciative inquiry* have shown that every statement of a problem has a hidden positive shadow: the hopes, dreams, and desires that are not being fulfilled (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005). These are the outcomes we seek that are hidden by talk about problems.

Outcome talk provides collaborative possibilities and opportunities that are lost in problem talk. For example, a company talking about its “turnover problem” is likely to get into finger pointing and defensiveness. But talk about “increasing retention” is more likely to generate excitement and positive cooperation. We often define problems as the absence of our favored solution. For example, when talking about safety on campus, someone says, “The problem is the lack of lights.” Lights are not the problem; safety is. Having more lights is the person’s preferred solution. Many meetings are filled with people with preferred solutions who are simply looking for problems to which they might attach them (Cohen, March, and Olsen 1972). Outcome talk keeps us focused on what we wish to achieve together and opens up multiple ways of reaching that goal.

Ways to Distinguish Wants and Interests

Our wants are often different from the things that represent our interests. Collaborative talk helps us focus on interests and helps free stakeholders from the frequent constraints of their wants. In the process, mutually satisfying different interests becomes a collective possibility. Working with this separation is central to most creative problem-solving processes that turn apparently competitive limited resource conflicts into win-win decisions.

Imagine two children arguing over who gets the last piece of pie. As a parent, you might well be stymied; you can’t let one have it without taking it from the other. Most parents will simply compromise: cut it in half. Although this division is not usually very satisfying, at least the dissatisfaction is equal. Win-lose has been turned into lose-lose. Studies on collaboration push us in a different direction.

Let us assume that the piece of pie is a *want*, a constructed means of satisfying some unspoken end or *interest*. We would then pose a different question to the children, “To what end do you want the piece of pie?” (Said in a more natural and interesting way.) One says she wants it because she is hungry, and the other says he wants it to know that the parent loves him more.

Already we see that the constructed limited resource situation is not really so limited. Many ways are available to satiate hunger without the pie (even if both wanted this), and many ways are available to show love. The constructed want that hides the interest creates a competitive limited situation where it need not exist. This transformation shows that many more interesting and preferred ways exist to satiate hunger and show love than with the pie. Not only are these mutually accomplishable, but also they are better than the wants at accomplishing interests. Sustaining difference is of greater value than seeking common ground and value consensus.

Collaboration beyond Limited Resource Situations

Although most of the work on collaboration has focused on limited resource situations, limited resource conceptions do not appear to touch all conflicts. Identity conflicts in particular, which are often central to intractable conflicts, do not immediately seem to fit the model.

Many of the same principles apply, however. Even identity issues like status are often not ends in themselves, and status does not necessarily require that others are denied different forms of it. Saving face does not mean that others have to lose it. Again, the focus needs to be on the outcomes we seek rather than on our preferred socially produced ways of obtaining them. For example, if parents find a lighter in a 15-year-old's backpack, they could prohibit it and, in so doing, set in play identity and rule conflicts that look like an inevitable win-lose situation. But they could say instead, "I can see no possible positive consequence of carrying a lighter and lots of negative ones," or "What do you gain or achieve by carrying a lighter?" Now the discussion focuses on outcomes with the possibility of greater understanding and multiple creative mutually positive options. Creativity substitutes for power as the path to the future.

Even social rules and religious norms are not necessarily ends in themselves. They work toward some end or accomplishment, and frequently multiple sets of different rules can accomplish the same goal. Focusing discussion on what the rules are trying to achieve and on multiple possible ways of achieving it opens options. New options created in collaboration allow joint decisions in which often no discussion seems necessary or possible at all. Appropriate concepts and practices of communication are required to move beyond mere mutual understanding to making quality decisions together.

Summary

Collaborative governance requires several alternative conceptions and practices. First, programs that focus on stakeholders jointly making decisions are of much greater value than those that simply give stakeholders a say. Second, membership based on the diversity of interests of those at the table and discussion processes that encourage emergent solutions are of greater value than those whose members represent external groups and are committed to maintaining positions held by those not at the table. Third, as shown for years by people working with conflict, focusing on outcomes and interests in an interaction is of greater value than focusing on problems and wants and bargaining over preferred solutions. This focus is especially the case when problems are defined by stakeholders as the absence of their preferred solutions. Finally, maintaining conflicts and differences as a form of positive energy moving toward creativity is of greater value than seeking common ground and value consensus.

Development of these concepts and practices requires an enriched theory of communication. Such a theory focuses on understanding the cultural

politics of experience and processes of domination in interaction. It has a strong conception of “other” and “otherness” and is grounded in conflict theories (for example, Pinchevski 2005). Such a theory helps turn these insights into positive practices and shows how difference or “distantiation” enables exploring alternatives and producing creative decisions. This type of theory works against native views focused on seeing a similarity, reaching a consensus, and finding common ground as it shows how difference and contestation coupled with the ability to invent creative options can sustain mutual commitment and mutual accomplishment of interests, thus including diverse social values.

Stakeholder governance, with appropriate collaborative communication practices, can generate more creativity that impacts development, greater efficiency and effectiveness in personal and organizational goal accomplishment, higher levels of mutual commitment, and greater customization of services and choices. Interaction modeled on collaboration grounded on the embracing of difference has great potential.

A reformed stakeholder conception clearly can be enhanced by the application of a conflict-based communication theory for the sake of greater responsibility and more effective decision making. Such a conception can provide a communication-based understanding of the complex processes of social and organizational life, direct the evaluation of existing governance forms and activities, and provide guidance for the education of members and redesign of governance structures and practices. Greater sustainability, social responsibility, and positive development can be made possible by the inclusion of multiple social values into the decisional premises, processes and routines, and development of communication processes that use the situations of conflict and difference to generate creative win-win responses.

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Public Sector Middle Managers: The Critical Link to Driving Public Sector Reforms

Peter Malinga

Introduction

Gaining public sector middle management support for change initiatives is a global challenge and an important ingredient for effective and efficient public service delivery as well. Appropriate strategies and timing of public reforms require effective leadership, management, and coordination of stakeholders. Public managers' roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined, understood, accepted, and appropriate.

This chapter will demonstrate why it is important to gain the support of middle management for any change in strategy, policy, systems, or reforms. It highlights possible causes and drivers of change in developing countries. In relation to the theme of this book, the Rwandan experience in carrying out reforms is described along with the challenges therein in relation to capturing the support of public sector managers and causing them to deliver effective services. Considering the number of reforms that Rwanda is undertaking, this chapter highlights specific reforms for the purposes of this discussion and describes how they succeeded as a result of effective communication across the cadre of public sector middle management. It also reviews reforms that were not supported by effective communication and thus had mixed results.

Who Are the Public Sector Middle Managers?

Public sector middle managers are the critical link between the supervisors (top management: minister, deputy minister, secretary general/permanent secretary) and staff. They could be a director general, director, or head of department

in the central government or provincial or district administration. Key actors in the public sector reform process because of their roles in managing and implementing national policies, programs, and projects, they have to interpret priorities for their institutions and adapt these priorities as required. They also have to reorient staff members to emerging institutional strategic issues and must establish and maintain relationships with key government institutions and stakeholders through providing required information, facilitating and participating in the planning process, building consensus, and supplying dialogue.

Importance of Middle Management Support for Change

Patrickson, Bamber, and Bamber (1995: 115–28) suggest that gaining middle management support for change is a vital part of a successful change strategy and warn that many change initiatives fail because of middle management antagonism or simply inertia and lack of cooperation. Bruhn, Zajac, and Al-Kazemi (2001), however, state that organizational members' involvement is critical because employees need to work with the changed systems and processes, as well as to understand and support the change initiative objectives and organizational goals.

As Kathleen Slattery (2002) argues in her presentation titled *A Strategic Framework for Stakeholder Consultation and Communication*, "Governments around the world are increasingly recognizing the need to understand and engage stakeholders in the process of public sector reform in order to build support for change and ensure long-term sustainability. There are two primary means by which to engage stakeholders—consultation and communication." Consultation is thus a process through which stakeholders play an active role in shaping and implementing reforms, whereas communication is a process through which information regarding reforms is shared between stakeholders and reformers. Both processes must be interactive, with stakeholders and reformers on an equal footing. Not surprisingly, consultation and communication are often linked together and form integral parts of a government's stakeholder outreach program.

John Kotter (1996) has written that "the most general lesson to be learned from the more successful cases is that the change process goes through a series of phases that, in total, usually require a considerable length of time. Skipping steps creates only the illusion of speed and never produces satisfactory results." He adds, "[M]aking critical mistakes in any of the phases can have a devastating impact, slowing momentum and negating hard-won gains" (3–17). Kotter goes on to propose an eight-phase approach to a successful change process: (1) establish a sense of urgency, (2) form a powerful guiding coalition, (3) create a vision, (4) communicate that vision, (5) empower others to act on the vision, (6) plan for and create short-term wins, (7) consolidate improvements and keep the momentum for change moving, and (8) institutionalize the new approaches.

Possible Causes and Drivers of Change and Reforms in Developing Countries

Global forces have a direct impact on national public services and also affect domestic political, economic, and social trends. The public sector in developing countries, therefore, faces a global pressure of benchmarking their practices with other pacesetters, for example, developed economies like the “Asian Tigers” (for example, Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia).

Good public management and administration, with emphasis on accountability and responsiveness to customer needs, has been seen as an aspect and culture of good governance by donor agencies supporting reforms in developing countries. For example, according to the World Bank (1992), good governance consists of a public service that is efficient, a judicial system that is reliable, and an administration that is accountable to the public.

The Bank goes further and elaborates on four elements of good governance: (1) public sector management emphasizing the need for effective financial and human resource management through improved budgeting, accounting, and reporting and rooting out inefficiency, particularly in public enterprises; (2) accountability in public services, including effective accounting, auditing, and decentralization, and generally making public officials responsible for their actions and responsive to consumers; (3) a predictable legal framework with rules known in advance and a reliable and independent judiciary and law enforcement mechanisms; and (4) availability and transparency of information to enhance policy analysis, promote public debate, and reduce the risk of corruption.

The vision, policy, and mandate of the political leadership will prevail when changes are made in the public sector. In most developing countries, all development actions are guided by the political philosophy of the incumbent government as well as the national vision; for instance, in Rwanda, Vision 2020 is a national framework for Rwanda’s development; it presents the key priorities and provides the country with a guiding tool in its development actions.

Resource constraints or rationalization have an impact on fiscal and monetary policies, which could mean cutting the cost of delivering public services. Reforms attributed to economic factors include pay scale reforms, outsourcing of government functions to the private sector, taxation, and budget allocation.

The Rwandan Experience in Implementing New Reforms

Since the 1980s, developed and developing countries have been embarking on public sector management reforms. The role and institutional character of the state has been questioned, and the public sector has been under pressure to adopt private sector orientations. In Rwanda, the government has strongly advocated for public service managers to act like shareholders of a company and work both aggressively and proactively toward meeting their targets in a private sector manner.

The public service has always been a tool available to African governments for the implementation of development goals and objectives. It is responsible for the creation of an appropriate and conducive environment in which all sectors of the economy can perform optimally, and this catalytic role is what has propelled governments all over the world to search for better ways to deliver their services.

Many of these initiatives count on the support of public sector middle-level managers, who are normally referred to as technocrats or technicians. Once policies and programs are adopted by government, these technicians have to buy in and own the process of implementation. Many countries in Africa have embarked on a public service reform agenda aimed at establishing efficient and effective management systems. However, despite the tremendous efforts and resources allocated to these reforms, there is still little progress on the ground.

Rwanda is a fast-reforming country that has risen from the dire consequences of war and genocide during 1994. For the past 13 years, the country has been in a process of formulating and implementing various public sector reforms, a few of which—and the experience encountered—will be examined next.

A New Capacity-Building Framework

The tragic calamities that befell Rwanda in 1994 caused a critical breakdown of the country's social fabric, political, and economic infrastructure. This breakdown was attributed to the loss of skilled human resources during the genocide, as well as destruction of infrastructure. It led to weak public and private sector performance. Service delivery was severely diminished, and poverty levels were alarmingly high.

With the country heading downhill, the postgenocide government felt it prudent to resuscitate the ailing economy so it could attain sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction, and improved public sector management, which delivers better services to the citizenry and to businesses. The past 13 years have seen the government of Rwanda engage in various undertakings to reestablish public institutions and reorganize the public administration. During this time, commendable progress has been made in implementing sound economic policies, initiating reforms in the public service and public administration, and establishing viable institutions. Government efforts and investments in these development actions required the support of and the inculcation of a sense of ownership among the political leadership, policy makers, and technocrats.

Despite government's efforts in reconstruction and reformation, a daunting and simultaneous challenge of weak institutional and human capacities prevailed. This was further indicated in the findings of an independent evaluation of the first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which revealed mixed results and poor performance across all sectors of the economy.

By 2005, the government realized that capacity building entailed more than training and had to be comprehensively addressed using a multisector and multidimensional approach. One fundamental developmental change agenda that the government undertook was the establishment of a Multi-Sector Capacity Building Programme (MSCBP). The MSCBP clearly departed from the prevalent traditional type of capacity-building interventions, which were widely characterized as being ad hoc, stand-alone, overlapping, and duplicative, as well as wasteful of resources.

The MSCBP is a national government capacity framework that seeks to address comprehensively the challenge of capacity building to cover human resources and institutional needs, as well as to develop a common framework to guide capacity-building initiatives in the public and private sectors and civil society. Its vision and strategic statement reads: “This programme aims at equipping among others the public sector to reach a point where it functions on a sustainable basis with sound policy and decision-making processes and mechanisms that are coherent and consistent. It is also aimed at ensuring that the public sector internal and external controls function well and that there are clear mandates and work programmes for line ministries and local authorities.” (Rwanda 2003).

A New Agency with a New Outlook

A major outcome of the MSCBP was the establishment of the Human Resources and Institutional Capacity Development Agency (HIDA), which was established by an act of parliament to coordinate capacity building activities in the country. The Public Sector Capacity-Building Project (PSCBP) and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) capacity-building support (grants 65 [2000] and 143 [2005]) constitute the major projects currently undertaken and managed by HIDA to support implementation of MSCBP activities.

The introduction of HIDA into the government system was a fundamental change, because this was not just another government agency being established. Its role is unique and threefold: strategic leadership, implementation oversight, and coordination, although never implementation. The borderline between coordination and implementation has been an issue to clarify across government; this is where the role of continuous information, education, and communication has become paramount.

Key Examples of Operational Challenges Facing HIDA

The case of MSCBP and HIDA’s role in the development agenda is a distinctive and unique homegrown investment of the government of Rwanda. This investment brought about operational challenges including the challenge of achieving buy-in by managerial and technical staff in public institutions.

The operational challenges faced by HIDA included the concept of how capacity building should be packaged. Middle-level managers who happen to

be directors or heads of departments perceive capacity building only as training and can willingly cooperate only if the support is in this direction. They assume that capacity building is offered solely through scholarships to study abroad. This challenge has been met by HIDA, which has taken on the ongoing role of explaining that even if training is part of capacity building it offers different packages (on the job, short term, and professional development) and not necessarily just master's or Ph.D. degrees.

For this reason, HIDA looks at capacity building holistically—that is, by strengthening individual capacities, enhancing organizational effectiveness, and improving institutional work environments. All the ongoing and planned capacity-building interventions managed by HIDA are based on the holistic approach, and the partner institutions who are beneficiaries of this support have been gradually brought to accept this approach.

To date, HIDA, with the support of the World Bank and the ACBF, is actively involved in the development of a comprehensive integrated skills development policy and strategy for the program's implementation, including strengthening public financial management and public procurement; enhancing the capacity of local training institutions, strategic planning, and procurement; and training public servants in accounting and internal auditing, as well as facilitating this last group in acquiring basic Internet and communications technology skills.

These capacity-building interventions have led to significant changes in public sector institutions. Key examples include a procurement code, which governs all public procurement activities and obliges all public institutions to comply; an organic budget law, financial regulations, and accounting manuals, which will enforce public financial management; and training of public accountants and auditors, with the aim of sustaining the public financial management reform agenda.

It is important to note that although the results of concerted communication efforts have brought about a gradual shift by the middle-level managers in terms of the appropriate and relevant approach to capacity building, this shift also has had an impact on the timely implementation of identified capacity-building activities at the level of partner institutions.

Experience in Rwanda has shown that the predominantly supply-driven approach to capacity-building interventions being implemented by public institutions has contributed to major gaps and the unsustainability of these activities. Examples of weaknesses of such an approach include mismatch between training needs and training, weak ownership, oversupply or under-supply of skills, and overlap and duplication of interventions. Cases exist where training is prescribed by the management staff and yet does not tally with the worker's job description.

It has been proven that demand-driven approaches as opposed to those that are supply driven can enhance ownership on the part of beneficiaries of capacity-building interventions. This approach is one that HIDA advocates and is steadfastly committed to bringing on board for all stakeholders. A case

in point is that training should not be conducted without training needs assessments. In addition, when packaging capacity-building support, the priorities of the beneficiary institution should be considered.

To reinforce the demand-driven approach, HIDA has signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with all its client institutions.¹ The MoUs are a framework of partnership and cooperation, but most important, they entail a list of capacity-building activities identified by the client for support. These activities are drawn from the clients' strategic and action plans, which makes HIDA's interventions acceptable, appropriate, and sustainable among middle management staff.

However, at this juncture it would suffice to say that despite the presence of these MoUs and increasing knowledge about the demand-driven approach to capacity building, inadequacies still exist in terms of ownership among some managers of client institutions. In addition, the temptation among these managers to go ahead with the "usual way of supply-driven training" is still prevalent. This comfort zone often has disastrous effects.

HIDA's Attempts to Address These Challenges

HIDA strongly advocates for effective and efficient service delivery in the public sector and has thus invested much effort in ensuring that the middle-level managers who are the technical fulcrum behind training of their staff, creating reforms, making policy formulation, and enforcing regulations are made *partners* and not just *consumers* in the change process.

To achieve this effectiveness, HIDA has used various approaches. To build support for capacity-building interventions, it has networked with top government leadership and policy makers to develop buy-in. Once these individuals are on board, support percolates down to middle-level management; all new policies and reforms are subjected to a consultative and validation process. During the preparation of the National Skills Development Policy, two committees were formed, a national steering committee (which was composed of six ministers from cross-cutting ministries) and a national task force (composed of secretaries general from all ministries), in which middle-level managers were appointed to serve in key roles. These structures have enabled the entire process to be subjected to high- and middle-level review and validation, which will lead to the comprehensive and integrated policy Rwanda needs.

Government technocrats have been sensitized to the importance of taking ownership of the process through constant dialogue, having direct technical assistance, and coaching to build their internal capacity for sustainability and enabling them to make informed choices. For example, HIDA supports various public institutions, which are referred to as "clients," not "beneficiaries." These clients have signed MoUs, now a tool of partnership, with HIDA.

HIDA is in the process of initiating "peer groups" among professionals drawn from, but not limited to, planning, procurement, budgeting, accounting, and auditing with an aim of creating a forum for discussion of common

capacity challenges. These challenges include packaging and implementing a training program so that these professional public managers are able to manage their functions effectively and efficiently.

HIDA has used all possible forums to disseminate its success stories and best practices, rather than resorting to spin doctoring. The agency has also used communication tools such as radio and television programs, newsletters, and Web sites to share information.

The agency has participated in and facilitated various workshops and meetings serving as advocacy forums in which it uses well-documented facts and figures to justify or substantiate its arguments. HIDA usually participates in government national retreats, national and international investment conferences, development partners meetings, and other conferences. At these forums, HIDA presents its ongoing and planned capacity-building activities while underpinning their role in the national development agenda. As a result of this advocacy, a significant outcome is that a capacity-building subsector has now been included in the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), which is the second generation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

In all its forums, HIDA has explained its role as a coordinating agency for capacity building to ensure that there is an integrated and comprehensive approach to training, reform, policy formulation, regulation, and service delivery. For instance, HIDA played an instrumental role in the preparation of an integrated Public Financial Management Action Plan for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. This role has led to better coordination of investment resources in public financial management reforms and activities.

HIDA will also facilitate the Ministry of Public Service and Labour to conduct a comprehensive assessment on the ongoing and planned capacity-building interventions in Rwanda. This assessment will minimize the risks of overlap and duplication and, therefore, wastage of resources in the process of formulating capacity-building strategies to implement projects envisaged under EDPRS.

HIDA conducted a pilot Knowledge, Attitude, and Perception (KAP) survey in July 2006 to gauge public servants' experience with work facilitation and their perception of HIDA's services. These surveys will be conducted annually, as HIDA intends to make public servants "customers" in reform, not "victims" or uninformed bystanders.

HIDA's Impact

It is not easy to measure impact in such a short time, but it is sufficient to say that some issues have come to the surface, giving HIDA leverage, morale, and pride in continuing its work. To a considerable extent, there is consensus among government and other stakeholders on what capacity building entails and how it should be packaged. This approach will positively affect planning and absorption of resources targeting capacity building.

Most stakeholders, including government officials, acknowledge that much duplication, overlap, and wasting of resources have occurred. Efforts are now being made to share information on ongoing and planned capacity-building activities; in addition, the role of HIDA is being appreciated across government and the donor community in this regard.

Other Major Strategic Changes in Rwanda

The Rwandan government's commitment relies on an effective, efficient, economical, and well-organized public sector that can render the required services. To achieve this goal, it has undertaken a series of reforms.

The government introduced a new pay system that effectively reduced the number of salary grades and raised the lower end of the pay scale. The hope was that this reform would improve staff retention, but it received some criticism from the public sector management staff. It has become evident that this reform was implemented too quickly and should have been complemented with an effective communication package to send the right signals and messages to, among others, managers in the public sector. Reports indicate that some countries, including the Gambia and Guinea, have made considerable progress in simplifying their grading structures. This progress, in turn, has acted as a magnet to attract and motivate some top professionals.

It is still too early to know whether this reform has achieved its objectives in Rwanda, but the reality in some institutions is that increasing numbers of staff members are migrating to the private sector. What can be said at this time is that there is need for an aggressive information, education, and communication program to avoid setbacks to this reform.

The inappropriate, highly centralized dictatorial governance by the colonial, as well post-independence, administrations excluded the population from participating in the national development process. This system of governance caused significant inefficiencies in service delivery and created a passive attitude regarding civic responsibilities among citizens.

The present government, which came into power in 1994, inherited a system that was largely centralized and burdened with administrative red tape including communication overload, inadequate response times to critical issues, filtering and distortion of information, and a failure to coordinate planning for different sectors.

For this reason, the government adopted on May 26, 2000, the decentralization policy and a strategy for its implementation. The policy's main thrust was to ensure political, economic, social, managerial, administrative, and technical empowerment of local populations to fight poverty by participating in planning and management of their local development processes. The government initiated decentralization as an instrument for empowerment of the people, a platform for sustainable democratization, a structural arrangement for mobilization

of economic development energies, initiatives, and resources, and a weapon for the people's reconciliation, social integration, and well-being.

After the territorial reform, there are now four provincial administrations: the Kigali City Council, 30 districts, 416 sectors, and 2,148 cells. Theory and international practice have shown that a sound intergovernmental system depends on clear definitions of spending and revenue responsibilities between each level of government. This system posed a major challenge to the reform process, and to meet it, a Fiscal and Financial Decentralization Policy was developed to provide local governments with adequate resources and necessary resource mobilization powers to implement their decentralized functions.

Decentralized service delivery raised the challenge of changing the prevalent public service management culture. To mitigate risks and threats, the government embarked on several activities: (1) ensuring support for the policy from high-level management; (2) appreciating the role of employees in the success of policy implementation; (3) effectively communicating the vision, strategy, and intended changes to all stakeholders; (4) identifying who would be responsible for each aspect of change; (5) empowering stakeholders to take action, although it has taken time—and this is a process that will take time—for some central government officials to appreciate the role of local governments; (6) promoting short-term results so that those in charge of the reform and the beneficiaries will see evidence that the policy is working; and (7) implementing the reform in sequence and allocating resources to top priorities until visible results are achieved. Government has used the credibility gained from early success to push the reform forward faster.

Within the framework of the decentralization process, and shortly after the 2006 local elections, another homegrown tool for performance management was developed locally known as *Imihigo*, a Kinyarwanda term equivalent to a “performance contract.” *Imihigo*, which is a response to the challenge of reforming local government and managing change, has been used in Rwanda to design a series of performance management contracts signed between the president of the republic and the district mayors on behalf of their constituents. The public engagement is recorded publicly in a written contract that presents a set of development targets backed by specific performance indicators over a period of time. *Imihigo* shares many characteristics with result-based management tools and is now being implemented at all levels of public institutions.

Aimed at cutting government expenses and wasted resources, a bold decision was taken in 2005 to auction off all government vehicles and ensure that staff transport was then outsourced. In addition, certain categories of public servants were required to provide their own vehicles. This decision affected both high- and middle-level public servants. A mixed reaction among public servants was revealed in a pilot KAP survey commissioned by HIDA. Therefore, a rigorous media campaign was undertaken by the government to convince public servants about benefits of this scheme. To date, after just two

years, appreciation is slowly growing among public managers that this strategy has greatly reduced motor pool expenses by the government.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning has made impressive progress in rebuilding its public financial and public procurement management systems. To date, there is a legal and regulatory framework: for example, a budget law, financial regulations, and manuals. A legal and regulatory framework for public procurement also exists: for example, a procurement law, standard bidding documents, and manuals. To ensure ownership and compliance among chief budget managers and middle-level managers, a two-week sensitization and training program was conducted in May 2007. Given these regulations and guidelines, the culture of accountability, rationality, and transparency will be inculcated in the management teams of public institutions.

Approaches to Middle-Level Public Managers Accepting Change

It should be noted that a core element of gaining the support of public sector middle-level managers for change should include defining the conditions that will be required after the change is achieved. The managers are bound to ask, “How exactly will the organization be different once the change has been achieved? What is the desired outcome? What is in it for me?”

The success of a change agenda depends on a range of issues. Change needs role models in the form of senior executives “walking the talk.” The extent of senior management’s commitment to effect and manage change must be visibly evident in the institution. Senior management’s vision and strategic objectives must be easily translated into action by middle managers.

It is imperative to identify the nature of an existing organizational culture. Although the management of change has common elements across most organizations, implementation of change initiatives in the public sector in particular may pose specific challenges because of different orientations, values, objectives, incentives, mandates, and policy prescriptions. Lawson and Ventriss (1992) argue that change initiatives become “stuck” if the culture of an organization is not well understood, and Patrickson, Bamber, and Bamber (1995) suggest that organizational change will have little impact if the existing culture of the organization is not altered as part of the change strategy.

Change agendas should be tailor-made or customized to suit organizational needs. Change should be empowered by a strong internal and external vision. Line managers need to be included in the process of change because these managers form an integral part of the implementation chain. Identification of organizational culture allows insight into the types of organizational processes required to alter the reception of the change by staff, and the ways in which successful organizational change initiatives may be shaped and implemented. Change agendas typically involve structural and strategic adjustments within organizations, but it is the “intangible” components of these organizations that may yield the greatest threat to, or facilitation of, change.

Effecting change in most developing countries raises suspicion, pessimism, and, worse still, opposition. This change then requires high levels of authority, power, and innovative ideas to introduce the change process.

Public sector middle managers need a reason to change. They will ask, “What is the intent of the change program?” or “To what degree will the organization change and how will I benefit?” They will need a clearly defined goal and a strategy for the change agenda.

To secure sustainability and credibility, a “change champion” is needed who is committed as well as credible. This person must have access to power brokers and, apart from having the necessary intellectual capability and experience, must be acceptable to all parties and must be considered to be objective and impartial.

Change requires technical expertise and resources, and sometimes government is constrained. This restraint can be remedied through mobilization of resources to secure competent technical advisers to provide the necessary coaching and mentoring of public sector managers.

A successful change process, once well packaged and disseminated, will gain the confidence and faith of stakeholders. These changes are normally documented as internationally acceptable best practices and provide lessons to reforming institutions.

Conclusion

Advocating that middle managers in the public sector should accept change is both desirable and doable. It is also a daunting challenge, one that takes time and dedication to rethink old ways of doing things and to develop new, more customized country-driven ones. This change will not be achieved without investing in change and meeting the costs, as well as challenges that come with it. Change requires proper planning and wide consultation within and outside institutions. It also requires strategic communication to supplement efforts in the change agenda. This strategy means that the new ways of doing things will require a new degree of willingness on the part of the public sector middle-level managers to champion change.

Note

1. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning; Ministry of Public Service and Labour; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Lands, Water, Environment and Forestry; Ministry of Infrastructure; Rwanda Institute of Administration and Finance; National University of Rwanda, School of Finance and Banking; Rwanda Information Technology Authority; and Parliament.

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Working Appreciatively to Foster Cultures of Public Service

J. Kevin Barge

How do we gain the support of public sector middle managers, who are often the strongest opponents of change, and foster among them a stronger culture of public service? This is a deceptively simple question that poses several challenges for those who wish to answer it. First, it presumes that public sector middle managers' opposition to change may be ill advised. But aren't there moments when it makes sense for public sector middle managers to resist change for good reasons? Second, the question takes for granted that there is a clear consensus on the meaning of a "stronger culture of public service." However, is there clear consensus on what a stronger culture of public service means, or does it vary according to factors such as a country's political ideology, an agency's mission, and whom you ask in the agency? Third, why is it important that we foster a stronger culture of public service among public sector managers versus all members of a public sector agency? What is particularly special and unique about middle managers to warrant our particular attention?

These challenges do not diminish the importance of the question but do raise some significant issues as to the way public sector middle managers are typically positioned to act during change. Middle-level managers are often positioned as "go-betweens" or "bridges" between upper and lower levels of an agency who think about and experience change differently. Senior managers tend to experience change initiatives as shifts in strategy, whereas low-level employees experience them as cultural changes or shifts in their values and daily working practices (Corley 2004). Senior managers, while seeing change as a complex process, tend to underestimate the energy and attention to detail that is required to make change, but lower-level employees, who are on the

front lines of change, see their everyday working relationships and practices dramatically altered. Middle managers are positioned as translators and negotiators between the two groups who try to explain senior management's vision and strategy to the staff and to execute the strategy they have been given while simultaneously providing senior managers with feedback from lower-level employees. It is not surprising that middle managers often think of themselves as being caught in the middle during change efforts and feel disempowered.

When agencies position middle managers as a buffer between senior management and lower-level employees and change fails, the story becomes that it is the fault of the middle managers because they were unable to broker agreements between the two groups and execute the vision. The reason for an unsuccessful change is a failure of execution, not a flawed, incomplete, or uninspired vision, and those accountable for executing the vision are the middle managers. Therefore, when middle managers feel that they are being positioned, intentionally or unintentionally, by an agency to be the potential scapegoat if a change initiative should fail, it is not surprising they would be resistant to change and hesitant to take a lead position in constructing cultures of public service.

When asking middle managers to become advocates for change, we need to develop methods for creating change that invite them to act from a position of empowerment and partnership. I argue that if we want to position middle managers in ways that invite their support and to energize them toward developing stronger cultures of public service, we need to adopt an approach that values their contributions and that builds on the strengths of middle managers, recognizes that the responsibility for creating cultures of public service rests on the contributions of all agency members, and envisions middle managers as full partners in change processes, not conduits of information between hierarchical levels.

The particular approach outlined in this chapter is what various authors have called an appreciative approach toward change in organizations (Barge 2007; Barge and Oliver 2003; Cooperrider and Whitney 2005). It begins by exploring why middle managers may resist change, and it suggests that our traditional ways of working with change, grounded in a problem-solving model, may unintentionally generate this resistance. Then an appreciative approach to working with change is offered that addresses these concerns. The chapter concludes with two brief case studies of "extreme practice" to show concretely how appreciative processes may work to foster change. Readers are invited to reflect on the implications for how public sector agencies may position middle managers to become empowered change agents.

Change, Management, and Resistance

Change management has typically been defined as a process involving unfreezing, moving, and refreezing values, practices, and procedures within organizations (Lewin 1951; Seo, Putnam, and Bartunek 2003). *Unfreezing*

refers to the creation of a perceived discrepancy between the existing and ideal state of an organization that generates a desire for change and lowers people's resistance to change. *Moving* focuses attention on the various processes such as training, education, and restructuring that lead to the development of new behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs. *Refreezing* reestablishes a new state of equilibrium within the organization by stabilizing the new patterns through a variety of support mechanisms. Change processes are analogous to reshaping ice: we first need to thaw an existing piece of ice into water to make it more malleable, shape it in the way we desire, and then refreeze it, solidifying the water into the new shape.

Equating change processes in human systems with the melting and refreezing of ice is problematic because water does not have the sense of agency or self-determination that human beings do. Unlike water, organizational members pursue their own goals, wishes, and interests, and they may resist change efforts if the proposed change requires a dramatic alteration that is contrary to their preferred goals, wishes, and interests. The primary reason for resistance to change is that change requires employees to alter their existing individual and organizational identities (Fiol 2002). Changing one's identity can be anxiety provoking, and it is common for people to use strategies such as denial, rationalization, idealization, fantasy, and symbolization to resist change (Brown and Starkey 2000).

Why may public sector middle managers be particularly opposed to change? There are several possible reasons for their heightened resistance. First, they may not perceive *urgency to change*. The literature clearly indicates that people must perceive an issue to be urgent and in need of being addressed to initiate and pursue change (Kotter 1996). Second, as discussed earlier, middle managers are often caught between *conflicting accounts of what change means* by senior managers and lower-level employees and are positioned as being a translator as opposed to a full partner during change processes. Third, middle managers may oppose change because they don't have a clear vision of what they are trying to accomplish and how to get there. Arie de Gues (2002) suggests that managers often fail in their tasks because they don't have a *memory of the future*. De Gues argues that people act on the basis of memory, and because change processes are associated with high degrees of novelty, ambiguity, and contingency, they don't have an existing memory to draw on to guide their actions. He suggests managers need to use tools such as scenario planning to create memories of what an anticipated reality might look like and to imagine the steps they took in creating it so they can act from memory as they move into the future. Fourth, managers may resist change because it makes them *vulnerable*. During change, managers are asked to give up the comfort of their normal routines and to have the courage to venture into the unknown and the uncertain. Managers may resist change because it puts them at personal and professional risk by asking them to sacrifice their desire to be confident, comfortable, consistent, and competent (Crossan 1998).

Working with change is all about working with identity, and people often feel threatened when their existing identities are undermined. Yet the traditional approaches we use to change agencies, which are rooted in a problem-solving model, may invite middle managers to feel threatened and disempowered. The basic idea underlying a problem-solving model of change is that we need to frame the problem, identify its causes, generate possible solutions, set criteria for selecting feasible solutions, and generate action plans that implement the solution we select (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005). It is based on “gap logic”: we need to reduce the gap between our existing state and a preferred ideal state of affairs.

The traditional problem-solving model and its approach toward change creates several problems when facilitating change. First, problem-solving approaches rarely result in new vision. Given that a problem is a “gap” between an existing and an ideal state of affairs, organizational members already possess a notion of what is ideal, and they do not search to expand their thinking, ideas, or visions; instead they merely try to reduce the gap. As a result, middle managers may become frustrated because they are not asked to use their full creative potential. Second, problem-solving approaches increase levels of defensiveness among organizational members. Such approaches are based on the “blame game” and can rapidly create defensiveness because they must attach blame, responsibility, and accountability to someone or something that has created the problem. Defensiveness, in the form of blame shifting—“It is not my problem but yours”—is commonplace (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005). In public sector agencies, middle managers are often blamed for past problems. Third, deficit language and problem-solving approaches can create a sense of organizational enfeeblement. Increased talk about the problems organizational members are confronting expands their vocabulary of deficit and develops their expertise in creating and sustaining their own dysfunction (for elaboration on this point, see Barge and Oliver 2003).

We need a way of working with change processes and middle managers that does the following:

- Allows them to comprehend the urgency for change
- Empowers them by positioning them as equal partners in the change process
- Evokes exciting future images to motivate them and provide them a pathway for change
- Addresses their concerns regarding vulnerability.

One approach that meets these criteria and can facilitate public sector middle managers creating a stronger culture of public service with others is an appreciative approach to change.

Work That Is Appreciative and the Creation of Change

An appreciative approach is based on the assumption that there is excellence in every organization and that the chief task is to inquire into what gives an

organization life when it is most effective and its people are at their best (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005). Working appreciatively is part of an emerging trend within organizational development that emphasizes the importance of creating change by leveraging existing assets, strengths, and capacities into the future.¹ Working appreciatively involves several key elements.

Hearing the Voices of Stakeholders

Every view of our world is partial (Weick 1995). An appreciative approach recognizes that people and organizations live in a landscape composed of multiple stakeholders, many with different expectations of what needs to be done and what the future should look like. This approach requires us to recognize and to take into account the multiple expectations and interests of stakeholders when creating change. Rather than dismiss those critical voices who raise concerns, we need to pay close attention to them and to treat them as providing useful information about people's visions and commitment to making the organization better. By hearing fully the stories of key stakeholders and appreciating their positions and interests, we can begin to grasp the urgency and consequences associated with addressing or not addressing their concerns. Kotter (1996) highlights the importance of cultivating awareness among organizational members regarding environmental realities, existing or potential crises, and major opportunities to create a compelling reason for change and lessen resistance.

Affirmative and Future-Oriented Talk

Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) observe that "human systems grow in the direction of what they persistently ask questions about, and this propensity is strongest and most sustainable when the means and ends of inquiry are positively correlated. The single most important action a group can take to liberate the human spirit and consciously construct a better future is to make the positive core the common and explicit property of all" (9). Working appreciatively requires maintaining both an affirmative and a future-oriented focus in one's conversation and discourse. Creating an affirmative focus within conversation develops the positive core within organizational life, which focuses on what works well within an organization and gives it life as opposed to what is wrong and prevents it from achieving its full potential. Developing the positive core involves focusing conversations on achievement, strategic opportunities, technical assets, positive emotions, organizational wisdom, core competencies, vital traditions, lived values, social capital, embedded knowledge, strategic advantages, relational resources, and alliances and partnerships (2005: 9).

The image of our future guides our behavior in the present. When we lift up positive images to orient us on our journey, we can bring the future we desire into the present. Working appreciatively emphasizes the importance of dreaming about the future and of what we desire if we were to work at our best. When we collectively create positive images of our future, much like the

Pygmalion effect, they serve to expand our thinking and capacity for change (Barrett 1998).

Whole-System Involvement

Traditional approaches to change emphasize the formation of a leading group, design team, or guiding coalition to initiate, plan, and monitor change processes. As a result, change processes tend to be centralized in the hands of few, and change becomes something to be managed. Working appreciatively, however, means recognizing that everyone in the system has expertise and that this expertise needs to be picked up, developed, and used during change processes. It is readily acknowledged in the change literature that participative approaches generally work better than change processes initiated and administered by a few within the upper tiers of the managerial hierarchy (Lewis and others 2006), in part because all voices are heard and people feel more ownership of and commitment to the task. More realistic and grounded change proposals are created because the different voices of individuals are placed in contact with each other, allowing each to reality test the views of the other.

Concrete Experimentation

Change is more likely to occur when people are able to experiment with possible change scenarios and to realistically assess their consequences. The change literature suggests that people need room to experiment when they are making a change as they are being asked to adopt new roles, duties, and practices that may differ significantly from the old (Fiol 2002). Working appreciatively requires individuals creating change to set up “practice fields” (Senge 1990) where they can see how these new practices work for them.

Pro-People and Pro-Results

Working appreciatively does not diminish the importance of accomplishing tasks. People are often skeptical of working appreciatively because they think it is utopian, is rooted in people’s feelings and not results, and is “happy talk.” However, by focusing change conversations on what already works well within the organization and then by provoking people to stretch that thinking by dreaming about the future, working appreciatively produces tangible results because it is rooted in the success that people have already experienced. The issue is not whether an organization has been successful; it already has because there is always something that is working well within every organization. The issue is how to leverage this excellence and to do more of it, in different ways, in different contexts. When we adopt a way of working that honors the expertise of the people we work with and focuses on their success, then we become more likely to generate the kinds of effects we desire.

An appreciative approach is more likely to enlist the support of middle managers during change because it enables them to sense the urgency for change, enhances the feeling that their expertise is valued, and positions them

as one of many players that must collectively support the change if it is to succeed. With its emphasis on hearing the voices of all the stakeholders, using affirmative talk, and working with the whole system, working appreciatively is likely to engage middle managers to support change, be cooperative, and enlist the support of others in creating a strong culture of public service.

Extreme Events and Working Appreciatively

It is sometimes important to look beyond the ordinary and to cast an eye toward extreme events—those that are clearly above average and special—that may hold important learning for us by revealing the atypical aspects of a phenomenon (Starbuck 1993). In this section, I want to present two extreme cases—cases in which working appreciatively has yielded dramatic results in the kind of change that gets created. The two cases differ as one case emphasizes the role of training in creating culture change and as the other case foregrounds a special kind of intervention called an Appreciative Inquiry Summit. As one reads through these cases and the brief highlights of lessons learned from these extreme cases, the following question should be considered: What do these case studies suggest about the kinds of actions that can be taken to enlist the support of public sector middle managers during change and to build a strong culture of public service?

Case Number 1: CARE

One example of working appreciatively can be found from a case study of a drug treatment center's dramatic change that the author of the present chapter and his colleagues at MacMann Berg (a Danish consultancy company) are developing. CARE (a pseudonym) is a Danish social services agency that works with the ambulatory treatment of adult drug addicts. CARE provides a variety of outpatient services to approximately 750 adult drug addicts within the municipality including counseling and methadone treatments, as well as psychological and physical therapy. CARE employs approximately 100 people including managers, administrative staff members, medical doctors, psychologists, physiotherapists, social workers, and nurses and is organized into seven departments. During the late 1990s, CARE was an organization in chaos. There was no common treatment approach for the drug addicts because employees' personal opinions guided the best way to do treatment: thus, the treatment a drug addict would receive depended on who was on duty at the time. New employees indicated little orientation was provided on how to do their jobs, and coaching or supervision was minimal.

MacMann Berg was contacted to provide ongoing leader and employee education in working appreciatively that involved all the leaders and staff members of CARE from 2002 to 2006. A brief summary of the training follows.

Middle Manager Training. In the autumn of 2002 and spring of 2003, all seven department managers and the head of CARE participated in the training. Inspiration for the training was drawn from Karl Tomm's (1988) work on questioning, as well as David Cooperrider's writing on Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005). A typical day would start with input regarding some key ideas about how to work appreciatively and with curiosity. This start would be followed with a series of exercises and interviews aimed at putting these ideas into practice. The managers participated in five two-day training modules with four to six weeks between modules. Between each module, managers were given "homework" to complete that grounded the material covered in the module with their daily practice.

Staff Training. In the second year (autumn of 2003 and spring of 2004), the training included all 90 CARE staff members. The basic five-module format from the first year was replicated. All seven managers served as training facilitators for the staff members during the training session and training meetings between sessions. CARE divided the 90 staff members into three groups with intact cross-professional teams from each department participating in a particular group. CARE also assigned two to three managers to each training group to assist the trainer from MacMann Berg. This assignment meant that a particular manager may have had one or more of his or her cross-professional teams participating in the training they were helping to facilitate. Following each module, managers typically met with their staff members to discuss ways they could implement the learning from the modules into the work groups. During these meetings, the managers would facilitate exercises and discuss the reading.

Supervision Sessions. MacMann Berg provided group and individual supervision with the middle managers during the autumn of 2004 and spring of 2005. The supervision sessions included both input—highlighting appreciative ideas and practices aimed at helping the managers make sense of their experience and take action—and coaching. Roughly 25 percent of the time was spent providing input and 75 percent of the time coaching.

Advanced Management and Staff Training. In the autumn of 2005, spring of 2006, and autumn of 2006, the seven middle managers received additional training. One or two people from their department also were selected to participate and were designated as "resource people." The hope was that by receiving more in-depth training in systemic ideas and practice, the managers and resource people could further the development of the staff and the organization.

Results. The effects of the training on the overall organization have dramatically changed the organization. Employee turnover has noticeably decreased, and the quality of service to drug addicts has significantly improved since the introduction of the training. Most impressive is a recent survey that was conducted three years after the staff training and that indicates the managers

and staff members believe that the training has had a great effect on the organization's ability to transform itself into a high-performing organization that values people's expertise.

What can be learned from this case study about what it means to work appreciatively when attempting to create change? Although not an exhaustive list, some possible learning includes the following:

- Simple, provocative ideas can create powerful effects. The managers and staff members report that the most important ideas they have taken away from the training are to work appreciatively by looking at what works best and what creates energy in the organization and to be curious about other people's experience by asking questions.
- By having all managers and staff members participate in the training, a common vocabulary for viewing situations that emphasizes appreciation and curiosity was created through the training and coaching sessions.
- Change occurs by altering the nature of relationships among participants, not by executing preexisting plans. Change occurs spontaneously at CARE as people have learned to listen to each other deeply and to collaborate with each other while searching for opportunities for continuous improvement in their daily work.
- Fast action-reflection learning cycles were put in place to foster learning. Practice fields were established for each departmental team between training modules in which they could ground the learning in their practice.
- Middle managers need ongoing support to create and sustain change in the form of additional training and the recruitment of resource people from their team to make appreciative ideas and practices part of the organizational culture.

Case Number 2: The United States Navy's Information Professional Community

Powley and others (2004) were asked by the U.S. Navy to conduct an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) summit for its information professional (IP) community. This new community was created from the former Fleet Support Community to provide land-based support for ships at sea by developing the U.S. Navy's capacity for using its information network. The challenge to build a new community was twofold: (1) the information technology professionals brought together in this community had never before experienced a strong sense of identity with each other, and (2) they felt they were not respected by their counterparts because "real sailors" went to sea while they remained on land.

It was decided to use an AI summit to provide a sense of vision and identity for the IP community. An AI summit is premised on the assumption that public dialogue about the strengths and visions of an organization can lead to rapid change. At the heart of the summit process is articulating the affirmative strategic topic. Rather than study problems, it is important to frame the task for the summit affirmatively, meaning that the task should focus on positive

potentials (Ludema and others 2003). For example, the first summit for the IP community was framed as “The Information Power Advantage,” which encourages participants to focus conversation on the positive potentials their experience in information technology brings to the U.S. Navy. An AI summit normally follows four phases: (1) Discovery—inquire into when the organization is at its best and articulate the positive core; (2) Dream—inquire into the image of the organization’s ideal future and members’ highest aspirations; (3) Design—identify organizing principles and action plans; and (4) Destiny—determine how to implement the action plans while allowing for continuous learning and improvisation. The structure of an AI summit involves both internal and external stakeholders and lasts three to four days, with a phase assigned to each day.

Highlighting some detail about the first summit that was held in September 2002 for the IP community will illustrate the way a summit is conducted:

Before the event, a steering committee met and framed a strategic topic for community exploration titled “The Information Power Advantage: Forge information dominance: Lead the Evolution of the Warfighter, and Open Portals for Information.” About 170 of the 365 IP Community officers and 80 members of other naval communities including flag officers, attended. The inclusion of these external voices was a crucial decision. If the IP community was going to enhance a sense of identity and legitimacy, it would need the support of the other warfare communities. For example, in order for the number of IP sea assignments to increase the other communities would have to sacrifice assignments.

The overall design for the Summit included a typical set of activities conducted over three and a half days. During Discovery, they engaged in appreciative interviews, stakeholder discussions about moments of pride and the creation of penants to identity and visually represent the community’s Positive Core. In the Dream phase, they explored creative presentations and then used an Opportunity Map, with over 65 original ideas, to make the transition to the Design phase. During the final two days, Summit members self-selected into one of thirteen teams each including representatives from across functional and organization levels. They self-organized by focusing on three-year aspiration statements, by designating senior and junior facilitator pairs, and by developing specific action plans on particular strategic topics for continued work after the summit (Powley and others 2004: 71).

The first summit was crucial for forging a shared identity and solidarity among the IP community members. It served as a springboard for the future and allowed the community to develop action plans in more detail. According to Powley and others (2004), some key learning from this summit process included the following points:

- Hearing positive stories about the importance of the IP community to the navy was energizing.

- The inquiry focused on identity stories and provided a venue for participants to discover things that were surprising. Participants heard success stories and created portrayals of a future in which the Navy respected them.
- The large-scale meeting created opportunities for forging new relationships and building social capital.
- Momentum was sustained through follow-up with the Executive Steering Group, in which each team participated in a conference call every six weeks to report progress and submit action items.

Discussion

Public sector middle managers are central to facilitating change within their organizations and to fostering a strong culture of public service. Dreams of positive change are best realized when these middle managers are partners in creating a change process that values the expertise of multiple internal and external stakeholders, that builds on the existing strengths of the organization, and that stretches managers' capacity by identifying their dreams and highest aspirations. When affirmation is emphasized and the best of the existing organization is appreciated, middle-level managers are less likely to feel threatened and to resist change because their experience is valued. They are also more likely to feel energized in creating a strong culture of public service in partnership with others.

There is not a single recipe for designing appreciative processes that facilitate change because every situation is unique. However, at least five communication principles should guide working appreciatively: (1) listen deeply to the concerns of stakeholders and be open to learning from the voices of your critics, (2) focus on what already works well within an agency, (3) involve all stakeholders in the change process, (4) create a space for experimenting with differing change possibilities, and (5) commit to the belief that honoring people's experiences and values and achieving results are not mutually exclusive. When we work appreciatively during change, we are more likely to earn the support of people to make the kinds of positive changes that will benefit an agency.

Note

1. See the 2007 special issue on positive organizational development approaches in *The OD Practitioner* 39 (1).

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Part IV

Building Broad Coalitions of Pro-Change Influentials





Participation as Dialogue, Debate, and Negotiation: Entangled Promises and Practices

John Forester

If we care about accountability and public participation, we must be able to integrate, not confuse, the distinct promises and practices of dialogue, debate, and negotiation, for each one contributes to the possibilities of fruitful public deliberations.¹ But “public participation” has a notorious history, of course. Every year I ask my students, as I would ask readers of this essay, to read Sherry Arnstein’s 1969 classic, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation.” However dated some of its case examples might seem, the relevance of that sobering “ladder” remains fresh: clearly some so-called participatory processes present false promises, some can be downright threatening to city or public officials, and perhaps a small minority really create power-sharing partnerships.

So studying and trying to improve public participation remains every bit as fascinating today as it is frustrating. We see great promise often squandered. We see thrilling examples of success—Ken Reardon’s work with the East St. Louis Action Research Project, for example—and these keep hope alive, even as we see traditional public hearings feeding perpetual burnout and cynicism (Reardon 1993).

My argument here builds upon several years of work conducting oral histories (Forester 2005; <http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/practicestories/>) with mediators of public disputes. I have studied such mediators because, by the nature of their work, they face the challenges—and try to realize the opportunities—of encouraging diverse and empowering participation all the time. By drawing upon mediators’ practice-focused oral histories, it turns out, we can explore in a quite grounded way a good bit of what these public dispute mediators know and what they might teach us (Schön 1983) about public

disputes and conflicts—all in the context of helping us think about both public participation and practical negotiations too (Forester 1999a).

Mediators make some very intriguing observations about the challenges of working in participatory settings. Consider just a few:

1. Not so surprisingly, but still instructively, mediators warn us of the damage done by typical public hearing procedures and the strategies of moderating meetings that so often encourage “decide, announce, defend” exaggeration and posturing instead of fostering mutual respect, listening, and learning (Susskind, McKernan, and Thomas-Larmer 1999; Susskind and Field 1996).
2. More surprisingly and counter-intuitively, though, mediators suggest that passionate parties to public disputes often haven’t always thought very carefully about their own interests—perhaps because, as Don Edwards, a community development mediator from Washington, D.C., put it recently, “If you don’t think something’s possible, you don’t go looking for it” (Edwards 2006). This simple but deep insight might serve as the opening motto for an entire professional or academic conference: “If you don’t think something’s possible, you don’t go looking for it.”
3. But mediators tell us, somewhat bizarrely, that—at times—parties might even *like* their problems, remaining attached to them, possibly saving or gaining face by being intimately identified with them.
4. Mediators also observe that many parties can say they’re willing to talk to those they see as adversaries, even if they think that those others would never do likewise—but then they’re surprised when they learn that those others have exactly the same skepticism about *them*.
5. Mediators observe, too, wisely enough, that no matter what the initial framing of problems, there seems always to be more going on: in public disputes, they know, there’s a great deal to learn, and they know well that it can often help to ask, not so much, “What’s the problem?” but instead, “What’s the story?” (Forester 1999a; 2006b).
6. Then mediators tell us something striking, too, when they observe that parties reaching agreements in contentious disputes often seem to express surprise and wonder at their own achievement of creative, satisfactory agreements, as they say, for example, “It’s magic what happened!” The mediators, of course, know that behind that surprise lies not magic, no mysterious rocket science, but hard work—hard work to pay careful attention to what *can* happen, not just to what *cannot*.
7. And mediators, of course, suggest also that careful process design—going slower initially sometimes to go faster later—cannot only prevent the costs of long delays, prevent relationships from being further damaged, but also can improve the quality of planning decisions and stakeholders’ ownership of those decisions (Susskind, McKernan, and Thomas-Larmer 1999).

When we identify a dispute over resources or regulations, for example, we point to the *absence* of agreement, not to the impossibility of agreement. So we would do well to explore particularly how mediators might teach us about *finding or creating possible agreements* where, of course, the distrusting, contentious parties themselves—including planners—may well see few cooperative possibilities at all. How, we should ask, do mediators create processes that generate real opportunities when residents, developers, local officials, environmentalists, farmers, and others might see only intractable conflict? What do mediators know and see—being sensitive to relations of power and being realistically pragmatic too—that the rest of us often do not?

How might these mediators of land use disputes or interagency disputes, for example, work when the parties in traditional planning processes can so easily miss opportunities to build relationships; miss opportunities to explore options; and miss opportunities to find mutually satisfying agreements rather than seize upon the “lose-lose” agreements they so easily reach when they very deliberately game, bluff, exaggerate, withhold information, and more?

We can explore these questions further in three ways: first, by considering just how limited all our knowledge is in participatory settings; second, by asking how we might *integrate* processes of *participation* with those of effective *negotiations*; and third, by returning to a series of practical insights offered by mediators of contentious public disputes.

So, first, if we make the somewhat less than stunning admission that we’re not the economists’ perfectly rational actor and that none of the parties in participatory processes are so perfectly informed, then we come to the underwhelming conclusion that in cases of any social or political complexity, we all typically need to learn—about our vulnerabilities to political change; our interconnectedness, socially or ecologically; and our need to manage such interdependence. Not being omniscient, there are information and interests and intentions and options that we can yet learn about that might really inform what we can do and that might really inform how we can serve our ends and interests far better than we can see initially.

Stakeholders, of course, can have their own internally conflicting priorities of interests and values; they can feel stuck in relations with others; they can doubt that others will act less selfishly than they have; yet they can admit also that they have no crystal ball to foretell the future and that there is information they need, that they need to learn (Forester 1989). Now, this much might sound like old news, for we have thought about participatory processes as social learning processes for quite some time, which dates not just from the systems literature of the 1960s, some 40 or 50 years ago, but from work such as John Dewey’s wonderful and still insightful *The Public and Its Problems* back another 40 years (Dewey 1927)!

Second, though, as students of participation in many disciplines, we have not often recognized practical negotiations as related learning processes, if, that is, we have thought at all about how real negotiations fit into processes of

participatory governance. Here we come to an area of actual practice in which the insights and judgments of mediators might help us a good deal, for mediators—because of the very nature of their jobs—have to worry not just about stakeholder representation, and not just about stakeholder learning in the abstract, but also about how diverse stakeholders can actually speak together and interact, *so that they can then reach* practical agreements together that serve their ends, agreements that they as stakeholders autonomously and consensually legitimate—as elements of their own democratic self-governance.

Washington-based consultant Frank Blechman gives us a glimpse of this work when he says that as a mediator first assessing a public dispute, one of his questions to every stakeholder goes roughly like this: “Are you having fun yet?” If the answer is “Yes,” he says, then he has little as a mediator to offer. The stakeholder feels happy enough as things are and so may have little incentive to deal with others to try to do better: if the status quo’s fine for me, why should I change it? But when parties are not, in Blechman’s words, “having fun yet,” when they’re angry that they don’t have more access or services or jobs or land—sooner, better, free-er—*then* the mediator can be helpful, then the stakeholders have incentives to talk, to listen, to try to learn, and to work to come up with options (and thus to negotiate) so that they can actually implement agreements to serve their own ends and concerns, hopes and interests (Blechman 2005).

Now, this much raises the practical task presented in figure 12.1 that maps out the challenge of *integrating processes of voice* and ostensible participation *with processes of practical outcome-oriented negotiations*. This figure arrays higher and lower voice from left to right across the top and more effective and less effective negotiations from top to bottom. This gives us an overly simple but still instructive 2×2 mapping. We can pass quickly through several of the resulting combinations, but we should pay careful attention to the challenge presented by the upper left-hand combination of “high voice, effective negotiations.”

Figure 12.1. Integrating Participation with Negotiation

	High voice/participation	Low voice/participation
Effective negotiations	Mediated negotiations	Deal making
Weak negotiations	Public hearings	Bureaucratic procedure

Source: Author.

Consider first the lower left quadrant. We have all seen or heard lots of “voice” with very little being negotiated. Here we might think, for example, of the common pathologies of public hearings. Perhaps many speak, but they negotiate nothing, agree upon less, and leave public hearings still more upset, less trusting, and often more resentful of public governance processes than when they came in, supposedly “to participate.” These common hearings give public participation a bad name, and we can only hope that Lawrence Susskind’s newly published *Breaking Robert’s Rules* might help public officials in many settings as they might try to do better than they have in convening many kinds of public meetings (Susskind and Cruickshank 2006).

Consider next the upper right-hand quadrant. We have all seen (or worried about) the combination of “low voice, effective negotiations”: here we find varieties of deal making by “the old boys,” the insiders or the elites. Those with access and muscle cut the deals; the many affected, if not necessarily organized or represented, participate hardly at all. Negotiation triumphs here, and participation suffers.

Look now at the lower right-hand quadrant where we find those governance processes in which neither participation nor negotiation takes place. Here we might think of “bureaucracy as usual.” Experts and officials can study problems and make recommendations. Planners can present options for officials to consider. The city council can decide, but the process might well have involved little participation (once the council’s elected) and, most likely, not much stakeholder negotiation before recommendations landed on the city council’s desk or any other decision maker’s desk.

These three combinations all leave out one or the other of effective participation and negotiation. Consider now the fourth set of possibilities in the upper left-hand quadrant—and let us turn to the practical questions that the integration of effective negotiation and participation poses to us all: How can we organize governance processes that integrate high voice and diverse stakeholder participation with efficient and practically pitched negotiations to produce implementable agreements and lasting results? To answer this question, we can learn quite practically from the insights of experienced mediators of public disputes—because they face just this problem all the time. These mediators often seek broad and diverse representation of affected stakeholders, *and* they seek efficient, well-informed, stable, and consent-based agreements that go far, far beyond saying, “Let’s just make a deal and get out of here.”

We now have a growing body of work that explores such consensus building and mediation practice—and practitioner-academics such as MIT’s Lawrence Susskind have led the charge (for example, Susskind, McKernan, and Thomas-Larmer 1999). In my *Deliberative Practitioner* and in a forthcoming collection of recent essays, I’ve tried to draw out the lessons of such skillful mediation practice for governance more generally, wherever we can move governance processes in more inclusive and less manipulative, more accountable and less ritualistic, participatory directions (Forester 1999a; 2007).

So in the pages that follow, let us explore a few aspects of integrating diverse participation with effective negotiations, that upper left-hand space of emerging possibilities. We can do that by considering just a bit of the practical wisdom that astute mediators offer us. So here follow a baker's dozen tips or suggestions that inform at least four of the general phases of a public mediation process: (1) assessing a dispute, (2) convening the affected stakeholders, (3) enabling learning and joint inquiry, and (4) managing negotiations about options to implement (Susskind and Thomas-Larmer 1999). These mediators' insights provide no quick fixes, but they require no rocket science either: each might help us to do better work that integrates inclusive voice and practical negotiations.

On Assessing Multistakeholder Disputes

Mediators know that if curiosity kills cats, *presumptions* about what *can't* be kills negotiators—and they know that many negotiating parties are likely to come to participatory processes with at least as much so-called realism and narrow presumption as cats come to electric wires with curiosity. Here again we see the wisdom and challenges of Don Edwards's observation quoted earlier: “If you don't think something's possible”—if you presume it isn't—“you don't go looking for it.” So mediators work carefully to expand the horizons of the possible long before they turn to managing any negotiation about those options.

Mediators know very well, too, how many self-fulfilling reasons parties can find as justifications *not to talk* to those they see as adversaries and not to talk to those they see as repugnantly treating nature or finances or values differently from themselves. Even as mediators know, of course, that many disputes can be irreconcilable, they, nevertheless, teach us that far, far more can be possible than many passionately involved, but understandably distrusting and skeptical, parties can believe. Our limited vision and knowledge, mediators know, mean that we have much to learn—that we have much we might do together that we can't jointly see or invent if we don't jointly meet in carefully structured processes—even as progressives deeply distrust the fundamentalists (and vice versa), or even as the greens think developers repugnant (and vice versa), as distrust and skepticism, overconfident “realism” and posturing have kept parties from productive conversation and negotiation (<http://www.publicconversations.org/pcp/index.php>; Forester 1999b; Umemoto 2001).

So mediators know to *probe possibilities* rather than to *presume outcomes*, and they take pains as a result to be neither presumptuous cynics nor naive optimists. In cases of increasingly common interdependence, when interconnected stakeholders—recreationists and environmentalists, residents and developers—can make each other miserable by taking a toll of time, money, natural resources, and opportunities lost, mediators see opportunities to bring parties together in pragmatic, forward-looking ways to ask new questions, to

build new relationships, to generate new options, and to solve problems together in new ways.

On Convening Parties

Mediators know that parties often enter participatory settings after they have hammered out a sense of priorities and concerns that have reflected discussions with their own constituencies—and those mediators know that those priorities and concerns may very well shift over time—that we shouldn't take them as definitive last words, and that a great deal remains to explore (Yankelovich 2001).

Mediators know that accumulated anger not only may threaten but also can *fuel* efforts for change. As California mediator Lisa Beutler put it so powerfully, “Whenever there is conflict in the room, it means there’s energy to work on something—conflict is always better than apathy.... So, now, if [as a party] I’m angry, I’m angry about *something*, and I’m angry because I don’t think something is working right—and I *want* things to work right.” Anger and contentiousness can provide energy *for* change, she argues, if mediators do their work well (Forester 2006a).

Mediators know that words matter and that names and frames matter. So mediators can be reluctant even to call their processes “mediation” because that itself might too narrowly frame parties’ subsequent discussions. In a striking case exploring native gathering rights in Hawaii, for example, Peter Adler quite deliberately convened a multiparty process, at the request of the legislature—a process involving native Hawaiian cultural practitioners, bankers, and realtors—and he worked to call it not a “facilitation,” not a “mediation,” but a “study group”—to focus first on investigating the issues and only then to turn to designing policy alternatives (Forester 2005).

On Enabling Learning and Joint Inquiry

Mediators know that none of the parties in participatory processes are likely to be omniscient; that all of the parties can learn; and, what’s more, that the parties can all in some ways feel *vulnerable* and so can recognize their need to learn. They potentially then turn their attention a bit from fighting each other to figuring out how better to achieve their goals and to satisfy their interests (Sandercock 2003).

So mediators know very well, too, of course, that turning a group’s attention to a shared challenge or vulnerability mapped on the wall can subtly turn participants’ focus away from attacking one another to facing issues and uncertainties and to hearing further questions that many in the room may wish to explore.

Mediators know that pictures tell thousands of words—that visual materials can open up participants’ commentaries and stories far more than can pages and pages of text. Thus, photographs and slides, family albums and photos of neighborhood “goods” and “bads,” assets and deficits can all help

turn participants' claims from generalities about transportation conditions to quite specific instances of particular intersections, all enabling parties to learn from rather than lecture to each other.

So mediators know that processes of dialogue differ from processes of debate. In moments of *dialogue*, we seek understanding of meaning and sentiment, understanding of perspective and “where they’re coming from,” and we need skillfully attentive and probing *facilitators* to help us clarify meaning rather than have hot-button words lead us astray. To foster *debate*, in contrast, we encourage parties to sharpen their arguments, and we need skillful work not so much of facilitating but of *moderating* an adversarial series of claims and refutations, counterclaims and counterrefutations (Forester 2006a).

On Negotiating Agreements about What to Do

Mediators often note the importance of *working indirectly*, the importance of *not just trying to sit the parties down to cut a deal*. Of course, Americans can be notorious here for a vulgar pragmatism, even as others might take prenegotiation rituals to great lengths. Still, the wisdom of indirection helps us to acknowledge that any, even apparently straightforward, negotiation involves not only the “substance” being negotiated by those present, but also the complex relationships involved and the legacies of their histories, in addition to a changing and *uncertain* environment that can subtly put both relationships and “substance,” vulnerabilities and opportunities, all in new light over time. The most commonplace strategies of indirection, of course, include making time and space for the rituals of sharing food and storytelling, the time and spaces enabling parties to acknowledge and learn new things about one another at the same time (Forester 1999a; LeBaron 2002; Sclavi 2006a; 2006b).

Mediators know how critical can be *the turn from* escalating “blame games” to generating proposals. Blaming quickly becomes personalistic, fueling defensiveness, justification, and counterargument; proposals open up possibilities of crafting agreements. So mediators know the risks of accusatory “you” language, and they try to create space for participants to ask and explore variants of the essential “what if?” questions: “What if we do this? What if we try to do that?” (Kolb 1994).

Mediators know, too, crucially though, that both *dialogue* and *debate* differ from *negotiation*, and that *each of these requires different forms of assistance*. *Facilitating* a dialogue calls for different sensitivities, skills, and goals than does *moderating* a debate. Likewise, both facilitating and moderating differ as strategies of intervention from *mediating* a negotiation. Dialogue can seek understanding (not necessarily agreement); debate can seek to sharpen arguments (even at the cost of further antagonizing relationships); negotiation, in contrast, seeks agreements upon practical action—so we can answer the question, “What are we going to *do*?”

Summary

So mediators—integrating multistakeholder participation with practical negotiations—will be very careful *to do even more than what facilitators and moderators do*; building upon both of these related strategies, mediators will work to evoke practical proposals, to probe possibilities of joint action and agreement, to explore how parties might go forward together (Forester 2006a).

When we need collaborative attacks on public problems through multistakeholder task forces or recovery committees or other participatory bodies, we can extend the insights and lessons of skillful mediators. We can work to improve governance processes by integrating inclusive voice and representative participation with efficient and well-informed, practically oriented negotiations—and as affected parties and students of participation both, we can then redeem the promise of empowering, transformative public participation—and we might save it from its evil twin that we see continuing in so many public hearing processes.

Note

1. This essay was originally prepared for a keynote lecture at the meeting of the International Association for Public Participation, Montreal, Canada, November 14–16, 2006. It reflects work in progress on a book manuscript tentatively titled *Dealing with Differences: Dramas of Mediating Public Disputes*, as well as work gathering oral history–styled “practice stories” from practicing environmental and public policy mediators.

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A Consensus-Based, Stakeholder-Driven, and Decentralized Approach to Building Broad Coalitions for Water Sector Reforms

George O. Krhoda

Building broad coalitions around decentralized institutions is a prerequisite in the implementation of sectoral reforms, especially in regard to water issues. The involvement in Kenya of high-level policy makers, as well as other stakeholders, was seen as bringing on board a broad political and social perspective, thus ensuring a transparent and accountable process. Because of a clear focus on the major issues bedeviling the water sector, the political momentum created with the incoming government in 2003, and the renewed interest in water by the government's development partners, a coalition was quickly built around water sector reforms. The interministerial Water Sector Reform Steering Committee (WSRSC) guided the reforms, and the Water Sector Reform Secretariat (WSRS) implemented the decisions of the WSRSC.

Water is life and is considered to be the most important factor in socio-economic development. It is a basic right, and failure in its delivery causes strife, competition, and conflict. The importance for good governance in the water sector has been captured in the National Environmental Action Plan and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and had been the main cause of land and water clashes between the various water users in Kenya. The factors listed above were condensed in the Sessional Paper of 1999 (Government of Kenya 1999) and were culminated in the passage of a new Water Act in 2002 (Government of Kenya 2002). Core problems in the sector were identified. The proposed solutions included the need for separation of policy formulation, regulation as well as devolution of responsibilities, and service provision and

the separation of water supply and sanitation (WSS) and water resources management (WRM) services.

This chapter demonstrates the success of a consensus-based, stakeholder-driven, and decentralized approach to building coalitions around reform. Under the new government, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MoWI) built political awareness about water sector reform to respond to stakeholder demand for action and transparency in the process. Thus, by the time the reform began, water was considered “everyone’s business.” The success of the reform was due to broad-based consensus on the need to reform, stakeholder mobilization to further reform, formation of a policy-making steering committee composed of key stakeholders, and establishment of an independent implementation unit free of government manipulation or intervention.

Background

Water issues are too important to be left to technicians to handle. Water contributes to economic growth and to the social well-being of the human population. This reality is attributable to both social and economic activities’ heavy reliance on access to adequate quantities of water of suitable quality (Government of Kenya 2005). Water governance has been identified as a key issue in WRM, as well as water services delivery, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Several trends and factors—one being corruption in the water sector—have increased the likelihood of a serious crisis in Kenya over the medium and long terms.

Review of water sector development in Kenya was carried out in 1999 following nationwide consultations (Government of Kenya 1999). In this review, shortcomings in WRM, water and sewerage development, the institutional framework, and financing of the water sector were identified and analyzed. Additionally, the Participatory Poverty Assessment Study was concluded in 2000. It demonstrated a strong link between availability of water and the level of people’s socioeconomic status. Water was already being seen as a vehicle for poverty alleviation through its supportive role in reducing the disease burden and increasing supplemental irrigation, livestock and fisheries development, hydropower, and biodiversity.

How to Understand the Problem

Water, as vital to life, is a social and economic good. Access to safe water is considered a basic human right,¹ and hence it is the right of every Kenyan to have access to safe water and sanitation.² However, this basic human right was increasingly being violated in Kenya. The water service delivery level had declined from 50 percent to 42 percent of the rural population and from 75 percent to 72 percent of the urban population between 1999 and 2003. Sanitation services for only 65 percent and 40 percent of the urban and rural populations, respectively, were not acceptable. The majority of the people live in rural areas, and 50 percent of the urban population live in informal

settlement areas (slums) where service delivery is very poor. The water sector was bedeviled by several constraints, namely:

- Shortage of funds for infrastructural investments, operation and maintenance of water supplies, and management of water resources
- Institutional weaknesses, especially the scarcity of qualified manpower and lack of user skills to operate and maintain water supplies properly
- Limited availability of water resources because of their uneven distribution in both space and time
- Poor choice of technology, and inconsistent project selection criteria that resulted in adoption of technologies and delivery mechanisms not well suited to sector development
- Lack of proper coordination of the various actors in the sector
- Lack of proper interlinkages with other water-related sectors, such as the Irrigation Department, National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation, and Ministry of Regional Development Authority.

From a previous water master plan, it was obvious that Kenya is a water-scarce country and that the situation is getting worse. Water scarcity occurs when the amount of water withdrawn from lakes, rivers, or groundwater is so great that water supplies are no longer adequate to satisfy all human or ecosystem requirements, bringing about increased competition among potential demands. In specific terms, water scarcity has also been defined as a situation in which water availability in a country or in a region is less than 1,000 cubic meters of water per person per year. Kenya has 647 cubic meters of water per capita; this figure is projected to fall to 235 cubic meters of water per capita by 2025 (Government of Kenya 2003).

National Rainbow Coalition Manifesto and Water Sector Reform

The new National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government came to power on a platform of democracy and good governance in the management of public affairs (National Rainbow Coalition 2002). It had no choice but to address the major shortcomings associated with the management of water resources and delivery of water services. Water governance entails the upholding of the policies, strategies, and legislation mandating how water service providers have to develop and manage water resources in an efficient and effective manner, as well as being accountable to service recipients.

Poor governance has far-reaching implications in terms of resources allocation, corruption, absence of the rule of law, and lack of transparency and accountability. Corruption undermines not only the economic development but also the democratic quality of political systems, and it increases social injustice. Within the water sector, corruption was prevalent and posed a significant threat to sustainable human development and equality. Water that was unaccounted for ranged from 40 percent to 67 percent of the total amount supplied from the treatment tanks. Poor record keeping and corruption were common. The cost of

NARC Manifesto on Decentralization and Devolution

Any attempt to try to drive local operations from Nairobi can only lead to misguided and misplaced investments and to destruction of local peoples' capacity to manage their own lives.

corruption in the water sector not only severely harmed prospects for providing water and sanitation to all, but also disproportionately affected the poor. This cost led to inequitable management and use of basic water services.

The overlapping roles and responsibilities of key public actors in the water sector were the main causes of conflicts and poor services. Figure 13.1 gives a summary of the core problems relating to overlapping mandates and roles of various institutions, as well as possible solutions based on streamlining institutional mandates and functions. Figure 13.2 shows the institutional conflicts in the water sector under the old water law arising from overlapping policy formulation function, regulation, and service provision. The shaded areas indicate the involvement of each institution across service delivery, regulation, and policy formulation. The unclear institutional mandates and functions resulted in the absence of checks and balances, as well as duplication of allocated resources, thus causing poor sector performance and encouraging corruption. Figure 13.3 shows the bottlenecks that created inefficiencies in management and service delivery. Similarly, the regulations were never enforced because of such institutional conflicts shown in figure 13.2.

The previous absence of written policy prior to Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1999 created room for sector actors to implement policies devoid of holistic approaches to sectoral objectives. The Water Act of 2002, developed to address some of the administrative weaknesses, separates policy formulation, regulation, and services provision; it defines clear roles for sector actors and a decentralized institutional framework. These reforms ultimately are aimed at achieving a well-managed and sustainable water sector.

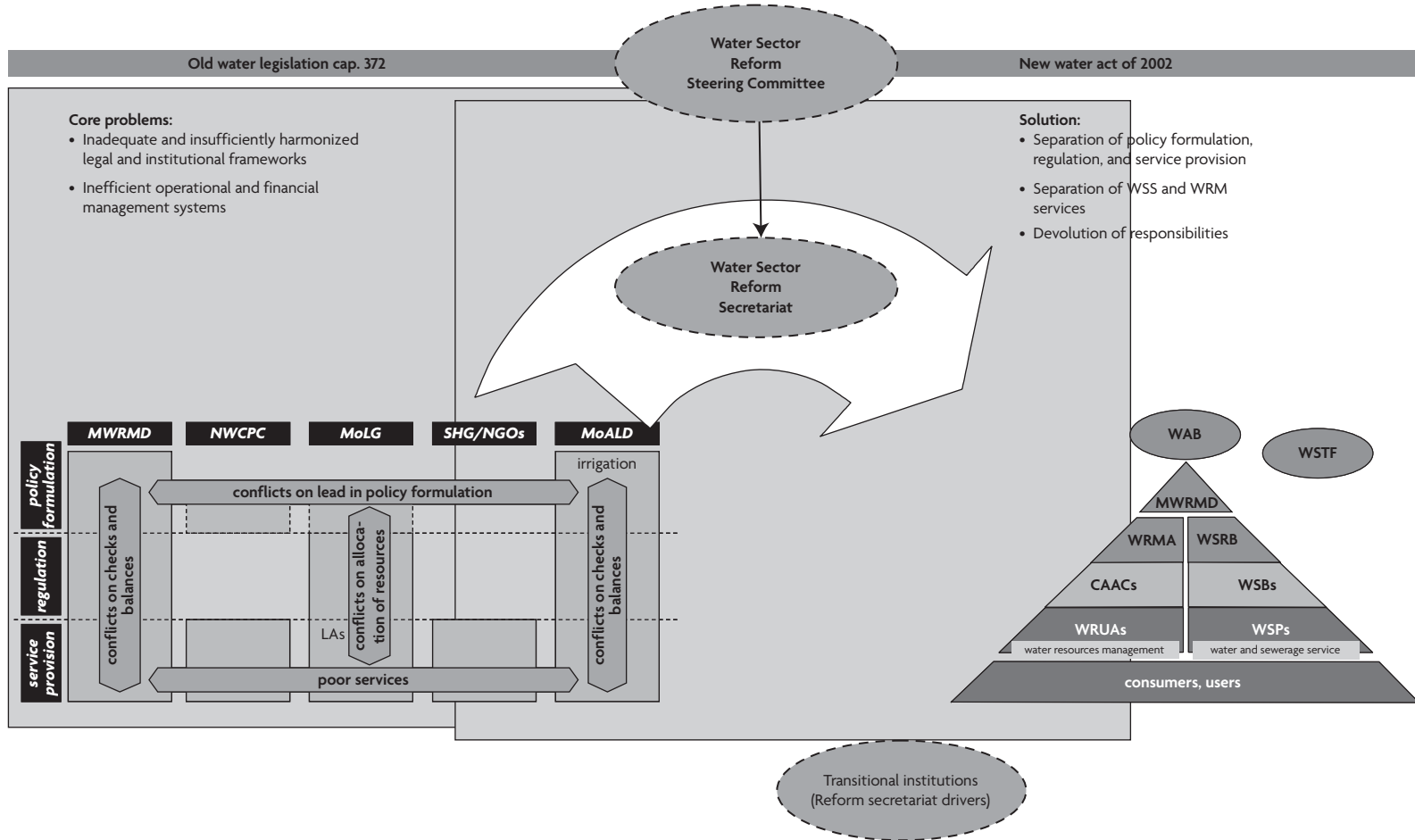
Preamble of the Water Act of 2002

An Act of Parliament to provide for the management, conservation, use and control of water resources and for the acquisition and regulation of rights to use of water; to provide for the regulation and management of water supply and sewerage services; to repeal the Water Act (Cap. 372) and certain provisions of the Local Government Act: and for related purposes.

The Water Act of 2002 provides the legal framework for the implementation of new institutional arrangements based on the following principles (Government of Kenya 2002):

- The separation of the management of water resources from water supply and sanitation services

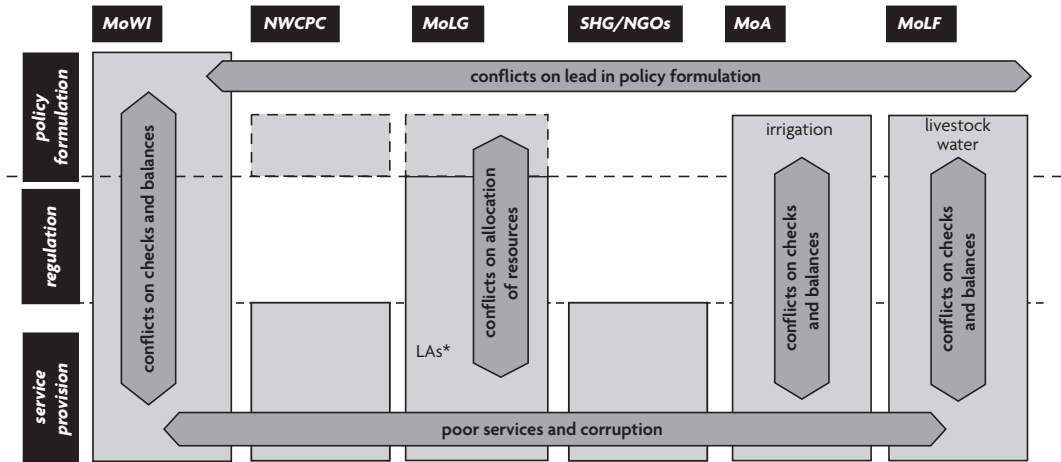
Figure 13.1. Reasons for Water Sector Reforms in Kenya



Source: Water Services Reform Secretariat.

Note: CAACs = Catchment Area Advisory Committees; MoLG = Ministry of Local Government; MWRD = Ministry of Water Resources Development; NGO = Nongovernmental Organizations; NWCPC = National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation; SHGs = Self Help Groups; WAB = Water Appeal's Board; WRMA = Water Resources Management Authority; WRUAs = Water Resources Users' Associations; WSBs = Water Services Boards; WSTF = Water Service Trust Fund.

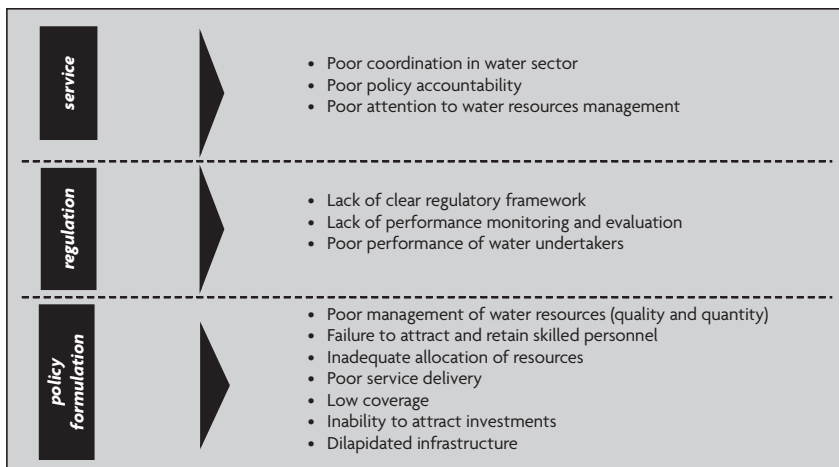
Figure 13.2. Institutional Conflicts in the Water Sector (Under Cap. 372)



Source: Author's representation.

Note: MoA = Ministry of Agriculture; MoLF = Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries; MoLG = Ministry of Local Government; MoWI = Ministry of Water and Irrigation; NGO = Nongovernmental Organizations; NWCP = National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation; SHGs = Self Help Groups.

Figure 13.3. Bottlenecks in the Water Sector (Under Water Act Cap. 372)

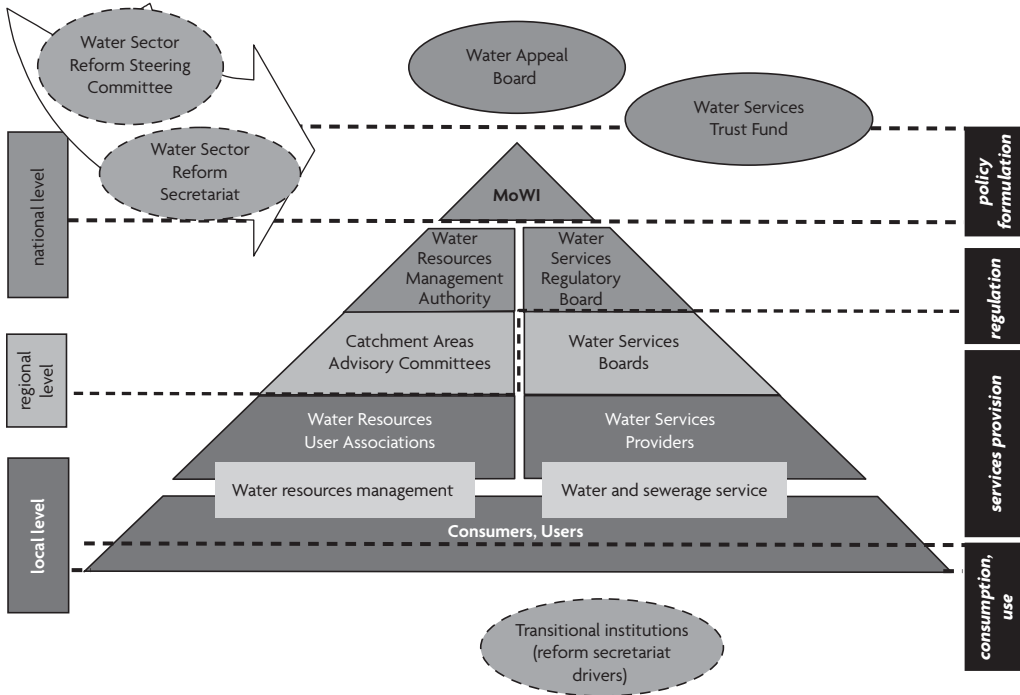


Source: Author's representation.

- The institutional separation of service provisions from regulation and policy making
- Decentralization, participation, autonomy, accountability, and financial and ecological sustainability and efficiency.

The government of Kenya's strategy for water was seated on three pillars, namely, reforms, rehabilitation of water infrastructure, and resource mobilization,

Figure 13.4. Institutional Setup under the Water Act of 2002



Source: Author's representation.

and thus it appealed to nearly all interested parties in the water sector (see figure 13.4).

Roles and functions at different management levels were blurred, overlapping, and unclear. Overcentralized decision-making processes, an inappropriate and rundown monitoring network, an inadequate water resources database and documentation, discontinuous assessment programs, uncoordinated source development, nonoperative water rights, absence of special courts to arbitrate water use conflicts, and a generally weak institutional setup affected the sector's performance. Clear roles and responsibilities defined for sector actors will result in improved water sector performance.

The involvement of high-level policy makers—such as members of the national assembly and senior officials, as well as decision makers, various stakeholders, and communities—was seen as bringing on board a broad perspective into the political and social spectra, thus ensuring a transparent and accountable process to containing water resources degradation and decreasing level-of-service delivery. Without stakeholder participation, inbreeding in both planning and resources utilization led to uncontrollable corruption and mismanagement of resources.

The following discussion outlines the establishment of institutions, some of the ongoing reforms being implemented, and continued stakeholder involvement in the implementation.

Water Resources Management Authority

The Water Resources Management Authority (WRMA), a corporate body that functions under the direction of a governing board, has the responsibility of water resources management. It will do the following:

- Develop principles, guidelines, and procedures for the allocation of water resources.
- Assess and reassess the potential of water resources.
- Receive and determine applications for permits for water use.
- Monitor and enforce conditions attached to the permits for water use.
- Regulate and protect the quality of water resources from adverse impacts.
- Manage and protect catchment areas.
- Determine charges and fees to be imposed for the use of water from any water source.
- Gather and maintain information on water resources from time to time in order to publish forecasts, projections, and information on water resources.
- Work with other bodies for the better regulation and management of water resources.

The WRMA established offices in catchment areas called Catchment Area Advisory Committees (CAACs), whose membership consists of government officials, water users, and communities. The CAACs' role includes advice to WRMA officers at the appropriate regional office on water resource conservation, use, and apportionment; the granting, adjustment, cancellation, or variation of any permit; and any other matter pertinent to the proper management of water resources. The delineated catchment areas include Lake Victoria South, Lake Victoria North, Rift Valley, Athi, Tana, and Ewaso Ngiro. It is anticipated that the present catchment areas will be subdivided as water demand increases, as well as the need for moving decision making further downstream.

Water Services Regulatory Board

The Water Supply and Sewerage Development is under the Water Services Regulatory Board, which is also a corporate body. The board's functions include these:

- Issuance of licenses for the provision of water
- Determination of standards for the provision of water services to consumers
- Establishment of procedures for handling complaints made by consumers against licensees
- The monitoring of compliance with established standards for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of facilities for water services
- The monitoring and regulation of licensees and the enforcing of license conditions

- Advice to licensees on procedures for dealing with complaints from consumers and monitoring the operation of these procedures
- Development of guidelines for fixing of tariffs for the provision of water services
- Development of model performance agreements for use between licensees and water service providers.

Water Service Boards

Kenya has been divided into economically viable water service boards (WSBs) to ensure that water is provided for every part of the country. Each WSB is responsible for the efficient and economical provision of water services within its area of jurisdiction and has the following functions:

- Using the capacity building of communities to start water provision as a business
- Carrying out competitive selection of service providers
- Drawing up of service provision agreements
- Clustering of the spaghetti lines to known off-take and metered points to eliminate water losses through illegal connections
- Eliminating cartels by setting tariffs and regulations
- Ensuring equitable distribution of water through zoning of community service providers and enforcing service standards as stipulated in the service provision agreements.

Water Service Providers

The actual water service delivery shall be done by a water service provider (WSP). A WSB, therefore, enters a service agreement with a WSP in writing for the purpose of providing water services in specified areas. The WSP is required to submit a business plan and to enter a performance contract.

Water Services Trust Fund

The object of the Water Services Trust Fund (WSTF) is to assist in financing the provision of water services to areas without adequate water services. It will receive money from the government, donations, or grants. The fund is managed by an autonomous board with strict funding requirements.

Water Appeal Board

To administer the Water Act of 2002, those parties that may be aggrieved by a decision or order of the authority, minister, or regulatory board over a permit or a license have a right to appeal to the Water Appeal Board (WAB), whose judgment shall be final. The work of the WAB is expected to increase as demand increases, as competing and conflicting needs exacerbate problems, and as water scarcity begins to hit harder.

Government Ministries and Paragovernmental Organizations

The Ministries of Water, Local Authorities, Regional Development, Agriculture, and Livestock and Fisheries Development—with financial resources from the Exchequer and other lending agencies—in the past have independently developed and managed water supplies for their sectors with no policy and very limited coordination. This process may best be demonstrated by water supplies and sanitation. Out of the 2,500 water schemes in the country, 330 government gazetted water supply schemes served 80 percent of the population served. Before the reforms, 1,800 individual programs were operated by the MoWI, 200 by local authorities, and the other 200 by the National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation. The remaining 300 programs were operated by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals and private companies.

Community-Based and Other Nongovernmental Organizations

Water's value as such an important commodity had attracted a large number of operators including self-help groups (300 schemes) and community-based organizations (400 schemes). The entry of self-help groups and community-based organizations into water service delivery improved access for many communities that could not be served from public-run water supply schemes. However, operations of these organizations were frustrated by poor coordination, lack of financial resources, and lack of capacity. Such frustrations notwithstanding, civil society entities saw an opportunity to address some of their ongoing grievances in the management of water supply and sanitation through intended water sector reforms.

Through interaction with and between the WSTF, WSBs, and WSPs, communities in the periurban areas and informal settlements saw an opportunity for being empowered to manage provision of water services. A scaling-up program planned for other informal settlements and periurban areas in Nairobi and other urban areas through the respective WSBs is under way. One study that will result in a clear framework for making the Water Act of 2002 operational in rural and periurban water supplies and sanitation is being funded by the Swedish International Development Agency and the Danish International Development Agency. Nongovernmental water service providers have formed an association to galvanize their common interests such as tariff negotiation and compliance with regulations.

Water Resources Users Associations

Water sector development had been highly centralized. It was inevitable that communities had to be involved in all stages of water supplies development. Gender issues were beginning to become a major policy interest as well. The government initiated the process of handing over completed supplies to communities. The Water Resources Users Associations (WRUAs) provide a forum

for conflict resolution and cooperative management of water resources in designated catchment areas. The WRUAs are responsible for conserving the watershed and advising the CAACs on the available water that may be allocated or reallocated to other water users.

Development Partners and Resource Mobilization

The reforms were perceived to be a vehicle for opening investment opportunities in the water sector. The WSTF is designed to assist in financing the provision of water services to areas of Kenya where they are presently inadequate. The fund provides financing and support of capital investments for community water services, water services activities outlined in the Water Services Strategic Plan and as prioritized by government, capacity-building activities and initiatives among communities, awareness creation and information dissemination regarding community management of water services, and active community participation in the implementation and management of water services.

Investments have started to come along the line as a result of the water sector reform. The Nairobi Water and Sewerage Institutional Restructuring Project was created on June 17, 2004, with a credit amount of US\$15 million. The project's aim is to build a strong governance, institutional, and service delivery framework that will allow efficient and sustainable delivery of water and sewerage services for the population of Nairobi. The three main project components will perform the following functions:

- Support the bringing into operation and the strengthening of a new autonomous asset-holding entity, the Nairobi Water Services Board (NWSB).
- Support selected activities aimed at strengthening the commercial, financial, and technical operations of the NWSB.
- Support monitoring project activities and implementation of a complementary communication program supporting the new institutional transformation in service provision.

This project brought credibility to the reform agenda, and many municipalities look forward to rolling out similar projects.

Water Revenue and Cost Sharing

Development expenditure in the water sector had been decreasing considerably prior to passage of the Water Act. The declining trend started with an increase from K £2.14 million in 1992 to a peak of K £43.1 million in 1995 before declining to K £34.55 million in 1996–97. Between 2001–02 and 2003–04, the development expenditure rose gradually from K Sh 1.343 billion to K Sh 4.169 billion before falling to K Sh. 3.2 billion in 2004–05. Development expenditure increased from K Sh. 3.2 billion in 2004–05 to K Sh 6.0 billion in 2005–06 (Government of Kenya 2006).

Implementation of the Water Sector Reforms

The interministerial Water Sector Reform Steering Committee (WSRSC) guides and coordinates the water sector reform process, and the Water Sector Reform Secretariat (WSRS) implements the WSRSC's decisions. Key responsibilities and interaction are between the WSRSC, Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MoWI), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), stakeholders (NGO Council, Kenya Association of Manufacturers [KAM]), WRUA, Water Service Providers Association (WSPA), and Association of Local Government Authorities of Kenya (ALGAK).

The Composition and Role of the Water Sector Reform Steering Committee

The Water Sector Reform Steering Committee is made up of members of the MoWI, MoF, MoLG, MoH, MoE, MoA, and nonstate actors: the NGO Council, KAM, WRUA, WSPA, and ALGAK.

The committee's functions include monitoring and guiding implementation of the Water Sector Reform Secretariat's operational plan, building consensus between stakeholders on the implementation process, approving the reforms' budget, and providing policy directions and guidance to the WSRS.

Water Sector Reform Secretariat and Stakeholder Dialogue

The temporary WSRS, as the executive arm of the WSRSC, was established as an independent institution and was charged with implementing the WSRSC's decisions, preparing the framework for implementation of water sector reforms, ensuring a smooth transition to the new legislation, designing an operational process for new institutions, developing organizational structure, defining a financing mechanism for new institutions, and supporting new institutions in becoming operational and executing their mandate. The key function of the MoWI will devolve from regulation and direct service provision to focus on its core functions of policy formulation, overall sector coordination, supervision, and guidance.

Policy dialogue on planning and management of water resources has broadened since the reforms were implemented. The stakeholders involved in policy dialogue include public consumer groups, user groups, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), regional development authorities, local authorities, communities, and development partners. The primary function of the policy dialogue team includes policy formulation and direction, sector coordination, planning and financing, supervision of public institutions under the MoWI, and parliamentary business. The Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Development of the National Assembly ensures that all matters coming before it have been discussed by the Policy Dialogue Team.

Conclusion

Water sector reforms in Kenya have taken a consensus-based, stakeholder-driven, and decentralized approach to building coalitions around reform. A strong political wave to change the administration of a very important sector contributed to the success of reform. Beginning in the late 1990s, chronic water shortages had created a consensus among the citizenry that sector reforms were imperative. The Ministry of Water and Irrigation's role was, therefore, to build a coalition not only among people and groups who were disgruntled with the administration of water services to date but also among others who needed to be associated with such reforms, especially the new government that had campaigned on a platform of good governance and improved public service delivery.

Second, the previous National Assembly had passed the Water Act of 2002 and awaited its implementation. Under the new government, the MoWI built political awareness about water sector reform to respond to stakeholder demand for action and transparency in the reform process. The success of reform was due to broad-based consensus on the need for it, stakeholder mobilization around it, the formation of a policy-making steering committee composed of key stakeholders, and the establishment of an independent implementation unit free of government manipulation or intervention.

Third, other public service reforms, such as changes in budgeting, financial management, and human resources, had been initiated and were ongoing. Thus, by the time the water sector reform began, water was considered "everyone's business." As a result, water resource management and service provision was successfully decentralized, making the water sector in Kenya one of the most successful in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Notes

1. As established by the Committee on Social, Cultural and Economic Rights in 2002, under General Comment 15 relating to the right to health.
2. The draft Kenyan constitution states that "Every person has the right to water in adequate quantities and reasonable quality."

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Building Pro-Change Multisectoral Coalitions to Overcome the Resistance of Powerful Vested Interests

Robert de Quelen

Introduction

Demand for change is the new buzzword in the development community. After decades of believing that government endorsement alone is sufficient to drive acceptance of change, pro-reform advocates have realized the need to engage the public directly. Past complacency has left a wide-open space for powerful vested interests that do not hesitate to manipulate the law-making process; to influence much of the executive; and to control the media with a subtle mix of fear, bribery, co-optation, and direct ownership. The demise of traditional communication methods enhances the potential appeal of information and communication technologies such as the Internet and mobile phones to mobilize broad coalitions in support of the clamor for better governance. This “techno-optimism,” however, needs to be tempered.

As shown by the examples of Thailand and the Philippines, the gains obtained by citizen coalitions are often short lived. Ousting a corrupt leader is far easier than consolidating weak institutions and building trust in them. Although the “bottom-up” approach can bring results in a local government setting, where a mayor can be persuaded by a coalition of citizens and private businesses to support a pro-reform agenda, the fear of being downgraded by a rating agency such as Moody’s or Fitch remains a much more powerful incentive for governance reform at the national level. Direct pressure from multilateral institutions such as the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank is an equally compelling factor for working toward such change.

Recently, though, the influence of such multilateral organizations and their capability to push a pro-reform agenda have been undermined by the availability of other sources of financing from newly industrialized countries awash with cash and willing to lend money without any governance or environmental strings attached. Is the battle for the developing world's hearts and minds lost, then? Not necessarily. In the case of the Philippines, for instance, the growing influence of Filipinos overseas¹ may prove to be a driving force toward better governance, accountability, and transparency. Despite their low turnout in the May 2007 elections,² Filipinos overseas as part of the Philippine electorate over time may become a critical instrument for change. As the cost of telecommunications keeps going down under the impact of deregulation and voice-over-Internet protocol, and as the adoption and usage of the Internet reach a critical mass in the next few years, Filipinos overseas may develop into a viable and formidable group capable of countering the ugly hand of vested interests. Organizing the Filipino Diaspora into a pro-change coalition, however, will require a far-reaching collaborative engagement effort among multilateral organizations and their local allies.

Global Context: The World Bank and the Rome Consensus

In October 2006, the World Bank's Development Communication Division, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' Communication for Development Group and the Communication Initiative network, organized the first World Congress on Communication for Development in Rome, Italy. Some 910 delegates, communication professionals from all the leading bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, as well as stakeholders from civil society, academia, foundations, and the private sector, engaged policy makers, sector experts, and media representatives in intense discussions about how the outcomes of government programs can be enhanced and may even be saved from outright failure by building effective communication from the start. The Congress highlighted what the strategic role of communication in development was, how such understanding rapidly changes what leaders can do, and what input local people can have, particularly through information and communications technology (ICT) tools.

The major result of the Congress was the "Rome Consensus," which reaffirmed that communication is essential to human, social, and economic development. At the basis of communication for development are participation and ownership by the communities and individuals who have been most affected by poverty and other development issues.³

Citizens, Governance, and Corruption

In the Philippines, the cities of Marikina in metropolitan Manila and Naga City in the Bicol region are often cited as best cases of local good governance. In 2003 and 2005, Marikina was cited by the Asian Institute of Management Policy

Center as the Most Competitive Metro City in the Philippines. It was also lauded by the World Bank as one of the Four Model Cities in Infrastructure.⁴ Until the late twentieth century, Marikina was virtually unheard of in the Philippines except for its shoe industry. Under the leadership of then mayor Bayani Fernando⁵ (1992–2001), the city put emphasis on sound environmental management, economic dynamism, a culture of discipline, and a corruption-free government. The mayor’s leadership provided a new paradigm in community management in which “strong will” and a “can-do” attitude are the key elements. The city takes pride in having pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, hassle-free roadways, a clean and orderly public market, and a high garbage collection efficiency rate of almost 100 percent. The city is run as efficiently as a private corporation, with a strong focus on accountability. As a result, the media are keen to feature Marikina as a genuine case study of good governance.

Mayor Jesse Robredo is credited with revitalizing the city of Naga. In 1989, Naga was a dispirited provincial town where vice syndicates operated with impunity, city services were predictably unreliable, thousands of squatters filled vacant lots, and revenues were so low that the municipality was downgraded officially from a first-class to a third-class city. To boost the morale of city employees, Mayor Robredo introduced a merit-based system of hiring and promotion and reorganized employees on the basis of aptitude and competence. The city was rid of vice, and, in partnership with business, the leadership revitalized the economy. Public revenues rose; by 1990, Naga’s status as a first-class city was restored. Applying techniques from business, Robredo raised performance, productivity, and morale among city employees. A culture of excellence replaced the culture of mediocrity. The city’s businesses doubled, and local revenues rose by 573 percent.⁶

In a country where poverty and corruption go hand in hand, these stories are like a breath of fresh air. Transparency International’s 2007 Corruption Perceptions Index places the Philippines at 131st out of the 180 countries studied, with a 2.5 rating, along with Burundi, Honduras, Iran, Libya, Nepal, and Yemen. To quote some excerpts from the report, “despite efforts by the government and civil society, corruption remains a serious problem in the Philippines.” Two problems are reported by Transparency International as faced by the Philippines. First, legislation tends to either underlegislate (there is lack of protection for whistleblowers) or overlegislate (there are too many government regulations). Findings indicate that all the integrity pillars are “tainted by internal corruption and are, therefore, heavily compromised,” and “unable to perform their functions and operate effectively.” Furthermore, “constitutional commissions are not deemed independent, [and] the public procurement system is found to be plagued with misappropriation problems.” There is “a need to improve enforcement by prosecuting and convicting ‘big fish’ rather than ‘small fry.’”⁷ In a survey conducted by the Asian Development Bank, the Philippines ranked second only to Bangladesh as the most corrupt country in Asia.

The Office of the Ombudsman has estimated that US\$48 billion has been lost by the Philippine government over the past 20 years on account of corruption. The Commission on Audit has estimated that corruption costs the Philippines about \$2 billion (US\$44.5 million) each year. Furthermore, the Commission on Audit survey reports that 20–22 percent of the public has been asked for bribes in government transactions, and only 4 percent bothered to report the solicitation.⁸ Those who did not complain reasoned that (1) it was futile to complain (51 percent), (2) the amount involved was too small (21 percent), (3) there could be retaliation (15 percent), or (4) they did not know where to file the complaint (10 percent).

There are three notable structural sources of corruption: favors to be paid after campaigns and elections, an incredibly poor compensation and reward system for civil servants, and weak enforcement of anticorruption laws that renders corruption a low-risk, high-reward activity. Weak public vigilance, burdensome bureaucratic systems, and innate cultural tendencies cultivate such a culture of corruption (see <http://www.fes.or.kr/Corruption/papers/Philippines.htm>).

Responding to estimates that 20 percent of the funding for government contracts goes to kickbacks and commissions, a government procurement reform act was signed into law in 2003 (<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?docid=4738692964>); its passage was aided by the earlier creation of a monitoring and advocacy organization, Procurement Watch Inc., which mounted a media campaign and received international support, as well as the backing of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that banded together in the Transparency and Accountability Network. The law's goal is to rationalize the legal framework for procurement and, in the process, to "increase transparency, competitiveness, efficiency, accountability, and public monitoring of both the procurement process and the implementation of awarded contracts." Even the law's most ardent supporters, however, estimate that "it may very well take a decade to get it fully implemented and working across all levels of government."⁹

Philippine Institutional Context

Following the first People Power Revolution and the ouster of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, the Philippines developed a comprehensive legal and organizational infrastructure for instilling transparency and accountability in governance. The 1987 constitution contains a section titled "Accountability of Public Officers." There is an Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (Republic Act no. 3019), as well as a Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees (Republic Act no. 6713). The Revised Penal Code contains a section titled "Crimes Committed by Public Officers" (Title VII). The Administrative Code of 1987 (Executive Order 292) sets forth the organization and procedures by which the bureaucracy should operate.

Three constitutional oversight bodies are in charge of supervising the entire framework: the Office of the Ombudsman, the Commission on Audit, and the Civil Service Commission. Yet such institutions are inadequate and inefficient in pushing for greater transparency and accountability. For instance, the Office of the Ombudsman boasts of putting in place educational projects, but no “big fish” has been convicted for corruption so far (although conviction rates have jumped from 7 to 33 percent between 2002 and 2005, following a training program for prosecutors funded by the United States Agency for International Development). Foreign investors and international think-tanks continue to rate the country among the most corrupt in Southeast Asia and in the world. In fact, the Office of the Ombudsman has been largely discredited as a result of the scandals that surrounded the Supreme Court’s cancellation of a contract for election automation systems in 2003, plus the resulting issues in the 2004 election.

One recent survey showed that “the proportion of managers saying that most or almost all of the companies in their line of business give bribes to win public sector contracts” declined somewhat in most areas of the country between the 2003–05 period and 2006. Still, for all the efforts that have been undertaken to combat corruption in the Philippines, there is little progress to show. As a recent World Bank report acknowledges, “[T]he country has not had much success in combating corruption. Despite relatively intense media attention and the proliferation of so-called anticorruption agencies, corrupt exchanges have continued to pervade government activities.”¹⁰

Multilaterals, the Private Sector, and NGOs for Good Governance

Under these circumstances of widespread corruption and the failure of government agencies to combat it, there is increasing recourse to civil society for enhancing transparency and accountability. NGOs (for example, the Makati Business Club, Asian Development Bank, Transparency and Accountability Network) are actively pursuing initiatives such as oversight of key appointments, lifestyle checks, civil society watchdogs, report cards, citizen charters, policy checks, open public documents, and integrity pacts.

The international community and multilateral agencies have offered assistance, support, and best practices and models against corruption. International and foreign donor agencies have exerted pressure on government to undertake a credible and effective anticorruption campaign, and they have assisted in the formulation and implementation of anticorruption projects in government and civil society. In November 2001, the World Bank issued a report on combating corruption in the Philippines in which it recommended a nine-point approach:

1. Reduce opportunities for corruption through policy reforms and deregulation.
2. Reform campaign finance.

3. Increase public oversight of government and transparency in its operations.
4. Reform the budget process.
5. Improve meritocracy in the civil service.
6. Target selected departments and agencies.
7. Enhance sanctions for corrupt and illegal behaviors.
8. Develop partnerships with the private sector.
9. Support judicial reform.

The Bank continues its “grading system” in evaluating the country’s progress in terms of good governance and has been assisting in programs that aim to achieve such a goal.

Six years later, though, the Philippines’ continuous decline in international rankings on competitiveness and governance suggests that, although the proper legislative and institutional framework is in place, the political will to implement these policies is missing. Even worse is the fact that citizens themselves, despite sporadic attempts, are discouraged by the lack of funding and results. Procurement Watch, for instance, is hampered in its action by the lack of funding, although significant results have been achieved at the Department of Education (the procurement of textbooks had been the cause of many scandals in the past).

A Successful Multisectoral Approach: The Asia Foundation’s Transparent Accountable Governance Project

Building on more than 50 years of experience in the Philippines and Asia Pacific, the Asia Foundation is helping government, local NGOs, and the private sector to strengthen democratic institutions and empower the citizenry. In the Philippines, the foundation’s programs promote better governance nationwide, although with a strong focus on Mindanao, to support economic growth, to strengthen the rule of law, and to foster peace and development (see <http://www.asiafoundation.org>).

The foundation has supported local efforts to better understand the nature and reduce the impact of graft by providing technical support and training to Philippine NGOs, academia, and private sector partners. One of these efforts, the Transparent Accountable Governance (TAG) initiative, is a perfect example of successful pro-reform coalition building. The Asia Foundation was able to secure strong local legitimacy for the program by building a wide-ranging coalition of partners united in their shared purpose to curb corruption and foster a better environment for economic growth.

Initially partnering with groups of academicians such as the Asian Institute of Management and the Ateneo School of Government, the foundation started with analytical research activities to examine the problem of corruption in the Philippines. These initial partners were joined over time by other groups such as the League of Cities of the Philippines for city-level activities (the Philippine

Cities Competitiveness Ranking Project), as well as credible NGOs and partners from the private sector, such as the Makati Business Club, the Mindanao Business Council, and the chambers of commerce. These additional partners generated maximal effect and ensured sustainable support for the program.

Since 1999, the foundation has followed up with dozens of coordinated activities to combat corruption through the TAG initiative. The creation of the TAG Web site (<http://www.tag.org.ph>) proved instrumental in empowering citizens and motivating them to participate by making their contribution visible in a (virtual) public space. In addition, as one person mentioned, “Corruption stories exposed in newspaper articles can be read only once, whereas the same story published on the Web site remains permanently there for everyone to read, comment, and forward.”¹¹ Today, the TAG program can boast significant achievements such as textbook monitoring with the Department of Education, development of a feedback mechanism for procurement monitoring with the Office of the Ombudsman, and development of deployment software for civil society observers of the Bids and Awards Committee, to name just a few.

From a communication perspective, there is a lesson to be learned from the foundation on how to overcome powerful vested interests, or sometimes even just plain inertia and bad habits. The Asia Foundation’s formula for success was to work as an enabler rather than as an operator. The approach allows each of the stakeholder groups to find its own motivation to support broader advocacy and then empowers them to become powerful change agents through technical assistance, with the Web site as a venue for the sharing of information and testimonials. The principle of subsidiarity, or a “bottom-up” approach, according to which issues should always be handled at the level closest to citizens, proved to be another key ingredient for success. Even the most disenchanted citizens will support a program that has a direct impact on their daily lives if they can experience tangible improvements. A shining example who inspired many of the TAG programs, Mayor Robredo of Naga City, was able to gain his constituents’ buy-in for his own reform agenda. He has consistently been ranked among the country’s best mayors and has won reelection repeatedly.

The Makati Business Club

The private sector is also rallying for better governance. The Makati Business Club (MBC) is one of the frontrunners as a private, nonstockholder, nonprofit business association organized as a “forum for constructive ideas.” As a forum, the MBC is dedicated to addressing economic and social policy issues that affect the development of the Philippines. The group’s main thrust is to foster and promote the role of the private business sector in national development efforts, in both the planning and the implementation of policy. Founded in 1981, the MBC is composed of more than 800 chief executive officers and senior executives representing almost 450 of the largest and most dynamic

corporations in the Philippines. Over the years, the MBC has become the leading forum for business and government leaders to address outstanding issues.

The MBC's mission as a forum for constructive ideas is carried out primarily through three main lines of activity: policy advocacy, information services and publishing, and investment promotion. The MBC provides members with business information and services and analysis of key macroeconomic indicators through its various publications and reports such as MBC Research Reports, Congress Watch Reports, Philippine Business, and the Philippine Government Directory (see <http://www.mbc.com.ph>).

Nongovernmental Organizations

Civil society organizations have increasingly taken action against corruption. The Volunteers against Crime and Corruption (VACC), which took the lead in ousting Joseph Estrada, and the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance (CCAGG), which is fighting corruption in Abra province, are exemplars of emerging anticorruption NGOs that have demonstrated effective tactics. These agencies and organizations form coalitions aimed at advocating and pushing for better governance. They support and, at the same time, keep a watchful eye on government institutions.

The Role of Information and Communication Tools

In the Philippines, 41 million people out of a population of 85 million own a mobile phone and send roughly 250 million text messages daily; almost 12 million have direct or indirect access to the Internet.¹² Web 2.0 technologies, which enable the uploading and sharing of user-generated content, make it easier for citizens to participate and relay these initiatives.

As in most developing countries, the number of people in the Philippines who have access to mobile phones by far exceeds the number of those with Internet access. This gap explains why many citizen organizations have opted to use mobile phones to monitor elections, encourage voter participation, ask for official tax receipts, and expose anomalies and wrongdoing by corrupt officials. It is interesting to note, however, that the combination of these two participative technologies can be a powerful tool to build and activate broad-based, multisectoral coalitions. Although mobile phones can "push" information to a wide number of people, and can even mobilize them into action as was the case during the Philippines' EDSA II "text revolution," Web sites remain the most efficient way of bypassing the influence of powerful vested interests over the media (see box 14.1). Web 2.0 technologies enable the uploading and sharing of user-generated content, which can also be easily migrated from the Web to mobile phones and vice versa. Last but not least, mobile phones can mobilize large assemblies instantly, as in the case of EDSA II, while the Web alerts distant communities and influences international opinion.

Box 14.1 EDSA II, the “Coup d’Text”

On January 16, 2001, 11 senators (of the 21 present) during the impeachment trial of President Joseph (“Erap”) Estrada voted to block the opening of a sealed envelope that contained valuable evidence of accusations of corruption and hidden wealth. This seemingly obvious move to suppress the truth by the pro-Estrada senators was met with public outrage.

Teodoro Casino, secretary-general of the Bayan Party, came out of the Senate gallery that night and began texting through his mobile phone, relaying the news. Soon he was coordinating with the rest of his party, figuring out what action they should take next. Their mobile phones gave Casino and his colleagues the speed to relay information and flexibility to arrange promptly a protest and political moves. The same activities were taking place in different parts of civil society that night. Within 75 minutes of the abrupt halt of the impeachment proceedings, 20,000 people converged on Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA). (Thus this revolution is often called EDSA II; the ousting of Ferdinand Marcos was EDSA I.) The mobile phone became the main tool in summoning citizens to assemble there and assisted organization of the political movements that threw President Estrada out of the Malacañang Palace. As the Filipino joke puts it: “He was ousted by a coup d’text.”

Elections and ICT

The application of ICT in Philippine elections (conduct, counting, monitoring) has been quite spotty. In terms of conducting elections, the government had shown a willingness to modernize the slow manual elections, which have been prone to cheating, by passing legislation on automated elections as early as 1997 (Republic Act 8436). However, efforts at automating the elections have been marred by numerous setbacks, with the Supreme Court voiding automation contracts awarded by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) because of legal issues. Most recently, the Philippine Congress amended the Automated Election System Act of 2007 (RA 9369), which prescribed partial poll automation in six provinces and six cities around the country for the May 2007 senatorial and local elections, and full automation by the time of the presidential elections in 2010. However, the Commission on Elections decided against the 2004 partial implementation because of a lack of time and resources to prepare for it, both for logistical reasons and for ensuring the readiness of voters.

Some measure of success was achieved in modernizing voter registration when COMELEC adopted the use of biometrics technology wherein voters’ photographs, thumbprints, and signatures were captured using special digital equipment.¹³ This technology helped prevent double registration because the central database would be able to detect duplicate voters. It helped election officers at the precinct level monitor voter misrepresentation by checking voters’ photos.

To date, canvassing of election results is still being done manually, with results handwritten in election returns spreadsheets and aggregated at the municipal, provincial, and national levels. It is generally acknowledged that wide-scale cheating occurs not at the voting precinct level, but at the canvassing level. The real challenge now for the next round of elections is to finally adopt automated counting and transmission of election results.

ICT and Elections Monitoring: Citizen Participation

The National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) is the long-time COMELEC-accredited body that conducts a parallel citizens' quick count of election results. In the 2004 elections, NAMFREL tried out the use of short messaging system (SMS) technology to enable volunteers to transmit election results from their respective precincts or areas. The system experienced numerous difficulties because it was overwhelmed by thousands of messages flooding the system. Inconsistencies between the precinct numbers used at the local level and the national level, which were based on COMELEC records, were also a problem and caused the system to reject the results submitted from a number of precincts. NAMFREL admitted that the SMS problem caused significant delays in the quick count, and the method was abandoned in the 2007 elections. NAMFREL volunteers in the 2007 elections had three options for submitting their election reports: e-mail, fax, or a Web interface. However, the quick count proceeded more slowly than expected because of the insufficient number of field volunteers, volunteers who had problems using the Web interface, and other limitations.

With their legendary sense of humor, Filipino citizens have found their own way of taking their revenge on an electoral system that has consistently disappointed them. MobileActive.org, a Sweden-based NGO focused on empowering better governance through the usage of mobile technologies, cites the case of the 2004 elections in their Mobile Active Strategy Guide, a document created to empower NGOs and citizen groups.¹⁴ The guide tells that Philippine president Gloria Arroyo was hounded by a mobile phone ringtone made from a wiretapped recording of a phone conversation discussing the election results. The 17-second ringtone was based on an alleged phone conversation between Arroyo and an election official during the controversial 2004 presidential race. Critics alleged that the conversation demonstrated her electioneering violations, although the government denied rigging the elections. The audio clips—now known as the “Hello, Garci?” ringtone—were posted on the TxtPower Web site (<http://www.txtpower.org/##/about>) and have been downloaded more than one million times, making it one of the most popular ringtones ever (as of 2004). However, that harassment campaign did not have any real impact beyond allowing Filipinos to air their frustrations.

A similar example is to be found in Thailand, where, in preparation for the 2006 elections, the Thai Election Commission sent messages to 25 million mobile phone users reminding them to vote. A campaign led by *The Nation* newspaper also urged citizens to bring their own pen and to avoid using the rubber stamp provided by the authorities to prevent fraud. According to MobileActive.org, “The election was controversial and was boycotted by opposition parties. Thailand’s premier resigned several months later in a surprise move fueled by two months of street demonstrations largely organized by text messaging and e-mail, despite his apparent victory.”¹⁵ One would like

to question the kind of victory obtained by such means, however, considering that the country is now governed by a junta and remains as divided as ever.

Coalition Building

Citizen participation was characterized by a more concerted effort for the May 2007 elections as the major civil society groups involved in election initiatives banded together to form Volunteers for Clean Elections (<http://vforce.multiply.com>). The coalition is composed of several groups involved in monitoring various aspects of the election process, such as precinct poll watching, canvassing, and voter education, with each group focusing on its particular strength. The two biggest groups are NAMFREL and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting. It remains to be seen how effective this group was; however, these kinds of watchdog initiatives have played their part in pressuring COMELEC to improve its performance. Seven days after the elections, the official COMELEC tabulation had overtaken that of the NAMFREL quick count, much earlier compared to previous elections (<http://eleksyon2007n.inquirer.net/view.php?article=20070522-67260>).

Overseas Absentee Voting

Overseas absentee voting for the 2007 election achieved a very low turnout of 15 percent, compared to 65 percent turnout in 2004. Some of the reasons given are incorrect or mistyped addresses, which caused thousands of ballots to be returned to sender, the low level of interest in senatorial elections compared to presidential elections, and the fact that a number of the registered overseas voters had returned home. One possible explanation is that there might have been some inadequacies in conducting the absentee voting in 2007. Although disappointing, these facts should be taken as only a temporary setback: the movement for a greater involvement of Filipinos living overseas in the country's civic life is unstoppable, as it has been in other countries.

How to Overcome Obstacles: The Stakeholder Relations Approach

Unlike traditional, one-way communication disciplines such as advertising, which keep repeating the same simple message through the same channel, stakeholder relations is all about building trust. Credibility cannot be bought. It can only be earned, one step at a time. This, requires engaging people with credible messages, backed up by research and proof points and delivered by credible messengers, spokespeople trusted for their competence and integrity. Vested interests are at a disadvantage in this new landscape. Columnists for hire may enjoy a lot of visibility, but they have about as much credibility as a used-car salesman.

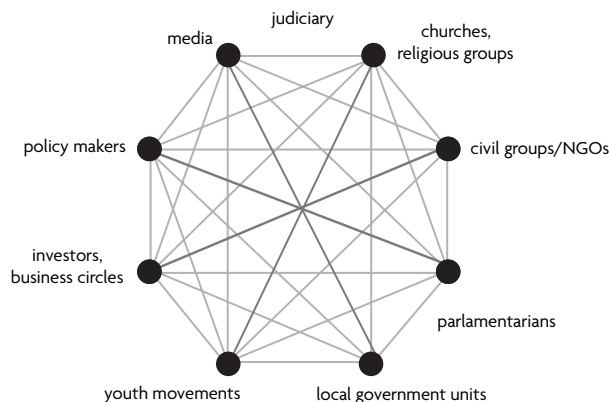
In today's world, communication is no longer a top-down process, where self-appointed experts tell ordinary people what to think on a given issue. Rather, it travels along horizontal networks of peers, or "people like me." The *circle of cross-influence* was first described by Richard Edelman to explain the way Internet, cable TV, and other new media have contributed to decentralizing the influence of traditional, "mainstream" media (figure 14.1). Vested interests usually prefer to use the mainstream media, which they can control and manipulate more easily, whereas citizen coalitions will prefer the new media that favors user-generated content. Blogging and other Web 2.0 features may not yet have the same impact in developing countries as they have in the United States or in Europe, but the moment is approaching when a critical mass of connected people will acquire the habit of shaping their own opinion on a given topic based on that shared by people like themselves. Today's citizens want to participate, and they want to talk back. In a country where the median age is 22.5 years old, the balance of power is shifting fast to their advantage.

Understanding Stakeholder Dynamics with Stakeholder Mapping

To help organizations understand the dynamics at work in the Philippine context and to gain acceptance for their advocacies, EON, a stakeholder relations firm, has localized stakeholder mapping, an innovative research tool originally created by Richard Edelman. *Stakeholder mapping* is defined as the process of determining the type, degree, tools, and context of influences among identified individuals and groups holding actual and potential stakes on advocacy, institutions, organizations, corporations, undertakings, or personalities. In other words, it is a map that helps communicators navigate through the circle of cross-influence.

EON's stakeholder mapping is a four-step process that consists of (1) identifying stakeholder groups, (2) locating and profiling them, (3) engaging them to better ascertain their attitude or expectations on a given issue and to identify

Figure 14.1. Circle of Cross-Influence



Source: Author.

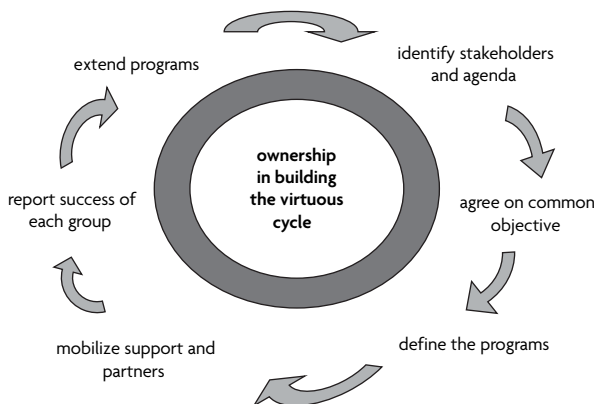
the preferred communication channels, and (4) creating a graphic representation of the web of influencers and the dynamics at work. This is how EON was able to identify the foreign chambers of commerce, foreign investors (such as CalPERS), international media, financial rating agencies (Fitch, Moody's), and the Supreme Court as being the groups most likely to exert a real influence on the Philippine executive. Conversely, local media, NGOs, and even the judiciary have limited influence, except when they can rally to their cause any of the stakeholder groups mentioned in the first group.

Stakeholder mapping is the first step toward building an integrated stakeholder engagement and communication framework while using innovative communication methodologies to drive mobilization and acceptance. Traditional communication strategies focus on message dissemination, but the stakeholder relations approach puts a special emphasis on listening before communicating and understanding what really matters for each group of stakeholders: these are absolute prerequisites to gain needed legitimacy. The second ingredient for trust is to set tangible, measurable objectives. In the Philippines political process, which is marked by widespread disenchantment and even cynicism, the setting of attainable, verifiable goals can help turn around the perception that “things will always be the same.” Building successful coalitions is about creating a virtuous cycle where the various partners take ownership of a shared agenda, with verifiable milestones and commitments (figure 14.2). Communicating transparently, every step of the way, increases the chances of success and builds ownership into the process.

Conclusion

As shown by a comparison between the “texting revolution” of 2001 and the 2004 elections, the biggest danger for proponents of governance reform—far

Figure 14.2. Ownership in Building the Virtuous Cycle



worse than vested interests—is disenchantment and apathy. Information and communication tools are useless without a constituency of citizens persuaded that their collective action can bring about positive change and determined to make it happen.

Unfortunately, the mind-set that brought about the EDSA I and EDSA II revolutions is no longer present. The activist generation is being replaced by one that is more focused on pursuing individual interests such as careers and access to consumer goods. One could even argue, as *The Economist* did in 2001, that the EDSA I and EDSA II revolutions contributed to weaken the very institutions that would now be needed to promote sustainable reform. The result is widespread disenchantment. While the poor revert to entertainment and lotteries, the middle class multiplies individual strategies to escape the trap that the country has become for them. Rather than voting with their thumbs, they choose to vote with their feet. Every year thousands of doctors go back to school to get a nursing degree that will allow them to leave the Philippines, bringing the country's health care system to the verge of collapse.

A year before the 2004 elections, a survey by the Social Weather System indicated that two-thirds of Philippine young people were dreaming of leaving to try a new life abroad. In other words, they have already given up on their country. The Philippines' lifeline is the US\$12.5 billion remitted every year by more than 8 million Filipinos living and working abroad. This amount is four times more than the US\$2.8 billion channeled to the country in terms of foreign direct investments. Without these remittances, the whole economy would collapse, and the political structure would become unsustainable. If anything is to change, then, it would happen under the influence of overseas Filipinos' extremely powerful organizations. The recent law on absentee voting and the (slowly) increasing number of Filipinos living overseas registering to vote offer a faint, but serious, reason to hope. One can reasonably expect that the number of families connected will reach a critical mass sometime in the next few years. Filipinos overseas working in developed countries such as the United States or Canada will have higher expectations in terms of governance, transparency, and accountability. Combined with the "bottom-up" approach, in which citizens become empowered to demand tangible results at local government levels, this long-term trend may bring slow but encouraging progress.

One thing is certain: collaborative engagement involving innovative, participative communication methodologies is more likely to remobilize Philippine young people than traditional activist slogans and rallies. The future is in the hands of the connected generation.

Notes

1. On the basis of the latest estimates from the Philippine government, there are now 8.2 million Filipinos living and working overseas. This figure is about 10 percent in relation to the total national population.

2. Turnout in 2007 was 15 percent, compared to 67 percent in the 2004 presidential elections. Low turnout was attributed to technical and administration reasons.
3. See <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVCOMMENG/Resources/RomeConsensus07.pdf>.
4. See <http://city.marikina.gov.ph/PAGES/cityawards.htm>.
5. Bayani Fernando now serves as chairman of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.
6. Cited by the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation in conferring the Government Service award to Mayor Robredo in 2000. <http://www.rmaf.org.ph/Awardees/Citation/CitationRobredoJes.htm>.
7. Based on the Transparency International 2007 Report; http://www.transparency.org/publications/gcr/download_gcr#download.
8. See Segundo E. Romero, "Civil Society-Oriented Measures for Enhancing Transparency and Accountability in Governance and the Civil Service"; see <http://www.fes.or.kr/Corruption/papers/Philippines.htm>.
9. J. Edgardo Campos and Jose Luis Syquia, *Managing the Politics of Reform: Overhauling the Legal Infrastructure of Public Procurement in the Philippines* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006), 32.
10. Social Weather Station (SWS), *The 2006 SWS Survey of Enterprises on Corruption* (Quezon City: SWS, July 6, 2006); Campos and Syquia, *Managing the Politics of Reform*, 3–4. A media release on the 2006 SWS Survey of Enterprises on Corruption is available at <http://www.sws.org.ph/pr060706.htm>.
11. Interview with Steve Rood, Country Representative, Philippines and Pacific Island Nations, and Regional Adviser for Local Governance.
12. This estimate was in 2005. The number of users is estimated to reach 21.8 million by 2008.
13. For the initial implementation of overseas absentee voting in the May 2007 national elections, registration was undertaken with the use of biometric data capture machines.
14. A PDF file of the study is available at http://mobileactive.org/files/MobileActiveGuide1_0.pdf.
15. See Katrin Verclas, "SMS Messages in Use in the Thai Election," April 9, 2006. http://mobileactive.org/sms_in_Thai_election_06.



Part V

Transforming Indifferent or Hostile Public Opinion





Journalistic Framing and Media Relations for Marginalized Groups

Karen S. Johnson-Cartee

Introduction

When analyzing communication challenges in governance reform contexts, stakeholders and the public at large will have different interpretations of a proposed reform. Communication theory analyzes such interpretations using framing theory: “A frame is a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration” (Tankard 2001: 11). Entman’s (1993) definition of the framing process is perhaps the most frequently cited and most widely used definition among working journalists and political news scholars: “Framing essentially involves *selection* and *salience*. To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the term described” (Entman 1993: 52; emphasis in original).

One important area of framing research, for governance reform, concerns the role of framing in news reporting. All organizations including governments have an interest in promoting frames that advance public understanding of their interests through the media. Managing public opinion is not possible without a government’s propagation of clearly defined frames constructing social problems, nor is public support for change likely without the delivery of culturally resonating and individually compelling social-change frames. Marginalized groups have a particularly difficult time getting their perspectives, or preferred frames, understood, because such groups have few of the

resources necessary to attract media attention, such as money, power, and connections to decision makers at their disposal (Gerhards and Rucht 1992: 555–95). This chapter reviews research and theory on framing news writing, promoting culturally resonating messages, and using appropriate media conventions to attract and develop media interest and understanding, eventually securing their cooperation in advancing social change frames.

News Writing as Framing

Gary Woodward (1997) argues that the use of the term *news stories* by journalists, publicists, and news researchers provides us with significant insight into the news process. He writes:

The word *story* is such a basic descriptor of a news event that we tend to forget that it defines a unique way for organizing ideas. Storytelling involves the organization of facts and human motives in a definite sequence of stages. To tell a story is to set up a general structure for organizing a set of actors and events in ways that meet certain prior expectations. The story format defines actors moving through a sequence of events filled (usually) with victims, villains, and heroes. Conflict generates our interest and sets up the search for a final or at least temporary resolution. The story format exists in most general news reporting because it is an efficient structure for reducing complexity to a minimum, and for collapsing a long time frame into a short and interesting summary (76–77; emphasis in original).

Woodward's explanation of news stories serves as an essential blueprint for any professional journalist, publicist, or issue activist seeking media attention: establish a dramatic imperative of conflict, increasing the complications, and then craft a temporary or final resolution. Inevitably, journalists frame news stories or news narratives by selecting from a repertoire of journalistic frames, which were learned through college courses or on-the-job training including the daily experiences of a working journalist (see Schön 1983). Journalists take incoming information or fast-breaking facts and assemble those items, fitting them into preexisting news frames (Wolfsfeld 1997). In other words, journalists judge the "narrative fit" of incoming information (Reese 2001). News reporters will use not only professional experience but also social theory when constructing news accounts. Often, news reporters have specialized theoretical knowledge of the issue area on which they are reporting, either because of academic or professional degrees or because of years of investigative reporting in a given area. Schön (1983) has argued, "If anything, the effective use of specialized knowledge depends on a prior restructuring of situations that are complex and uncertain" (19). In other words, the successful practitioner applies theoretical knowledge to news frames within his or her repertoire, enriching, perhaps altering, the conventional news-framing repertoire of a given news culture.

Similarly, Ettema and Glaser (1998) have suggested that the key to becoming a master reporter is in the art of learning to “frame” the story. After selecting a news frame, a journalist adds nuances to it, modifying and enlarging the frame to suit the day’s events and ending with the newly framed news of the day. *Narratives may be viewed as a combination of the frame (the structural body of a tree, its trunk, its branches, and its twigs), while the leaves of the tree are the details, which give any retelling of the narrative its own unique character* (Johnson-Cartee 2005). If we know the frame, we know what essentially happened in the narrative. The frame in its entirety is the structure of a narrative, presenting action and providing an attitude toward that action, a moral, or a theme.

Reporters involved in the process of news framing are engaged in what Schön (1983) has called “the logic of affirmation” (155). In their efforts to define the situation, select a news frame, and then build upon that news frame, reporters seek evidence—whether in the form of expert testimony, written reports, public records, or eyewitness accounts—that affirms their approach to the story. They ask themselves, “Is my evaluation of the situation supported by available evidence?” Master reporters, according to Schudson (1978), establish a “mature journalistic subjectivity” through which they challenge social conventions or status quo evaluations. They are compelled to ask themselves if they have considered all the possibilities. Such reporters look beyond the obvious. They develop the confidence in their own abilities to demonstrate “tolerance of uncertainty, and acceptance of risk and commitment to caring for truth” (Schudson 1978: 194).

Gamson (1992b) and later Wolfsfeld (1997) distinguished between older and newer frames. Some frames may be viewed as “deep” or long standing, widely shared, and taken for granted, whereas others are relatively new or “shallow,” are used in a very specific context, are recently constructed, and are emerging in public consciousness (Gamson 1992a; 1992b; Wolfsfeld 1997). Such characterizations help illustrate how a reporter’s repertoire of news frames is refined and expanded through his or her professional career.

Assignment of Responsibility

Iyengar (1989) has shown that reporters routinely ascribe the assignment of responsibility for social problems within news stories. The assignment of responsibility is twofold: first, who or what is responsible for creating the social problem, and, second, who or what is responsible for curing or resolving the social problem? Consequently, in examining people’s understanding of news accounts, Iyengar found that “the primary consideration that governs any issue opinion is the assignment of *responsibility* for the issue in question” (879; emphasis added). Research has shown that individuals routinely assign responsibility when confronting social problems (Nisbett and Ross 1980; Iyengar 1987), even when the social problem is the result of a random event such as a natural disaster (Langer 1975; Wortman 1976). Such “attributions of responsibility powerfully influence attitudes toward the self, interpersonal

evaluations, and emotional arousal” (Iyengar 1989: 879; see also Bettman and Weitz 1983; Fiske and Taylor 1984; Folkes 1984; Pettigrew 1979; Schneider, Hastorf, and Ellsworth 1979).

Using the work of Fincham and Jaspars (1980) and Brickman and others (1982), Iyengar (1989) operationalized issue responsibility as falling into two categories: *causal responsibility*, or the emphasis on the origin of the social problem, and *treatment responsibility*, or the emphasis on who or what has the means to resolve the social problem. In a laboratory experiment, Iyengar had participants read news stories covering four social issues (crime, terrorism, poverty, and social inequality) and then answer lengthy questions about the issues presented within the stories. Iyengar concluded, “The results indicate that for all four issues attributions of responsibility significantly affect issue opinions independently of partisanship, liberal-conservative orientation, information, and socioeconomic status. In general, agents of causal responsibility are viewed negatively while agents of treatment responsibility are viewed positively” (1989: 878).

Episodic versus Thematic Treatment of Events

In a later study, Iyengar (1991) found that the news media were far more likely to present news from an *episodic perspective* than a *thematic perspective*. Instead of providing the historical background of a given issue and the related social, cultural, and political forces affecting the issue (a thematic perspective), the news reporter is likely to focus on a recent, alarming, or attention-earning event that highlights an individual’s or group’s plight through personal illustrations (an episodic perspective). Gitlin (1980) has observed that journalists’ evaluations of newsworthiness are judged according to “traditional assumptions in news treatment: news concerns the *event*, not the underlying condition; the *person*, not the group; *conflict*, not consensus; the fact that ‘*advances the story*,’ not the one that explains it” (28; emphasis in original).

Consequently, Iyengar (1991) has argued that when people view news accounts from an episodic perspective, they are far more likely to attribute responsibility for social problems to individuals (people choose poverty), not systemic attributions such as poverty caused by cultural deprivation, educational and job inequalities, drug addiction, or discrimination. According to Greenburg (2002), “[T]he lack of historical and social context creates a discursive space where readers are less likely to fully appreciate, understand, or interpret the implications of events and issues” (194). In addition, television news is far more likely to be devoted to episodic framing because of its obvious time and commercial constraints (Iyengar and Simon 1993). For example, Iyengar and Simon found that two-thirds of all stories about poverty on television news for a period of six years were stories about a particular poor person, and 74 percent of all news stories during that same time period concerning terrorism were live reports highlighting a specific terrorist act, victim, or event. Weimann and Brosius (1991) also found that media selection and coverage of terrorist

acts were influenced by “the level of victimization, the type of action, the identity of the perpetrators, and an attributable responsibility” (333).

Pan and Kosicki (1993) have argued that the frame of a news story is the same thing as the theme of the news story: “A theme is an idea that connects different semantic elements of a story (e.g., descriptions of an action or an actor, quotes of sources, and background information) into a coherent whole” (59). The theme is related to meaning—the residue of meaning left with the individual after attending to the news story. For Reese (2001), “[F]rames are *organizing principles* that are socially *shared* and *persistent* over time, that work *symbolically to structure* the social world” (11; emphasis in original).

According to McNair (1998), journalism authorship is providing contextualization to an array of facts in such a way that they tell a story. Authorship is of paramount importance to McNair, who writes, “No story can be told, no account of events given, without contextualization around a set of assumptions, beliefs, and values. This is in the nature of storytelling” (5; see also Schudson 1982; 1991). Such contextualizations are the key to understanding the significance of authorship in that they are an *ideological expression*. McNair (1998) writes, “Journalism, therefore, like any other narrative which is the work of human agency, is essentially *ideological*—a communicative vehicle for the transmission to an audience (intentionally or otherwise) not just of facts but of the assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, and values of its maker(s), drawn from and expressive of a particular world-view” (6; emphasis in original).

Here it is fruitful to consider the historian Hayden White’s observations about the writing of history. Events happen. A chronology of events is observed. But these events are not history; they are merely potential story or narrative elements (White 1987). White (1978) writes, “[T]he events are *made* into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motif repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like—in short, all of the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the employment of a novel or play” (84; emphasis in original). In their narration of historical chronology, historians ultimately create what is viewed as an authoritative account and, through the years, may come to be thought of as what in “reality” happened. However, it should also be remembered that other interpretations of the same historical events, other narrations telling the stories of history, could also be produced. Consider the number of different academic accounts purporting to examine the “causes” of the American Civil War. From economic competition to slavery, a wide range of explanations or historical realities has been presented (for example, Roswenc 1961/1972). The narration or the historical story is in the eye of the beholder: the author. To negate authorship is a deliberate obfuscation of the ideological dimensions of news. Such a practice not only separates the journalist from the news story, but also hides the source of and expression of values, beliefs, and worldviews presented within the news story. In short, such a practice deceives.

Similarly, Gamson (1989), in writing about news, argues, “Facts have no intrinsic meaning. They take on their meaning by being embedded in a frame or story line that organizes them and gives them coherence, selecting certain ones to emphasize while ignoring others. Think of news as telling stories about the world rather than as presenting ‘information,’ even though the stories, of course, include factual elements” (157). It is the journalist, of course, who creates the story line. For this reason, news researchers, such as Tuchman (1976) and Schudson (1991), find the notion that journalists, in their day-to-day work, construct news narratives as being patently obvious and not in the least controversial. Schudson (1991) explains, “Journalists write the words that turn up in the papers or on the screen as stories. Not government officials, not cultural forces, not ‘reality’ magically transforming itself into alphabetic signs, but flesh-and-blood journalists literally compose the stories we call news” (141).

Consequently, “a reporter writing a news story is not that much different from a storyteller or a novelist writing a fictional story” (Pan and Kosicki 1993: 60). Cook (1996) adds, “A story’s quality is judged by the ‘play’ it receives in the news, which presumably is both an indicator and a predictor of the ascendancy of the reporter’s career” (473).

Media Relations for Marginalized Groups

Because reform organizations have to surmount unusual odds to have their voices heard in many developing countries, often against the expressed wishes of some governmental officials and social and political elites, treating the reform organization’s situation as a marginalized group is advantageous, because it assumes the worst of working situations. Wallack and his coauthors’ *News for a Change* (1999) provides marginalized groups with the tools necessary to conquer the odds, their pitched news items or press releases gaining access to mainstream news organizations, whose preference, at least in Western media, is not for marginalized groups.

Strategic Conflict Frames

Using Entman’s (1993) four-pronged outline of most news story accounts—defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies—a reform organization should construct its media subsidies or press releases into a similar configuration. However, reporters and their news editors are attracted to news subsidies that have conflict as their news hook or angle. *Conflict* may be conceptualized as “an expressed struggle between two or more interdependent parties who perceive goal incompatibility, scarce resources, and interference from the other party in their individual goal achievement” (Rogan 2006: 167). Recently, researchers have identified social conflict frames, likely accepted by journalists in their writing of news copy:

- A *Substantive Frame* is one that focuses on the conflict from the standpoint of the person’s particular disposition.

- A *Loss-Gain Frame* denotes how an individual perceives the potential risks associated with all the offering parties' conflict-outcomes or proposed resolutions.
- A *Characterization Frame* denotes how the disagreeing parties generally perceive and describe each other.
- An *Outcome Frame* reflects a party's preference for or predisposition toward the realizing of a particular outcome frame.
- An *Aspiration Frame* reflects a party's general evaluation of "general concerns for broad-based interests or needs as opposed to a specific outcome" (Rogan 2006: 160).
- A *Process Frame* denotes a party's concerns for how a "conflict is managed and negotiated as opposed to a focus on the ultimate outcome" (160).
- An *Evidentiary Frame* "reflects a party's use of facts and evidence to support an argument either for or against a particular outcome" (160; the list has been adapted from Rogan 2006).

Such social conflict frames could well serve as the basic news frames from which to construct information subsidies for news media in a developing country, because they will fit a Western definition of news, which with the decline of communist-influenced news perspectives now dominates the globe (Johnson-Cartee 2005).

Checklist for Media Strategy. First, the reform organization must develop a checklist for strategy development for media coverage, which fits nicely with Entman's (1993) diagnosis of a news story frame, as well as Gamson's (1988; 1989) short encapsulation of the basic story frame.

Media Kit. One key to developing media interest is to provide a media kit to the news media when entering a country, with various routine public relations communication products: backgrounders, issue papers, position papers, fact sheets, and contact sheets. These products are then used in the four-phase campaign in which contact with the media is carefully staged.

Identification of Contact Persons. As with the use of media kits, contact with the media will be carefully staged, to reflect the evolution of the reform movement.

Phase I. Identify initially immersed individuals who are culturally sensitive, as well as media savvy; who have experience; or who have attended a training session on media relations. The number of contact persons should be minimized to ensure the control of the message, as well as consistency in themes.

Phase II. Identify change agents and outreach workers as complementary media contacts. After the identification and training of change agents and outreach workers, the reform organization should appoint several people to interact with the media, to ensure that the appropriate native reformers are heard as the reform organization begins setting up stakeholder groups for change. Although the vocabulary isn't important, the idea is that some of the change

agents will travel back and forth to the reform organization headquarters, thus ensuring quality feedback. Some outreach workers should remain in the field at all times, working with their participants in various projects. They perform the same functions for the group, regardless of their name, and the reporting may be rotated each month as to who travels to the headquarters, but the idea is that someone meets face to face each month with coordinating office staff personnel.

Phase III. Identify change agents and outreach workers as primary spokespersons. Although the stakeholder groups are becoming functional, with each member learning his or her role or responsibility, as well as coming to know each other in the collective effort to bring about change, the change agents and outreach workers will assume the primary responsibility for communicating with the media, but only after attending appropriate media relations seminars at the reform organization's headquarters.

Phase IV. Identify stakeholder group spokespersons. As the stakeholder groups are established, and as the group assesses the strengths and weaknesses of their various participants, they will appoint a single public relations officer (with the advice of the change agent or outreach worker appointed to them), with one backup person in case of emergency. Both of those people should receive training by the reform organization before engaging in their roles. In addition, it is important at this point that the public face of the group is not the change agent or outreach worker, because if the responsibility for change is not passed on to the rest of the members of the group, the change agent or outreach worker will lose his or her effectiveness to facilitate change within the group. Furthermore, within the public at large, it must be seen that others are accepting the "baton of change" to demonstrate the growth of the movement, their enthusiasm, and their visible activities. At this point, when all stakeholder groups have designated public relations officers, the indigenous spokespersons will assume the face of the reform movement.

Media Contact Sheets. Media contact sheets should include the following, at a minimum, with additional information that can be added on a case-by-case basis:

- Immersed reform leaders and contact information
- Immersed reform leaders and change agents or outreach workers and contact information
- Listing of stakeholder groups, the change agents' or outreach workers' names, phone numbers, and means of locating them
- Listing of various stakeholder groups and their public information officers
- Representatives, their numbers, and means of locating them.

News Releases. News releases are undertaken in step with the four-phase process. Each release is designed to advance a specific goal within each;

frequently more than one news release per phase will be required in order to meet desired goals:

- *Phase I.* Start with the initial press release, background of the reform organization, and biographical sketches on each immersed worker located in the country.
- *Phase II.* Include feature stories about the change agents and outreach workers.
- *Phase III.* Add more feature stories about the change agents and outreach workers; use press releases about deliberations of stakeholder bodies.
- *Phase IV.* Provide press releases about reform agendas, plans, successes, and implementation strategies, including membership invitations and recruitment drive information forms.

Background Paper. A background paper should cover in-depth information about the reform organization, its origins, its funding, its leadership, any contact information (particularly those who have been identified as immersed leaders and who should be the spokespersons), its multicultural assets, and so forth. These facts should be brief, running from one to three pages in length.

Issue Papers. Individual issue papers may be prepared as needed and may come in two types. Type I issue papers identify a problem, specify the severity of the problem, and note the reach of the problem. This includes who is impacted, for how long, at what cost, and how this prevents those who are affected from achieving their goals or why this prevents the culture or society from achieving its goals. These papers should be brief, running one to two pages. If there is more than one issue, then an issue paper should be written for each separate issue. Issue papers also deal with strengths of the society that might be capitalized on, as well as any societal weaknesses that must be taken into account, when planning (for example, any tribal or regional differences), and any opportunities or threats that the reform organization sees after a comprehensive environmental scanning. Examples could be poor timber management practices, global warming culprits, wild animals impacted, or torrential seasonal rains and their resulting runoff and floods. Opportunities might be in mining or in farming of a particularly sought-after crop on the world market.

Type II issue papers describe various types of stakeholder groups, emphasizing their dialogic nature, their indigenous population membership, and their empowerment and individual self-determination. McQuail (1994) describes as the basic human communication principles egalitarianism, justice, free speech, mutual respect, and turn to speak. For each group, the objectives (determining the nature of the problems, the needed solutions, and all the steps in between) will be identified. The reform organization may decide to devote a single page to each different type of stakeholder group. Eventually, the addition of group-specific contact information will be added in Phases III and IV of the

media contact evolution. Then these items will be added to the media kit after the stakeholder group has determined its mode of action.

White Papers. Often a paper addressing an in-depth issue, opportunity, threat, weakness, or strength is written for the reform organization personnel and for the change agents and outreach workers, thereby providing more background information than is generally consumed by ordinary citizens. This paper takes the form of an expert manual and runs any length necessary to treat the issue in the needed depth.

Fact Sheets. A fact sheet can comprise bulleted, staccato listings of basic information, facts, figures, tables, glossaries, and so on, pertaining to the basic issues, perceived strengths, opportunities, threats, or weaknesses within the society that the reform group sees before meeting with other stakeholder groups.

Position Papers. Position papers detail what each stakeholder group is doing to combat its problem or to take advantage of the opportunity that each has identified. These papers should be clearly labeled to accompany the appropriate Type II issue paper noted earlier.

Narrative Frames as Reform Organization-Speak

As a reminder, the materials developed within each phase of the campaign should be designed to carefully embody elements of a specific frame. Campaigns will succeed in large part, depending on how focused and how consistently messages are framed. One way to keep messages on focus is to think of frames as narratives, which will make them easy to remember and understand. This approach takes advantage of the similarity between frames and narrative structures in language.

Just as reporters must learn a reporting repertoire or a set of previously determined narrative structures or, if you will, narrative frames (Bateson 1972; 1979) on which they hang the “facts” of their stories, so too do the agents of social influence, whether “news promoters,” political consultants, social activists, or reform agents. They must learn the required stylistic and content concerns of the average newspaper, broadcast news program, or Web site, as well as a host of other outlets. Not only do they learn the styles and the manner of writing, but also they must think as if they were journalists. To achieve uncontrolled media space or free media, the news product has to be as good as, if not better than, that produced by the journalist. In addition, a public relations expert will also tell you that a campaign that uses a variety of different tactics must speak with one voice or risk appearing inconsistent. Such matters indicate that social change or reform proposals are culturally sensitive narratives, which must meet the specifications for inclusion in the host country’s media or in the interpersonal communication networks when passed along as information from person to person.

For purposes of clarification, then, a narrative is the fully developed, fully fleshed-out story with characters, scene descriptions, conflict, actions with motives, and ultimately, a resolution, which a reporter disseminates through a mass communication channel. The narrative frame, conversely, is the basic organization of the structural components used in the story. It helps, perhaps, to think of the narrative as a package with an internal structure, as Gamson and Modigliani (1989) have suggested. And, they note, “[A]t its core is a central organizing idea, or frame, for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue” (3). For instance, we are all familiar with Shakespeare’s play *Romeo and Juliet*, which is a fully fleshed-out story if ever one was told. But if we examine the structural components—star-crossed young lovers, warring families, well-intended but faulty communication, and ultimately death and tragedy—we may recognize the narrative frame again and again in other stories, such as *West Side Story* or *Love Story*. The former was originally a Broadway musical and then a Hollywood movie. The latter book also became a movie. Journalistic output may be in the form of feature articles, commentaries, investigative news, interviews, or editorials, but what is important to remember—for journalism products as well as the successful persuasive narrative—is that they are merely discursive types with “distinctive rhetorical styles, aesthetic conventions, and communicative functions” (McNair 1998: 10). These stories “speak” for the organization and, ultimately, the publics the organization seeks to engage in participatory communication for the development and sustainment of social change.

Summary

Communication challenges in governance reform work generally involve consistent message development, promotion, and discussion. Framing theory provides one way to understand how this challenge may be efficiently, effectively, and economically accomplished. Frames may be used in developing media campaigns aimed either at other stakeholder groups, at government, or at the public at large. In this way, public opinion may be brought into line with reform objectives, not only by pushing one’s message frame, but also by understanding the frames of others and by communicating using a reform message from within the spectrum of those culturally enriched frames. Thus, one can improve not only the public’s understanding of proposed reforms, but also its acceptance and involvement in the reform effort.

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Transforming Adverse Public Opinion into Support for Reforms

Rey Anthony G. David, Jr.

Introduction

It is not uncommon for advocates of governance reforms to face either indifferent or hostile public opinion. The problems that create the need for governance reforms, such as corruption and bureaucratic red tape, happen because of misdeeds by public officials, collusion with private groups, and inaction by constituents. Because governance reforms eat into the “source of livelihood” of corrupt officials and their private sector cohorts, reforms will have natural enemies. Moreover, although the problems may be very clear to reformers, the general public may not see the problems as directly affecting their lives, or they may have been so used to these practices that they think such practices are the norm, or they may actually have been indirectly benefiting from such a setup. Hence, there is apathy toward reforms.

The challenge for reformers is to galvanize enough support to carry forward reform objectives. Although there will always be indifference and even hostility toward reforms, these attitudes should be kept to a level that will not affect the successful outcome of an advocacy campaign. So how are we going to do that?

In the work done by the present author in many different advocacy campaigns, it has been found that only the following equation is needed for a successful advocacy campaign:

$$6R = 1R.$$

This equation means that a combination of Research, Reason, Reach, Resources, Record, and Review will produce Results.

Research

Good preparation is always the first step toward any successful endeavor. For reformers, there's nothing like good research to arm oneself with enough ammunition against those who resist change.

When Great Wall Advertising (GWA) was tapped by the Department of Budget and Management and the nongovernmental organization Procurement Watch Inc. (PWI) for a government procurement reform campaign in the Philippines, there were already voluminous technical studies on corruption in the procurement process. Concrete proposals also existed on how to address the loopholes in government procurement that provided opportunities for corruption. It is very important not just to identify the problems but also to offer solutions that address them.

The government procurement reform campaign, which started in February 2001, called for the passage of a law to streamline, increase transparency, and remove discretion in the government procurement process, which should result in minimizing corruption and plugging leakages that amounted to an estimated \$400 million a year. In less than a year of the reform campaign, the bill was signed into law.

Aside from citizens having a thorough knowledge of an issue, it is also important to understand the political and economic environment in which the advocacy campaign will be implemented. As in the case of the procurement reform campaign, corruption was a topmost concern when GWA launched the campaign in 2001. Then-president Joseph Estrada had just been removed from office on corruption charges. On the heels of his ouster were scandals involving procurement such as the "book scam" and the "fire trucks deal" (<http://www.tinig.com/v18/v18sj.html>).

An important area of research in an advocacy campaign often overlooked by technical experts is *linkage analysis*. Reformers are usually very convinced that no reason exists that would cause policy makers, regulators, and legislators not to support their reform objectives. They forget that in the real world (at least in the Philippines), government officials move on the basis of certain relationships. The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism even called law-making in the country "entrepreneurial legislation," where some congressmen are either "prepaid" or "postpaid" (as with mobile phone cards) and where rules and policies are crafted "to benefit certain industries, businesses, or companies" (Coronel and others 2004).

These private business interests ultimately drive policy directions in their specific industries. Because they are benefiting from the status quo, reformers should expect that they will use their resources to block reform agendas.

Linkage analysis will help reformers identify possible allies and adversaries in the reform effort. In the procurement reform campaign, administration legislators were natural supporters of the campaign because it was proposed by the Department of Budget of Management and backed by President Gloria

Macapagagai-Arroyo, who included it in her state-of-the-nation address. But GWA, together with PWI, was also able to get support from opposition legislators, among them then-senator Loi Estrada, the wife of former president Estrada. The group was able to solicit her support after they explained to her that this effort started during her husband's term.

Another linkage that should be studied before engaging in any campaign is the relationship of private interest groups and even regulators and policy makers with the media. In the Philippines, it is not surprising to find businessmen or political families behind some of the country's biggest newspapers or television networks.

Media scans should not focus only on ownership. Equally important is to know the "color" of a particular news outlet. Reformers should be familiar with how a newspaper has been covering issues related to their advocacy in the past or which columnists have been paying close attention to their issues. In most cases, the patterns in news coverage will be useful when reformers start to craft their own media plan.

Reason

At the heart of any advocacy campaign is the message that one wants to impart to its target audience. In governance reforms, this message should satisfy one basic question: "What's in it for me?" As selfish as this may sound, this question is the one that will be asked by your target audience when you present your reform agenda. This concern may go against the altruistic mission of the reform effort, but it is the only way to capture the hearts and minds of a group's audience. Having an answer to this question will transform the audience from bystanders into active supporters.

It is actually a valid question. Reformers should be able to give a reason people should bother with your issue. Otherwise, you may be just wasting their time. Especially in governance reforms, there should be a direct link between the policy reform and people's economic welfare. Studies have indicated that a strong negative relationship exists between corruption and economic growth. World Bank research has shown that corruption discourages private investment and that the quality of governance institutions has a significant impact on economic growth (Mauro 1998). The research even found that corruption distorts the allocation of resources in ways that hurt the poor. So reformers should be able to spell out why their target audience needs these reforms and how people will benefit in the long run, if not immediately.

Again, in the procurement reform campaign, GWA showed the revenue loss suffered by government every year as a result of corruption in the procurement process. The number of schools and kilometers of roads that would have been financed by these "lost" funds were then counted. This research allowed the

people to picture what they were losing because they were allowing corruption to occur in government procurement.

Reach

After knowing their issue and their message, reformers should be able to identify whom to reach and how to reach them. In “communications speak,” these are the target audience and communication tools.

It is important that the tools employed for a campaign connect directly to the target audience. When GWA helped the International Labor Organization with its campaign to pass a law that would criminalize the worst forms of child labor in the Philippines in 2003, comics were produced in different dialects, targeting the areas where the worst forms of child labor were seen to be pervasive. Three stories were produced for the comics, thereby showing children working as household helpers, miners, and firecracker makers. The stories depicted the suffering and dangers that children lived through in the workplace. Such efforts proved helpful in educating the parents of child laborers, who usually made the decision whether to send their children to school or to work.

In Singapore, advertisements for taxi services can be found on glass coasters with a message that drinking and driving are prohibited in the city-state. So after gulping that beer, the drinker would immediately see that ad on the coaster and be reminded of his or her civic responsibility not to drive if intoxicated.

In the Philippines’ procurement reform campaign, many people were amused by the screensaver that GWA designed and distributed to all public offices. Because corruption in procurement will not happen without collusion, government workers need to be reminded that government contracts should not be for sale. The screensaver showed the features of the bill, including penalties for noncompliance, reasons there was a need for legislating government procurement reforms, a call for support for the bill, contact details, and a Web site where workers could get more information about the campaign. Also, why give that free real estate to Bill Gates? So during the campaign, it was GWA’s procurement reform screensaver that ran on the computer monitors of government workers during break time instead of one from Microsoft Windows™.

Resources

All the information gathered from the earlier discussions should help reformers measure the extent of support that they can get from certain groups and the level of opposition that they might be facing. Those considerations should be matched with the amount of resources available for the campaign.

U.S.-based advocacy communications expert Fenton Communications advises that you should “budget for success” (http://www.fenton.com/pages/5_resources/pdf/Packard_Brochure.pdf). An advocacy campaign may be likened to a political campaign during an election. Imagine a politician pouring a huge

amount of resources at the start of the election campaign period, only to run out of funds in the homestretch. Do you think that the politician will win that election? Probably not. As Fenton Communications points out, “Shortage of money is nearly always a recipe for failure.”

This money issue becomes more relevant in reform efforts that challenge big business. As pointed out earlier, reformers can be sure that the status quo will not take sitting down whatever change is being introduced. Expect those who will be affected by reforms to use the resources available to them, which means not only money but also influence, the media, and even dirty tricks. During the height of the tax reform campaign in the Philippines in the 1990s, the laptop computer of the finance undersecretary who was leading the effort was stolen. The tax reform campaign called for a comprehensive overhaul of the tax system by broadening the tax base, thus simplifying the tax system, reducing dependence on legislation, and lowering the tax burden to make it more buoyant and to encourage productivity. Reformers’ only line of defense during that time was the watchful media. The comprehensive tax reform law was eventually passed, but compromises were built in along the way. That is as far as the machinery and the funding of the campaign would go, but it had been a good fight.

Again, take it from Fenton Communications: “Don’t start a campaign you can’t afford to see through a successful finish.”

Record

Not many people give sufficient importance to keeping a record of advocacy campaigns because they dismiss recording as mere documentation and not as useful research tools that may be helpful throughout the campaign.

It is absolutely necessary to record everything that has been publicly said by all parties about the issue you are pursuing. If what the parties said was helpful in your campaign, it should be repeated through other channels to amplify your messages. If parties voiced their opposition to your reform agenda, you can analyze their arguments and know how to counter them during more important forums, such as congressional committee hearings. There is also the possibility for some people to backtrack on their commitments. Recording what people have said in the past should help in sealing that commitment to your reform agenda.

And, of course, documentation is important in itself because it provides a rich source of information on how advocacy campaigns should be conducted for other reform efforts.

Review

An advocacy campaign does not end with the passage of the reform law or the completion of a specific community project. Just as much effort should be exerted on the review of the campaign. A monitoring system on the progress of the reform agenda may be put in place, and the next steps can be identified to

institutionalize and operationalize the reform objectives. Governance reforms are not one-shot deals but are continuing processes that should be regularly monitored, assessed, and developed. It should be expected that the enemies of reforms will try to reverse what has been accomplished by reformers, especially if the enemies already begin to feel the pinch of the changes brought about by the reform.

Conclusion

Reforms challenge a status quo, and this challenge naturally brings conflict. But unlike in an armed duel, the winner in this battle of ideas is not the one with the most guns but the one who tells the story better. To be the better storyteller, the six *Rs* provide a useful guide to reformers. It is hoped that this approach will get the reformers the desired result of transforming indifferent and even hostile public opinion into support for reform.

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Six Big Ideas: ICT as a Vital Tool for Reform

Phil Noble

One of the most powerful forces at work in the world today is the Internet combined with new information and communications technology (ICT). Anyone that wants to seriously impact governance reform should first focus on how to use these new tools and how to empower ordinary people to use them, not just reformers, to effect the changes they want.

Bill Gates said it best, “The Internet is something fundamentally different. It will change our world the same way as the invention of the printing press and the coming of the industrial age.”

The impact is, and will continue to be, enormous and widespread—affecting almost every part of our lives—in the industrialized countries and the developing world. Clearly the types and rates of change will vary greatly from country to country and from culture to culture, but the basic patterns are the same.

Below are the “Six Big Ideas” to keep in mind when working to build support for governance reform.

1. **ICT is the most powerful new tool for global social action today—use it.** Regardless of language, culture, income or country, ICT can be used to “change the world.” In a negative way, Al-Qaeda is arguably the most “effective” online organization in the world. Members of Al-Qaeda have no traditional central command structure. They are spread all over the world with supporters in almost every country. They have developed, funded, and coordinated highly sophisticated attacks through ICT. On the positive side, SEA-ATE was the principal online site for organizing and focusing emergency response efforts immediately after the 2004 tsunami and helped

raise tens of millions of dollars in online contributions. SEA-ATE did not exist when the tsunami hit, and the three people who developed and ran it were in three different countries and had never met.

2. **ICT can almost instantly empower and mobilize people—ordinary citizens.** With ICT, people have the real power and not the elites, government officials, or even the media. There are literally dozens of global examples of “people power” being organized and mobilized through ICT. Tens of thousands of demonstrators organized through SMS in the Philippines against President Joseph Estrada and ultimately drove him from office. In the Republic of Korea, the combined power of the Internet-based Ohmy News and of combined online and in-the-streets organizing brought President Rho Mu Hyun to power and helped keep him in office when challenged. Etienne Chouard is a French schoolteacher who used his personal blog to develop and organize a huge online campaign that helped defeat the European Union constitutional referenda.
3. **Put technology in the hands of reformers, and they will do the rest.** Wherever there is access to technology, reform movements develop that will challenge the traditional powers. The third most blogged language is Farsi, the language of Iran, and most blogs are focused on social and political issues. The fastest-growing blog language is Chinese. There have been online protest petitions with “signers” numbering in the millions. Howard Dean’s U.S. presidential campaign is a classic example of this volume of responses. The nongovernmental organization Global Witness gives video cameras to environmental and human rights activists to chronicle abuses and to put them online; in many places, it has been a major deterrent to flagrant abuses.
4. **Reform efforts should target ICT audiences: youth and students; business-people, especially those with external business connections; the middle class; and media.** These people are technologically literate and are also often the most politically attentive. Internet access and e-mail accounts are most numerous among older students. Businesspeople are influenced by external world events and are sensitive to market forces. The media have the ability to “amplify” the calls for reform and to spread them to larger audiences. Most of all, these groups are “connectors and influencers.” They have wide networks with whom they are in contact every day, and they have influence with their peers and public opinion.
5. **Build networks for reform with existing technology; it is the ideas for reform that matter more than the technology.** The existing technology that people already have can be mobilized to effect reform. In Ukraine, the Orange Revolution organized an “honest election network” to demonstrate election fraud by simply using a few computers, preprogrammed election data, and existing cell phone networks. In various African countries, the same activities have been undertaken using SMS and community radio stations as the information reporting hub. In India, a “whistle blower”

Internet site published documents exposing corruption, and a number of ministers resigned within a few days. None of these efforts required special technology but instead needed creative ideas for using the existing technology and networks.

6. **Mobilize a global audience for domestic reform.** The world is a global village, and we are all—more or less—connected. Local issues can be exposed to global audiences that can then be mobilized. Coke’s “illegal” activities in Colombia were publicized to college campuses globally and to stockholder groups that organized effective corporate protest. Student groups organized online to force their colleges to divest stock holdings to influence international business operating in Sudan and Darfur. The principal support group for East Timor independence was organized by an Irishman who had never even been to Timor. The 1997 Nobel Prize–winning anti-landmine campaign was organized by Jody Williams from a cabin in rural Vermont largely through e-mail. Expatriate communities can be organized online to have a huge impact in local elections; such organization has happened in several Central American countries. BBC organized a “global poll” for the last U.S. presidential election, and there were similar “global to local” activities during other political intervention campaigns.

These are just a few examples of how ICT is being successfully used around the world to effect reform. There are literally hundreds of examples—large and small, in every region of the world—that reformers can learn from.

For the first time in human history, we can now have “borderless reformers”—people who can positively influence governance reform from anywhere in the world. The critical need now is for an organization such as the World Bank to collect these “case studies” and to organize and present them so that reformers—local and global—can connect and learn from each other.



Part VI

Instigating Citizen Demand for Good Governance





Consulting the Public—Thoughtfully

James S. Fishkin

This part has posed the question: “How do we instigate citizen demand for good governance and accountability in order to sustain governance reform?” I will approach this question through an account of a particular method of public consultation. It “instigates” a certain sort of “citizen demand” and, in our experience, contributes to democratic reform. First, I will discuss the general problem. Second, I will turn to some applications, including some in developing countries.

There are many ways to consult the public. One can hold open meetings, do public opinion polls, solicit comments or letters, allow for mobilization in decision-making venues (participatory budgeting), and many other variations. The issue is one of institutional design. The precise design of a method of public consultation can have a major effect on the substantive outcomes and on the democratic values that are achieved. Our approach is to simultaneously pursue our account of best practices while also using social science to study the process and its outcomes.

Who speaks for the people? What sorts of opinions do they represent? These are two basic questions that any form of public consultation must answer. For some years now, I have been engaged in a research program I call Deliberative Polling. It is based on a distinctive combination of answers to these two questions. As compared to self-selected forums or samples of convenience, it uses scientific random samples. And as compared to the snapshots of an inattentive public often offered by conventional polls, it assesses informed public opinion produced through deliberation. In this way, the Deliberative Poll attempts to represent everyone in a given population through a statistical

microcosm empowered to think about the issues in question under favorable conditions. Of course, a lot depends on what we mean by “favorable conditions”—a key question for discussion.

At its core, a Deliberative Poll is a survey of a random and representative sample of respondents, both before and after they have had a chance to deliberate. An ordinary poll offers a representation of public opinion as it is—even if that representation reflects no more than the public’s impressions of sound bites and headlines on the issue in question. A Deliberative Poll, by contrast, attempts to represent what the public would think about the issue if such people were motivated to become more informed and to consider competing arguments.

But why go to all the trouble to conduct “Deliberative Polls” when a conventional poll can also solicit opinion from a good statistical microcosm, that is, a scientific random sample? A great deal of public opinion research has established that the public is often not well informed about complex policy or political matters. Only small percentages of the population can answer even the most basic questions. And other researchers have shown that policy-specific information can lead to dramatic changes of opinion under experimental conditions.¹

The low information levels among the mass public should not be surprising. Anthony Downs coined the term *rational ignorance* to explain the incentives facing ordinary citizens (Downs 1957). If I have one vote in millions, why should I spend the time and effort to become well informed on complex issues of politics and policy? My individual vote, or my individual opinion, is unlikely to have any effect. And most of us have other pressing demands on our time, often in arenas where we can, individually, make more of a difference than we can in politics or policy. From the standpoint of democratic theory, this lack of effective incentives for individual citizens to become well informed is regrettable but also understandable.

A particular difficulty is that many of the opinions reported in conventional polls may not even exist. They may be what Philip Converse in a classic study termed *non-attitudes* or phantom opinions. Many respondents do not answer “don’t know” (when they don’t) and are more inclined to pick an alternative almost randomly.² And even those opinions that are not quite non-attitudes may be very much “top of the head” in that they reflect little thought or sustained attention.

Among methods of consultation, the Deliberative Poll is the most ambitious in aspiring to get informed opinion from a scientific random sample.³ We initially conducted Deliberative Polls only in developed countries—Australia, Canada, Denmark, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Northern Ireland, and the United States. The process has now spread to Bulgaria, China, Hungary, and Thailand. Thus far, there have been more than 50 Deliberative Polls conducted in various parts of the world.⁴ I am limiting this discussion to the face-to-face version. We have also developed an online version, which is especially suitable to developed countries with high Internet access and uses voice as well as text.⁵

Following are some summary observations about Deliberative Polling, as we judge it thus far:

- First, in virtually every case, we have managed to gather a highly representative sample of the population in question to come for an extended face-to-face deliberation. We can judge the representativeness of the sample by comparing the people who come with those who do not. Because we invite people only after they have taken a conventional survey, we can compare the participants with the nonparticipants both attitudinally and demographically. We can also, of course, compare the participants demographically to census data.
- Second, in every case, there are significant changes of opinion on politics and policy, often quite large changes. For the most part, the considered judgments revealed by Deliberative Polling differs significantly from the respondents' initial responses.
- Third, we can demonstrate that the respondents became much more informed by the end of the process, according to informational questions asked before and after.
- Fourth, we have found, in further analysis, that information gain explains much of the opinion change. It is primarily those who become more informed on the issues who also change their views about them.⁶
- Fifth, change of opinion in the Deliberative Poll does not correlate with any of the standard sociodemographic factors, such as education, income, class, gender, and so on. Virtually everyone seems capable of deliberating.
- Sixth, in cases where there are ranking questions, we have found a higher degree of preference structuration that makes cycles less likely, especially after deliberation is compared to the views in the initial questionnaires. In other words, a higher percentage of the sample has single-peaked preferences. Respondents may not agree on a single answer, but they agree about what they are agreeing—or disagreeing—about. Deliberation creates a shared public space for public opinion.⁷
- Seventh, we have not found the debilitating patterns of group “polarization” that have recently been alleged by Cass Sunstein and others to be a necessary artifact of the deliberative process.⁸ Unlike jury discussions, our deliberative process does not require an agreed verdict. It has, with trained moderators, elements of balance that seem to inoculate it from reaching conclusions as a predictable artifact of the initial group composition.
- Eighth, we have found that the process is generally not distorted by inequalities. In other words, some have alleged that the problem with deliberation is that it will give an advantage to the views of the more privileged such as the more educated, more wealthy, male, and so forth. We have examined the time 1 opinions of more privileged groups and have found that there is no tendency for opinion to move in their direction.

There are some other key results as well, but these comments should suffice to fill out the picture of a deliberative consultation that plausibly represents

the entire public, in microcosm, under conditions in which it can think seriously about the issue in question.

A great deal depends on the good conditions that facilitate the sample becoming more informed. Respondents, knowing that they are to participate in a visible (often televised) event, begin—from the moment they are asked—to discuss the issue with friends and family and to become more attentive consumers of the media. We view this information effect in anticipation of the event as part of the experimental treatment. However, the learning that respondents do in anticipation is likely to be unbalanced. The respondent, when talking to friends and family, is likely to talk with people who have similar opinions and who come from similar social locations. The diversity that facilitates balanced deliberation can be better furthered in the environment of the Deliberative Poll with balanced briefing documents, balanced panels and random assignment to small groups with trained moderators. For example, in Denmark in the Deliberative Poll before the Euro, we happened to have some information questions that specifically identified facts supporting either the “yes” case or the “no” case. In the period leading up to the Deliberative Poll, yes supporting respondents learned the yes facts but not the no facts; no supporting respondents learned the no facts but not the yes facts. However, after the weekend of face-to-face deliberation, the gap closed (Hansen and Andersen 2001).

After the respondent agrees to participate in the Deliberative Poll, he or she is sent a carefully balanced briefing document on the issue. The document, which is also made available to the press and observers and which is sometimes posted on the Web to help inform other citizens, is meant to offer a reasonably accessible digest of competing arguments and relevant facts on the issue to be deliberated. It provides a starting point for the discussions on the weekend. Typically, it is vetted by an advisory board of stakeholders on the issue who scrutinize it for balance and accuracy. It is also useful if the same advisory board supervises the selection of competing experts and politicians who answer questions from the sample on the weekend. On occasion, when the project involves a sample that is less literate, we make a video version of the briefing document, and we either distribute that beforehand or show it on arrival.

When the respondents arrive, they are randomly assigned to small groups that meet with trained moderators. The groups discuss the issue—initially on the basis of the briefing document—and clarify key questions that they wish to ask in plenary sessions with panels of competing experts and, usually later in the process, panels of competing politicians or decision makers. In the larger sessions, the experts and politicians do not give speeches. They only respond to questions from the sample. The process alternates small group and large group discussions, until, at the end, they take the same questionnaire as the one they answered on first contact. At the same time, if there is a television partner, it has been either broadcasting the large group sessions live or taping and editing the proceedings—usually including the small group discussions—for later broadcast. The Deliberative Poll has

been called “a poll with a human face” because it puts a human face—and a human voice—on the process of informed opinion change. The weekend combines some of the qualitative characteristics of focus groups or discussion groups with the possibility of studying the opinion changes quantitatively at the individual level. Where possible, we have a separate control group that does not deliberate. Sometimes this group has been posttest only (to control for events in the wider world) sometimes pretest and posttest. We have also had various midpoint measurements to better study what elements of the process are producing change.⁹

In sum, the basic idea has proven eminently practical. We use social science to gather a representative microcosm and then facilitate its deliberation under favorable conditions. Ideally, all citizens would participate, but under normal conditions, citizens in mass society are not effectively motivated to do so, for reasons we have already mentioned. Hence, the idea is to engage a microcosm in a good social science experiment and then use that microcosm to represent what informed public opinion would be like—to fellow citizens, to policy makers, and to politicians. The considered judgments of the microcosm offer a basis for an informed and representative public voice.

One might think this process is applicable only to the most advanced societies. Indeed, the literature on deliberative democracy has generally treated it as aspirational. However, we have had some successful experience in developing countries. A good case is the series of Deliberative Polls we have been conducting, with local partners, in China. The first was in Zeguo township, Wenling City, about 300 km south of Shanghai. The issue was the choice of about 10 infrastructure projects from a list of 30—roads, parks, sewage treatment plants, a comprehensive environmental plan. For the local officials, the Deliberative Poll process offered a transparent, balanced, and representative way to provide public input. Like many other municipalities, they had previously held *Kentan*, or “heart to heart,” discussion meetings as a form of local consultation. But these open meetings were dominated by the intensely interested, the self-selected, and the local notables, and they lacked a decision process. The Deliberative Poll, while initially complex, proved cost-effective and workable. It also added to perceptions of transparency and legitimacy. As local party leader Jiang Zhaugua observed, “I gave up some power and found that I had more.”

Consider some key questions that might be applied to any Deliberative Poll:

- Was the sample representative?
- Did participants become more informed?
- Did the information gains drive the opinion change?
- Was the process demonstrably balanced and transparent?
- Was the process distorted by inequality?
- Was the process distorted by small group “polarization”?
- Did the participants become more public spirited?

- Were the results actually implemented?
- Has the process been repeated?

The answers to all these questions are favorable to deliberative democracy.¹⁰ The sample was highly representative. Almost all those drawn in the initial sample took the interview, and almost all of those who took the interview participated on the day. The 235 participants who completed the process showed strong information gains on the basis of specific knowledge questions, and it was those who became more informed who drove the opinion changes. All the projects were represented by experts on the panels, and the briefing materials, which provided the agenda for discussion, had arguments for and against each project. Inequalities did not distort the deliberations. In fact, we have found in this case that the opinions on the major policy indices moved away from the views of the most privileged. There was no pattern of small group polarization in the small group data. Furthermore, when we classified projects in terms of their contribution to the entire city rather than just one village or another, there was a clear pattern of increasing support for projects of wider collective benefit. In addition, the results have actually been implemented; the public's preference for sewage treatment plants rather than for more highways and for a people's park for recreation rather than for a fancy town square have changed the priorities of development. Last, the initiative is self-sustaining. Two more projects have already been conducted in the same area with similar results.

What does this discussion have to do with governance reform? First, projects like the one in Zeguo are an actual governance reform. The local government, by sponsoring a public and transparent Deliberative Poll about a policy issue, comes under strong pressure to implement the results—as it actually has done in this case. A similar dynamic has been at play in a recent Deliberative Poll that we conducted for the Regione Lazio in Rome about its health care budgeting crisis. The people endorsed a rationalization in the number of hospital beds and a diversion of resources into polyambulatory clinics; this reform has now been accomplished. (See the CDD Web site section on the Rome project. The Center for Deliberative Democracy [CDD] at Stanford University is devoted to research on democracy and public opinion obtained through Deliberative Polling®.) Similar results occurred in Texas with a series of local Deliberative Polls conducted with the Public Utility Commission on energy policy. The result is that Texas is now the leading state in the United States in renewable energy (See the CDD Web site section on renewable energy.).

Hence, one contribution to governance reform is to conduct a Deliberative Poll with key decision makers and government bodies and then see if the results get implemented. On a national basis, we have just conducted a Deliberative Poll in Bulgaria on policies toward the Roma people—in housing, education, and criminal justice. The process was nationally broadcast, and the results were widely hailed and embraced immediately by the Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev,

who also announced his intention to use Deliberative Polling for other national policy issues such as pension reform. Another national project, in this case in a developing country, is being prepared in Thailand. We are working with the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization on public consultations about who should receive kidney dialysis. The universal health care system there does not presently cover this expensive service but could cover a portion of the patients if clear criteria for selection were agreed to. An advisory committee is developing a range of options with initial arguments for and against, and these options will be the basis for Deliberative Polling.

An additional contribution to governance reform occurs in deeply divided societies, where representative and informed dialogue among ordinary citizens may offer greater opportunities for policy change than would a parallel dialogue among more entrenched policy elites. Some elements of this point are corroborated in the most recent Bulgaria project, where some of the proposals by parties for dealing with the Roma might well be considered extremist (for example, walling up the ghetto as a solution to the housing problem—a proposal without wide support in the mass public but whose support fell sharply in the Deliberative Poll). Our recent project in Northern Ireland on whether Protestants and Catholics might be willing to share some provision for cooperation in schooling exemplifies how public dialogue can be employed to provide cover for constructive policy alternatives. There were dramatic changes in support for various schemes of cooperation. In addition, the percentages of the sample willing to grant that Protestants or Catholics were “open to reason” or “trustworthy” went up significantly (See the CDD Web site section on Northern Ireland.).

The Deliberative Poll can also be applied in contexts where it constitutes, in itself, a kind of political reform. For example, we employed the Deliberative Poll in Greece to actually select a candidate for one of Greece’s two major parties, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), for mayor in the part of Athens that conducted the Olympics (the municipality of Marousi). The Deliberative Poll had all the characteristics of other Deliberative Polls with a key addition. After the final questionnaire, the participants went into a polling booth and officially selected the candidate. The idea was to provide an alternative to the direct primary as a method of democratizing candidate selection. An additional attraction was that the process built on historical roots in Greece (See the CDD Web site section on Greece.). It returned decision making to a deliberative microcosm selected by lot in Athens—but after a gap of 2,400 years. Processes like the Deliberative Poll can also be used for constitutional reform. We advised Gordon Gibson, the Canadian politician who set up the Citizens Assembly in British Columbia (which put a proposition on the ballot for electoral reform). The Citizens Assembly was designed with the key elements of the Deliberative Poll—random sampling, and alternating small group discussions and plenary sessions. A key difference was that it met for a year on alternate weekends. However, for most issues, we

have found that such long deliberations are unnecessary. The projects in China, Northern Ireland, and Rome all took place in a single day and produced many significant results.

In short, deliberative democracy is a practical application with scientific samples. It can enhance legitimacy and provide a transparent and credible public voice. Although the process might seem a luxury best reserved for advanced democracies, it would be premature to agree to such a limitation. Our preliminary experience is that it can also be applied with success in developing countries.

Notes

1. For a good overview on the state of the public's knowledge, see Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996). For the effects of policy-specific knowledge, see Gilens (2001).
2. Converse's seminal article was "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics" (1964). There has been a vast amount of literature since, but it has not changed the relevance of the basic insight.
3. It is not quite unique in this dual aspiration. The "choice questionnaire" attempts to provide random samples with more information, but only in the context of the survey process itself. This is a much more modest intervention than a weekend of discussion. Another strategy, Televote, sends respondents a briefing document after a telephone survey and then calls them back at a later time. This strategy also achieves far more modest opinion changes than the Deliberative Poll and probably suffers from the problems discussed here with imbalanced information when people are just stimulated to talk more about an issue at home. Hence it seems fair to say that the Deliberative Poll, while not unique, is clearly the most ambitious effort thus far to achieve these two goals—deliberative or more informed opinion from a scientific random sample. For more on the choice questionnaire, see Neijens (1987). For more on Televote, see Slaton (1992).
4. This accounting includes some of the *By the People* projects with PBS and MacNeil/Lehrer Productions where separate samples deliberated on the same day for different local PBS stations. Each sample reported the data in its own community and had its own broadcast.
5. See our paper, which is under submission, "Considered Opinion on U.S. Foreign Policy: A Comparison of Online and Face to Face Deliberative Polls," at <http://cdd.stanford.edu/research>.
6. The model, which we have applied more broadly, was first proposed in Luskin, Fishkin, and Jowell (2002).
7. See List, McLean, Fishkin, and Luskin 2002. The paper is available at <http://www.la.utexas.edu/conf2000/papers/PreferenceStructuration.pdf>.
8. See Sunstein (2000).
9. See, for example, our paper under submission, "Disaggregating Deliberation's Effects: An Experiment within a Deliberative Poll," Cynthia Farrar, James S. Fishkin, Donald P. Green, Christian List, Robert C. Luskin, and Elizabeth Levy Paluck (available at <http://cdd.stanford.edu/research/>).
10. For a detailed account of these results, see our paper under submission, "Deliberative Democracy in an Unlikely Place," available at <http://cdd.stanford.edu/research>.

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The Power of Organized Citizens: Fighting for Public Integrity

David Cohen

Introduction

This chapter comes at its subject from the experience of a practitioner—organizer, lobbyist, issue entrepreneur—who has worked on these matters directly in the United States and with citizen activists in different parts of the world. Having experience does not mean greater insight per se, and so part of this chapter’s contribution to others who practice is to help them recognize an important place for theory and deliberation.

To create the conditions for good governance and fight corruption around the world, a whole array of institutions has to be strengthened within each country. That core strategy is one that requires much more than declarative intent. It requires a major shift that recognizes citizens as necessary stakeholders in the efforts to achieve good governance and to win the fight against institutionally embedded corruption in all parts of the world.

Experience leads the author to believe that citizens are far more engaged than they are given credit for. On all continents and in most countries, you can find a critical group of citizens everywhere who understand the connection between corruption that is deeply ingrained and its adverse effects on their pocketbooks and the quality of their lives and those of their neighbors.

As stakeholder-citizens organize themselves, they make demands on public officials and others who affect their lives. They engage in issue politics and a politics of values and beliefs. At times, their actions will extend to electoral politics. They are the instigators; change does not come from outside of themselves. Of course, we all know that citizens have to battle their way to the table to be heard—to be part of any public conversation—and that there are many

who resist who are already seated at the table. What encourages me is that those already at the table are not monolithic—enough accept change so the effort is not foreordained. That acceptance makes it all worthwhile.

Governance and anticorruption issues abound, and organized citizens make these issues vibrant. That fact leads to an examination of public relationships between citizen organizations and others in civil society. These organizations are part of the public sector; they relate directly to government, including law enforcement authorities. Because these issues merit discussion, citizens must be able to organize without fear or harassment so they can engage and participate in a robust public life.

This chapter begins with citizens—what it takes to respect their responsibilities and roles in relation to good governance issues (which subsumes anti-corruption issues)—and provides ways that will help citizens fight institutional corruption. Also, it begins to suggest policies critical to fostering an engaged citizenry with its public and civil society institutions.

Citizens Must Be Able to Organize

No public official openly defends corruption or an absence of accountability, but many wink at it. An absence of political will takes over, and inertia—rationalized by “everybody does it” or “it’s in the political culture”—serves as the crutch to allow a corrupt system to go unabated.

Yet citizens know what the absence of good governance is. They may not be able to articulate a statement that can pass muster in a political science class, but they know it when they are hurt by it. Hear their stories: they know it when government is not effective, accessible, open, or responsive, and when it is bought and paid for.

Citizens know what they do not trust. They know what a lack of accountability means because they live it every day. Being experienced and knowing the ways of the world, they know that to address these problems requires something more than good intentions. Even when they do not know the legal details of what has to be done, they know that corruption is a behavior permitted by power holders, which can be hidden or open but which seriously damages the common interests of the people affected. The public commons stands violated and besmirched.

I appreciate the World Bank’s recognition that decision makers and power holders within a country have to engage systematically with a broad range of government, business, and civil society stakeholders. The World Bank further recognizes that such engagement is key to government and anticorruption reform and development outcomes. In practical terms, this approach means, for starters, making transparency, citizen participation, and third-party monitoring real.

Much more is involved around process and substance. People organize themselves, for they know when something is seriously wrong, and they work

to correct it. In widely reported scandals in the Indian and U.S. press involving paying bribes to get admitted to the hospital in Karnataka state in India, people revolted by organizing, media exposure made an added difference, and wrongdoers went to jail.¹

Societies and countries are replete with examples of how those without the conventional means of power are hit—and hit severely—with the consequences of corruption. Public resources are systematically misused and stolen. These are not isolated cases of bribery but represent organized theft with high-stakes benefits for those who gain and serious losses for other members of the community.

The commons is invaded. The poor lose access to income-producing resources such as land, forests, fishing places, water, and utilities and to equalizing institutions such as health, housing, education, and transportation. To attack corruption means to challenge the existing power equation, for, in every respect, it attacks privilege. Organizing is about confronting existing power arrangements. In U.S. terms, it's not about the scientific management of government or governing institutions.

The power equation is a variable, and so institutions with power have a responsibility to initiate sufficient balance in the equation to make the arena of public decision making less distorted. This concept is not about being hortatory, homiletic, or jaw-boning. It's about designing governmental institutions that are accountable in fact and not just in name. It's about having strong mediating organizations that have the political strength and organizational capacity to conduct a public argument with government and find ways to reach accommodations that improve people's lives.

To do so, groups of people have to be able to organize. Plainly, organizations have to be able to function autonomously from government and to have the independence to take action. Taking a hard look at a country examines the autonomy of citizen organizations, their freedom from bureaucratic and state authority harassment, and the citizens' receiving protection from the state's legal and enforcement authorities when they have that public argument with government.

Public freedom has unequivocal standards that traverse borders and cultural boundaries. They have roots, well developed in many countries, that stem from the rights-based approach (RBA) established in many United Nations' treaties, conventions, and covenants and ratified by many countries that in turn have good governance deficits and corruption problems. Rights do not self-execute, and so the autonomy and freedom of civil society organizations (CSOs) must be grounded in law. That is a start. A culture has to be fostered that respects the autonomy and freedom in practice as an established norm. Accountable institutional arrangements must be in place. Once established, they enable relationships to occur between organized citizens and decision makers.

Law and culture must respect the freedom and autonomy of CSOs to initiate and respond with appropriate actions such as the following:

- Engage in issues that are timely and significant.
- Carry out research, by collecting, analyzing, and producing information that draws from the experience of people affected by the corruption.
- Receive feedback on relevant issues from the membership and constituencies.
- Formulate suggestions that lead to practical policies that include alternatives to the status quo and what is officially proposed.
- Use public education to build support for an issue even though the audiences being educated do not think of it as an immediate or top priority.
- Build networks, allies, and coalitions to engage in and further strengthen cooperative efforts for joint action.
- Initiate and sustain action on one's own to shape public attitudes or influence public policy.
- Take follow-up action by playing an active role in implementation and thereby demonstrating stamina and persistence.

Addressing the gaps of effective citizen engagement and advocacy must not stand in the way of a vitality that comes from people organizing and making demands. Recognizing that there is a place for sophisticated poverty, gender, and sustainability analysis does not mean that all, or most, groups must have that capacity.

It is more important for community-based organizations (CBOs) and grass-roots organizations to have the capacity to create their own information because they know what outrages—what denial of needs and rights—they face each day. Surely, it is necessary to allocate resources for organizing and advocacy, which includes having money for staff. But that should not stand in the way of people self-generating their own efforts. In resource- and service-starved sectors in the United States, and outside these as well, there are countless stories of people organizing themselves without much money but with commitment, skill, and a vital sense of outrage. People who feel their own power and thrive in it build their power and take risks to gain a dignity that has been denied them.

Organized Citizen Power

The focus on good governance is not about the science of good government, aiming to have matters administered by a meritorious civil service that makes wise decisions. Good governance, ending institutionally embedded corruption, disturbs the status quo. It challenges existing institutional and power relationships and changes public behavior of governmental institutions and those who hold elective and appointive office.

Organized citizens—with good cause—rarely believe that they have a dominant hand in ongoing power relationships. In matters dealing with good governance and corruption, whether the issue is systemic or symptomatic of a larger problem, power relationships are rarely close to equal or even equitable.

One working definition of power is the ability of a group of citizens to create change, or to protect what they have won or gained by making demands, in the face of opposition. When dealing with good governance issues, power manifests itself in all its forms: political, economic, social, and cultural. The primary arenas of the political sphere are the institutions whereby laws are enacted and implemented. Those arenas of the economic involve directing the use of resources including land, plus the means of production that affect land ownership, working conditions, and wages. The social deals with hierarchical relationships outside what are generally recognized as the official spheres of life. Family, tribe, club, neighborhood, class, and caste are all part of the social picture. Last, in this context, the cultural focuses on constraints and permissions in beliefs, customs, folkways, and norms that enable issues of good governance to be addressed.

Will power bend? That is the critical question for citizens who organize. Even when power appears absolute and overwhelming, it changes. What causes the change stems from challenging it through various forms of confrontation and struggle. Experience tells street-smart citizens that power is rarely given nor does it yield unilaterally. Organized citizens use their own sources of power to create change, to gain rights, or to protect them. They bring to the effort knowledge of what adversely affects them, of an experience of having been abused by corruption and poor governance, and of the stories that illustrate their experiences.

The energy created leads to an openness to inventing ways of adapting, initiating new efforts, and creating innovative ways of challenging the status quo. It fits familiar cultural matters such as *satyagraha*, an Indian nonviolent protest. Vision and commitment builds intensity that factors in dynamics that bend the power wielders who are being challenged. This approach, in turn, leads to the actions that define and frame issues, fix responsibility, and create solutions. In turn, responses by public institutions are created, and the result is that public problems are dealt with.

Resource and livelihood challenges to the status quo bring with them violence, murder, fear, and ongoing harassment. The World Bank is not divorced from these matters. When pursuing efforts that are part of good governance and of democratizing institutions, a high level of risk to people's lives, safety, and livelihood must be expected. What experience teaches us is that people who prepare for risks are far less intimidated by threats and even violence. Their willingness to assume the risk—to stand up to it—is itself a tremendous source of citizen power.

Citizen groups need to have the realism that asks the hard question: "What likely and potential harm may come from the action?" Whatever the calculated risks, organizations must help participants in the action prepare for the risks.

They have to ask, “Does the state authority have the capacity and will to protect people exercising their rights?” They then must undertake the practical ways to help protect those participating in the action.

Experience tells us that common lessons are learned when people challenge abuses of governance, including corruption. The following are some of the outstanding lessons learned:

- Challenging existing power structures assumes taking risks. Violent reactions are not surprising. Organizers and group leaders must always be aware that danger is clear and present as a matter of prudence.
- Abuses of governance and corruption require the leader to communicate an anger to the group about the abuses while showing courage, being present in the moment, and having resilience and a vision that conveys hope.
- No one person can do it all—show anger and be resilient while conveying hope. That is why leadership has to be shared and be collaborative.
- Avoid unnecessary risks. People are not asked to give their lives. Fighting for good governance and attacking corruption is not a suicide pact.
- Celebrate every time people take risks. Even if there is no victory, the effort must lead to congratulations for the participants and the ritual of celebration in culturally supportive ways.

Getting Beyond the Citizen’s Organization: Having Public Argument, Creating Public Space

Good governance goes to the heart of how our governing institutions work. With power distributed unevenly and inequitably, institutions that advocate good governance have a responsibility to defend vigorously the room for “public argument.” The phrase is used deliberately. Public argument is about persuading others and learning to work with people with whom you may have disagreements or different overall perspectives. In contrast, debate polarizes; as a consequence, it leads to intensified opposition. Discussion leaves loose ends and avoids closure and thereby does not bring resolution with it.

As with so many matters, there can be an overlap with debate, discussion, and argument. The polarization may cause some on each side to find ways to get past it. Discussion can lead to some saying, “What can we conclude?” and move on.

Citizen organizations working on governance and anticorruption matters eventually have to advance in their organizational life cycle from early baby steps to adolescence, when they are willing to try and influence others and to build relationships with other groups. This approach includes like-minded organizations working in the same issue sector or CSOs that can be supportive.

To build relationships that move toward public judgment, organizations have to be engaged outside of themselves. This change takes confidence and maturity that organizational or other forms of identity will not be lost. Public

judgment means that the time has been reached for a decision that is within the country and that the public will accept or at the very least acquiesce in the change being proffered.

Relationship building that leads to public judgment benefits from the creation and use of public space. Across different political contexts and different social constructs, public places are free spaces in the community that stand between private lives and institutions, including public and large-scale ones. These spaces create many public benefits, such as the following, that are not easily quantifiable:

- People share experiences and raise issues with one another that might otherwise be avoided.
- People engage with people who are different from each other even if they share similar interests. The differences can be in class, race, ethnicity, religion, generation, gender, or role within civil society. By their sharing similar interests, there is a reason to collaborate and even become unlikely allies.
- People learn the art and skills of good governance by listening attentively, compromising, negotiating, and problem solving.
- It builds a sense of extended responsibility in which it is important to think beyond one's organization or community. This issue grapples with an age-old question: if we as an organization or community do not see beyond ourselves, what are we?

Public argument and public space are inextricably intertwined. Public argument recognizes the legitimacy and value of disagreement where the emphasis is to find a way of building agreement through persuasion, pressure, and politics in its generic sense.

Citizen Action: What Is Happening on the Ground

In Africa, Asia, Latin America, and former communist countries in the Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe, initiating actions are occurring that work for the qualities of good governance and that challenge deeply ensconced corruption. What must be addressed are the overall qualities on the basis of stories that are drawn from independent journalists and studies, academic analysts, and people and that look at the qualities of good governance.

A series of categories deserves examination and amounts to what can be considered an audit of the governing institutions and the quality of civil society. It encompasses the following matters:

- What is the degree of practical autonomy of CSOs and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)? What is the mix between such organizations and government-operated nongovernmental organizations? Such government-financed and heavily influenced so-called and self-styled organizations lack the necessary autonomy and independence to legitimately represent citizens.

- What is official secrecy and practical secrecy? Put another way, are there laws, mechanisms, and a culture of transparency to govern official matters?
- What are the institutional arrangements to prevent corruption at all government levels? This question is directly related to transparency.
- Do CSOs have processes to influence public budgets before they are completed? Are those processes more than ritualistic or perfunctory?

The goal is not to reach perfection, but to learn whether there are accessible points of intervention for citizens and their allies to make a difference.

We all have an interest in preventing states from being so all-powerful that their power is unchecked and that they violate people's voices by preventing them from raising critical issues. We have an equal interest in overcoming the harm that stems from weak states, states that are so weak that they do not have the capacity to protect people from their rights being violated and are unable to help build the institutions or to design the policies that improve people's lives. In RBA language, the "duty bearers" cannot effectively meet their responsibilities.

The importance of strengthening institutions within countries can be further reinforced. The Fund for Peace and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace have developed the concept of the "failed state" (Fund for Peace 2007). Twelve categories determine whether a state is in critical condition, is about to go into free fall, or is in a borderline condition:

- Growth of demographic pressures of overpopulation or underpopulation
- Refugees and displaced persons entering a country's borders
- Severe group grievances that fester and that remain not dealt with
- Flight of people who leave the country in large numbers
- Uneven economic development, leaving regions within a country depleted and neglected
- Steady economic decline that keeps people economically deprived
- People within or outside the country who consider the state illegitimate
- Weak public services in critical public institutions
- Regular violations of human rights
- A security apparatus that is weak or out of control and, thereby, violates human rights by neglect or actions
- Elites that are factionalized
- External intervention from another country or stateless peoples.

States that are in intensive care, are about to reach a critical condition, or are even borderline do not have the necessary vitality in their institutions to attain acceptable governance or to begin to tackle systemic corruption.

What is incredibly remarkable is the resilience possessed by organized citizens. The following examples represent a few illustrations:

- In rural Africa, Asia, and Latin America, women wash clothes in rivers and streams. They create their public space and gather there to organize themselves and create their demands.

- In more than one setting, villagers gather around their one television to watch a documentary. After the program, they discuss its application to their lives. This sharing is the beginning of organizing.
- In Indonesia, during the heyday of the Suharto dictatorship, urban radio shows could not reach remote areas. Not to be deterred, people found a way. They used e-mail to feed news to rural stations.

This chapter is about citizens taking practical steps to exercise their rights, identify their priorities, and begin to make demands on whatever political system they face. In exercising their rights, they begin to demand that the authorities with responsibility fulfill their duties. It is the beginning of building a relationship with those officials who are accountable.

All through Latin America, we are beginning to see citizen initiatives in tackling corruption. The mode of organizing can be called Citizen Watchdogs. Whatever it may be called in a local context, it is designed to create and tap into a citizen consciousness that the common interest—resources, space—belongs to all. Who controls it is a matter of discussion and decision, and such control stems from formal public relationships in which there is mutual responsibility between citizens, other parts of civil society, and public officials.

We are all familiar with the refrain that “all politics is local.” It is, and it does not stop with that statement. Ideas, innovation, and organizing inventions are contagious. Impressive examples exist throughout Latin America. In Paraguay, the citizens group *Contaloria Ciudadenas* connects people’s local efforts to national ones aimed at making the country’s national institutions accountable. In Colombia, in a risky setting, young people are mobilized beginning at age 16. Here decentralized technology works to the advantage of those fighting corruption. Concrete tools are designed to monitor public officials. In Argentina, public space is opened for civic forums that affect public sector decisions that, in turn, affect civil society. These political decisions affect citizens’ rights, and so citizens become a countervailing force. In Brazil, building skills creates citizens’ confidence in voicing comments and complaints. What makes it work is having a nonpartisan municipal body to gather complaints and to receive feedback on how well government is performing.

We learn from these small stories why relationship building with public officials is essential. But you cannot build relationships without confidence in yourself and your organization or coalition, without tools to use that are understood by the people, and without being part of a group that is not isolated from the community it is part of. It means that citizens have to be prepared to be protesters, and citizens must be prepared to be political.

Proposed policies will follow these activities and will reflect the authentic voices of the people affected. The traditionally obsessive determination of those who hold political power to see themselves as constantly threatened stems from an exaggerated sense of paranoia by too many elected and appointed officials in which, by neglect or design, they have warded off relationships with citizens who raise what they consider to be troubling and annoying questions.

Public officials are regularly separated from what the stuff of real life is. For example, they distance themselves from slum dwellers who face dislocation with no compensation or people who live on streets and in neighborhoods that are largely dominated by organized crime interests. The invariable surrender of the neighborhood by public authorities further lowers the quality of life for those who live there.

What the World Bank can insist on is that its country directors and the senior staff members within a country meet with and listen to those who work with people at the jagged edge of society. They can take the additional step of supporting documentary photography and independent interviews with such citizens. That step would get underneath the issues that these groups spend their time on. It could even lead to a respectful relationship with such groups.

There is much to learn from African, Asian, and Latin American countries. An example from Bangladesh, which is often thought of as a victim country and is viewed, certainly unfairly, as a perpetual “basket case” whatever its current political difficulties, gives a telling example of the use of public space. For many years, the Institute for Development Policy and Analysis at Proshika has successfully brought together different parts of the Bangladesh NGO community to discuss the national budget and poverty alleviation with government officials present. The meetings have allowed an exchange of ideas in a safe space for public officials and have given the officials feedback on programs and policy that they otherwise would not have received. It has given the NGOs a chance to learn where the “give” might be in the policy process.

What is being suggested here is not the kind of meetings that occur in Washington. Country World Bank officials should be expected as a matter of customary practice not to limit their meetings to national government or local officials. They should create the space to meet with and listen to a range of CSOs, NGOs, and CBOs. This concept is not about show-and-tell or the perfunctory routine of ticking off that a so-called consultation has taken place. It’s about providing respect to people who may well be thought of as trouble-makers and agitators by the authorities but who have their ear cocked to what people who are underserved and underrepresented are thinking and feeling.

The Special Place of the Media

In a vibrant civil society, the print and electronic media have a critical role in providing information to people. This is the case even in countries where the electronic media are government controlled. In such countries, the print media have an even more critical role to play.

At their best, the media’s use of information includes, but is not limited to, facts and findings that range from numbers to illustrative stories. Information is gathered from many sources through giving voice to those with experience, observation, interviews, testimony, and affidavits. A probing media, after

gathering information, analyzes it to show relationships, patterns, trends, and contradictions. That is its ultimate responsibility.

The challenge for the media is to understand that civil society actors are stakeholders. It means having what to cynics seems to be a lofty mission: a responsibility to inform that is buttressed by democratic values. That responsibility includes bringing into their orbit for informed coverage those organizations that focus on governance and anticorruption issues. There is a place for helping the media understand the importance of the work done by organizations that have the capacity to protest and to engage the political and policy systems within a neighborhood, village, city, region, and country. Informed coverage is neither “puff pieces” nor “gotcha journalism.” It means investing in the training of journalists, for print and electronic media.

If the World Bank is concerned with fighting poverty and distributing economic resources more equitably, then being able to fight corruption is a necessary ingredient in the mix. It means that the story, critically and independently examined, of organizations doing such work has to be known. Editors and journalists have to understand what these groups are doing, how they reach their decisions, and what their goals and objectives are. The organizations have to understand the media’s needs and requirements for evidence-based journalism. This approach is not about press releases or sound bites, shouting slogans, or forms of action exhibitionism. It encompasses something special: candid and direct relationships between organizations dealing with governance and corruption issues and the media. That relationship should be a welcome responsibility for country directors and global media companies, who are not exempt from needing to be pressured to step up and meet their responsibilities.

To make the special place of the media indeed special, those working on governance and corruption-related issues have to recognize that the media form an arena for advocacy, one that must be engaged with a sense of strategy by knowing the culture and norms. There are boundaries. Reporters and journalists are not advocates in their ordinary roles. Investigative journalists operate on the basis of evidence that often has to be corroborated using more than one source. Stakeholders must be as responsible as the journalist; therefore, they have an obligation to provide reliable information to maintain and strengthen their credibility and authority with journalists. Their power is as a provider of information that can be created in metaphoric and symbolic terms through theater, film, art, and poetry.

Leadership is exercised through such cultural expression. It gives expression to countless issues that rub up directly against corruption and governance. Go to a rural area depleted by deforestation, and any locally written theater presentation conveys that something is rotten. The corrupt officials are identified by function if not by name. That corruption is what deserves the attention of the media. The media must learn to give it; citizen groups must learn to ask for it.

To respect citizens as stakeholders is to understand that citizen power comes from the power of creating your own media. An illustrative story from Indonesia points to the power of creating an organization's own media. Comic books are printed that detail corruption problems facing Indonesian villagers. They are written in Bahasa Indonesian and the local dialect. The comic book, or one would say the graphic story, ends by telling the next steps people can take—the very heart of what makes an effective advocate. They go into skills workshops. They receive help from honorable and retired civil servants. They get at the systemic abuses of corruption, identify public budget misuse at the local level, and begin fighting back.

These unmediated voices—and they are likewise found in southern Africa and South Asia—give the real story about what landlords do to abuse tenants, the effects of liquor on physically and emotionally abused women, the police violations of lawful procedures, and so much else.

Whether it's wall posters or plays, graphic art or poetry and song, citizens' words express thoughts that create a music that is part of what has to be presented and listened to. The media creations of citizen organizations represent authentic voices. They are not the only authentic voices, but they are authentic and should be recognized as such.

Policy! Policy! Policy!

Citizen organizations that are stakeholders will immediately take policy outside a rarefied hothouse climate. Now policy elites will participate. So will organized economic interests. The difference is that they are not the only participants.

Here is one way to get a handle on the policy mix. What makes for public integrity? Put another way, what negates a country's being a failed state?

An audit of a vibrant civil society would include going beyond what is generally considered to be substantially free and fair elections. Such qualities go well beyond the counting of votes but, in the most welcoming of ways, recognize that citizens are part of the politics of the country. They ask questions of all the political parties and their candidates; they then get answers and give answers back. Such engaged actions begin to create the kind of public relationship that extends past the election at any government level. The actions provide a way of injecting issue politics into election campaigns in which the issues carry over past the election to implement policies, as well as to enact them.

An expectation is created for the media to report the civic engagement and to find ways to “follow the money.” This action cannot be done without helping to educate a generation of journalists to dig, poke, and not be forced to write daily or electronically report daily accounts. This approach will require money and, in the design of the distribution of funds, appropriate boundaries and walls will have to be set up to separate those who fund from those who receive. The subjects of the investigation that threaten and harass will be exposed, including their subtle practices.

None of us expects that this very different state of affairs to be willed by fiat or solely through declarative policies. Such policies draw on different experiences in different countries. They include public law but are not limited by it, which is why changing the expectations and norms matters. The expectation has to be that citizens will monitor, and so will the media, which is already happening. The question is how to create a continuing push that courses through many lands.

A policy strategy should focus on the following matters:

- A culture of autonomy for CSOs so that they are free from government harassment
- An ability to follow the money by developing systems of financial disclosure of officials when they hold office and by identifying who funds their election campaigns
- An ability to analyze public budgets to determine who benefits and who is bypassed, including the implementation of the budgets at all government levels
- A culture of transparency that is supported by law, giving citizens the right to access information and records and even to attend meetings of deliberative bodies such as a water authority

What is insufficiently appreciated is that citizens, when organized, learn to use right-to-information laws to advance their rights and interests. Municipalities are held accountable. Questions are raised about the poor quality of road construction. Utility rates are challenged. Police practices see the light of day.

Transparency and the internationally recognized right to know provide the essential building block in giving organized citizens the ability to influence public agendas and policies. The right to have information—for citizens to have knowledge before decisions and policies are thrust upon them—requires laws as well as a culture of officials abiding by these laws and a culture of citizens insisting that they do. An effective legal framework is necessary, provided that it is used by citizens and officials alike.

We can think of transparency policies in the following ways:

- Ensure citizens can easily be able to receive information from government, which would be public documents. There need to be active requests for such information so citizens can formulate public demands.
- Ensure that citizens are organized to pry information out of government officials. Part of what has to be done is to find allies among elected officials at all levels. After all, officials habitually keep themselves in the shadows.
- Identify information that people must receive on issues that relate directly to their experience, such as safe drinking water. Organized citizens can be trained to test the quality of the drinking water, to report when illnesses occur, and to work with public health officials to identify problems. Other examples can be found in areas such as disclosing the value of nutrients.

- Have citizens develop the capacity of connecting to others who have knowledge, including experts, to initiate inquiries that create new demands for information that can lead to action on public policies.

As a public problem's scope gets addressed, the quality of information—the relationships, patterns, trends, and contradictions that flow from facts and figures, interviews, and anecdotes—will be used in ways that course through the political and policy process. Whether it's an organized group of citizens concerned with health, education, shelter, livelihood, or countless other matters, citizens with information are a far better bet to increase their stakes and build toward agreed-on actions and decisions. None of this data gathering is a substitute for the tug and pull of politics. It informs it and creates the culture of people having public lives through their civic engagement.

Next Steps

The existence of various ways of measuring the quality of democratic governance and corruption represents an effort at getting a deeper understanding of how to deal with issues that are deeply rooted and, in many cases, filled with silt and sludge. Certainly, the work of Transparency International and Global Integrity has added much to our understanding.²

Information to be gleaned and questions to be asked include the following:

- Are there measurable audits to check the autonomy and freedom of civil society, the availability and access of public information, and the media's role as an independent and probing entity within the country itself?
- Is the election process free and fair? Does a robust politics exist in which there is an interaction between citizens and those who are campaigning?
- What are the levels of accountability of a country's national and local governing systems?
- Are budget decisions part of public discussion or something that amounts to a perfunctory process?
- What systems are in place to ensure that services are allocated and distributed without bribery or the kind of favors that amount to legalized bribery? Has whistle-blowing protection been recognized? Are there safeguards against procurement corruption?
- What oversight and regulatory mechanism are in place? Are taxes paid, or is there an understanding of gross underpayment? Is there any kind of ombudsman system in place anywhere in the country?
- What are the disclosure laws on corruption? If there is nonperformance of enforcing laws, what recourse do citizens have?
- What is the public conversation on these matters? What are the investigative reporters learning, and who are they? What do people who challenge corrupt practices talk about?

Citizen organizations can protest and be political, or they can only protest. They will be political if they are listened to, which is the essence of a respectful relationship. So far at the country level, they are not, which is what must change. It is less a question of instigation and more a question of what interventions are necessary to enable citizens battling for good governance and fighting corruption so that they can operate effectively.

Notes

1. Samuel Paul, a retired World Bank official, initiated and organized these efforts. In a public talk at the World Bank in 2003, he detailed the institutionalized corruption that had occurred.
2. As full disclosure, the present author chairs the Global Integrity's Board.

Reference

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Cultivating Deliberative Development: Public Deliberation as a Means of Improving Local, State, and Federal Governance

John Gastil

Public deliberation could do much to improve state, local, and national governance and to aid in the course of both political and economic development.¹ Deliberative forums and other practices have been found to educate and empower the general public, reconnect citizens and public officials, and improve the overall quality of the laws we establish and the norms we set for public behavior. These broad claims are based on the successes already enjoyed by deliberative experiments (Gastil and Levine 2005; Leighninger 2006), as well as the theories that are taking shape to explain day-to-day deliberative practices (Chambers 2003; Delli Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs 2004; Gastil 2008; Ryfe 2007).

In the context of international development, public deliberation also has the potential to address the conflicts that precede—or arise amid—economic and political transitions. As Joseph Stiglitz, former senior vice president and chief economist of the World Bank, wrote, “One of the obstacles to successful development has been the limited ability of some countries to resolve conflicts. The ability to resolve disputes is an important part of social and organizational capital.... There is likely to be greater acceptance of reforms—a greater participation in the transformation process—if there is a sense of equity, of fairness, about the development process, a sense of ownership derived from participation, and if there has been an effort at consensus formation” (quoted in Chang 2001: 75). Deliberative designs have been designed for expressly these purposes—forging a moral and policy consensus (Gutmann and Thompson

1996; Pearce and Littlejohn 1997) and building the public's capacity for solving its problems together (Leigninger 2006; Mathews 1994).

Admittedly, some proposals for political reform sound good but prove unworkable in practice. The imagined success of a new approach to governance may depend on a series of tenuous assumptions about cost, cultural context, administrative competence, and political will. Deliberation comes with its own set of assumptions, but the prerequisites for deliberation are few, and the value of a deliberative approach far outweighs the real costs associated with it.

What Public Deliberation Means

In shorthand terms, *deliberation* means to reflect carefully on a matter, weighing the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions to a problem. Deliberation aims to arrive at a decision or judgment on the basis of not only facts and data but also values, emotions, and other less technical considerations. It is not only a rigorous analytic process but also a respectful, egalitarian social process in which each participant has an adequate opportunity to share his or her perspective and to listen carefully to different points of view (Burkhalter, Gastil, and Kelshaw 2002).

Although a solitary individual can deliberate (Goodin 2003), more commonly *deliberation* means making decisions together, as a small group, organization, or nation. In larger political units, deliberation is often aided by large institutions, such as the mass media, schools, and the complex network of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Thus, we could hope for deliberative elections facilitated by mediated deliberation, or we could hope to establish deliberative norms in a community or even a society (Gastil 2008; Page 1996).

These are all important varieties of deliberation, but this chapter will focus on public deliberation as it takes place in face-to-face citizen discussions and meetings of anywhere from 5 to 500 participants. *Public* deliberation refers to talk aimed at making collective judgments about matters of public concern. Examples of such issues include large public policy disputes (for example, land reform or energy policy); broad cultural conflicts that may or may not result in policy change (for example, public attitudes toward gays and lesbians); and smaller, more specific matters that require public judgment (for example, deciding whom to hire as the new school superintendent).

This chapter works with an even more narrow conception of deliberation, which focuses on its *democratic* character (Gastil 1993). Democracy is about self-governance, so democratic deliberation should be connected to public decision making, to having real authority, or at least to being consequential. The process also should be inclusive by at least involving representatives from all relevant parties involved in the public issue. Participants should have an underlying commitment to the democratic process that tempers disagreements

and respects the intrinsic value of deliberative conflict resolution. In addition, a fully democratic discussion process asks participants to show a modicum of respect for one another. Finally, the participants in a democratic process should attend to the integrity of the deliberation itself by affording one another adequate opportunities to speak, avoiding manipulative discourse, considering what all participants have to say, and making sure that all can understand the issues under discussion.

A close cousin of public deliberation is the participatory model of democracy, but there are recognizable differences (Hauptmann 2001). Participatory democracy's highest principle is the effective expression of preferences on all matters of public concern. In this view, the volume and intensity of public participation indicate the vibrancy of a democracy, and participatory democrats worry that deliberation could dilute the strength of public engagement by supplanting robust citizen influence with quiet discussion. By contrast, deliberative democracy emphasizes the deliberative quality of participation and would, if necessary, sacrifice some quantity of public expression for a more reflective articulation of the public's will.

Another difference is that participatory models of democracy downplay the potential for consensus and stress the importance of all voices entering the democratic choir, even if they refuse to sing in unison. The deliberative approach acknowledges the necessity of majority rule and the value of pluralism but emphasizes the need to complement adversarial politics with a mode of public discourse more likely to discover common ground and promote accord (Mansbridge 1983).

Modern-day elections illustrate the meaning of deliberation and contrast it with a purely participatory approach. In Mexico, for example, the end of one-party rule by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional signaled the movement toward more inclusive, open, and fair elections in Mexico (Tulchin and Selee 2003). This transition is making Mexico's elections more participatory, but it will not necessarily result in a very deliberative electoral process. The United States has a long history of participatory elections, yet its elections are far from the deliberative ideal. Voters are woefully underinformed, campaigns are largely manipulative exercises, the mass media do little to stimulate careful reflection on issues and candidates, and the result is the election of public officials who are accountable only insofar as they must not run afoul of the nondeliberative public during the next election. The elections themselves are not deliberative exercises, and they result in elected bodies that have little incentive to deliberate on the public's behalf (Gastil 2000).

A good illustration of a modestly deliberative process is the National Issues Forums (Mathews 1994; Melville, Willingham, and Dedrick 2005). This program gives average citizens the chance to come together to discuss the most important public issues of the day in small study circles or larger community forums. The emphasis at the forums is on the public's coming to its own

understanding of an issue, such as immigration policy or questions involving public schools. In some cases, the forums are integrated more directly into public governance by maintaining an ongoing connection between elected officials and the deliberators, so that citizens and policymakers can educate one another and work in concert (Gastil and Kelshaw 2000). Far from a unique experiment, the forums now have a long history in the United States and are one of many similar programs promoting public discussion (Burton and Mattson 1999; Ryfe 2002).

What Deliberation Requires

Public deliberation has intrinsic value that makes it a desirable complement to any set of quasi-democratic public institutions and practices. One cannot, however, simply drop it into place. Social psychologists have experimented for years with implementing democratic decision-making methods or leadership styles, but both interventions are likely to be more successful when they appear in the right circumstances (Gastil 1994; Sager and Gastil 2006). This success is equally true for public deliberation, which can flourish only when a number of requirements are met.

Authority and Public Space

For deliberation to be truly democratic, it must (eventually) fit into the public architecture in a way that gives it real authority or influence. This fit usually means that public officials need to cede some control to the participants in public deliberation. Otherwise, the deliberation will be effortful but meaningless and could backfire, thus undermining the legitimacy of a government that sought to win public confidence by promoting deliberation. The most ambitious proposals have suggested creating deliberative citizen bodies that would take authority directly out of the hands of public officials (Threlkeld 1998) or serve as checks on their authority (Leib 2004).

Sometimes, however, all that is required of local public officials is that they not obstruct a deliberative process that occurs in the unofficial spaces of civil society. Bringing the public together to deliberate can have an educational, rather than policy-making, purpose. The aforementioned National Issues Forums normally serve this purpose, which poses no direct challenge to the authority of elected officials. More interesting is the potential for deliberation to increase a political unit's capacity for action by generating public energy, developing a broad consensus, and fostering commitment to seeing ideas to fruition. In this sense, public deliberation can make a municipality more powerful than it was before, complementing rather than diminishing the preexisting power of public officials. As a relatively mundane example, if public forums created a motivated, engaged public committed to improving their community's attractiveness to tourism, their deliberation will yield more

focused hours of public labor (much of it voluntary) than the local government could have hoped to produce simply through spending money from its public works budget to purchase such labor.

Investments in High-Quality Deliberation

In addition to requiring space in the public sphere, deliberation requires the expenditure of considerable human and financial resources. Whether the costs are borne by civic organizations or public agencies, high-quality deliberative forums require the planning, facilities, participant recruitment, and, often, cooperation of experts and the gathering of other informational resources to aid the deliberation.

Another example of a deliberative process illustrates how quickly these costs can add up. The citizen jury process has a long history and has been used in various forms in Australia, Europe, the United States, and elsewhere (Crosby 1995; Crosby and Nethercutt 2005; Smith and Wales 1999). Modeled loosely after a jury trial, a citizen jury empanels a randomly selected group of one or two dozen citizens to hear contrasting views on an issue over a five-day period. When not listening to and questioning expert witnesses and partisans, the jurors deliberate among themselves with the aid of a professional facilitator. At the end of their deliberations, they answer a series of questions about the subject they have discussed. These questions, which are known to all parties at the outset, help generate a coherent set of final public judgments, so the policy makers can clearly understand what the citizen jury recommends after its deliberation.

A single jury might cost anywhere from \$50,000 to \$200,000 to convene, depending on various factors, such as how far the jurors have to travel and whether the proceedings will be videotaped professionally. One of the most important expenses is the payment of the jurors themselves. To ensure that the jurors are a representative sample of the public when they are first contacted (usually by telephone using random-digit dial), prospective jurors are informed that they will be paid a good daily wage plus all travel, lodging, and meal expenses for their participation. Without this financial incentive, the participation rate would not be as high, and the jurors would not be as representative of the general public.

Even if one does not pay a random sample to participate, a serious commitment to inclusion is still labor intensive, if not expensive. For instance, another approach is to devote considerable resources to recruiting people from different socioeconomic and cultural groups within a community. In this model, organizers use their civic network connections in a community to reach out to other organizations and individuals, and the result can be a larger group of unpaid participants that includes at least some members of the relevant subpublics (Leighninger 2006). This is not a cost-saving method, however, because it substitutes considerable organizational effort for the cost of random selection and financial inducement.

Just as one can calculate the costs of deliberation, however, so can one put a dollar value on the importance of convening deliberative forums. For example, Ned Crosby and the present author have proposed that when there are initiatives, referenda, and other measures on the ballot, a random sample of citizens should deliberate and record their reflections and recommendations in the same official voters' guide that is routinely distributed to households before an election (Crosby 2003; Gastil 2000). A single ballot measure may ask the public to commit tremendous sums of money to future building projects, public employee salaries, and so on, or a measure may suggest ending a tax that generates millions or even billions of dollars in revenue. In 2002, for example, the people of Seattle, Washington, voted by a very narrow margin (less than 1 percent of the vote) to build a \$1.3 billion monorail system. Had a citizen panel, costing less than a fraction of a percentage of that amount, deliberated and recommended against the monorail, the voters probably would have rejected the project. In the end, cost estimates ran up to \$4 billion, and the project was scrapped after spending millions of dollars on planning and staff. Examples like this show that when such a large decision is put in the public's hands, there is wisdom in investing even a small amount of money in a moment of structured public reflection.

Participant Attitudes and Abilities

Even if the institutional setting is right and resources are available, deliberation still requires participants with the right attitude and abilities to work together effectively (Burkhalter, Gastil, and Kelshaw 2002). First, participants need to perceive deliberation as an appropriate mode of public discourse. There are many other ways of speaking, such as adversarial debate (Mansbridge 1983), testimonial monologues (Sanders 1997), and less instrumental but open-ended dialogue (Pearce and Littlejohn 1997). And, of course, there is not speaking at all. Any of these alternatives may be more common or conventional in a given municipality. If the residents who are invited to deliberate consider it an inappropriate mode of talk, then it is unlikely they will choose to participate.

Second, participants are less likely to deliberate effectively if they perceive that common ground is impossible. Common ground—let alone a full consensus—is not required of a deliberative forum, but it is often taken to be the ideal result of a fully deliberative public process (Cohen 1997). After all, if the residents of a city think that there is no chance for changing each other's minds, much less any hope for reaching accord, then they will be reluctant to devote the time it takes to deliberate. Voting is a much more efficient means of counting people's private preferences; deliberation requires the faith that from talk might come a new set of judgments, and a change in how people view themselves, each other, and the issue at hand (Warren 1992).

Third, public deliberation requires citizens who have the ability to consider carefully a range of views on a public issue. Problem analysis, reasoning, and information-processing skills are all helpful for this purpose. Emotional maturity

and social skills are also necessary to disagree respectfully and to empathize with other points of view. In addition, participants need to be able to express their individual points of view effectively; to make sound arguments for particular policy options; and, one hopes, to frame those arguments in terms of a common good (Bohman 1996; Cohen 1997; Gutmann and Thompson 1996). Although deliberation does not require genius and social flair, it is likely that deliberation will fail if few of the participants are well equipped for the exercise.

Finally, participants will not deliberate if they are not motivated to do so. Even if an organizer can bring people together into the same room, lead them through discussion materials, and elicit comments from the participants, they will avoid putting forth the effort necessary to weigh issues, consider conflicting viewpoints, and forge consensus if they do not believe that deliberation is a useful activity.

What the Benefits of Deliberation Are

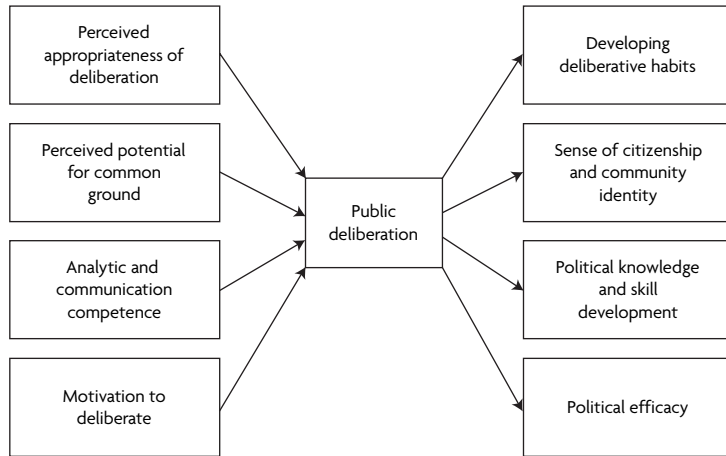
That last set of requirements for deliberation may seem particularly daunting, even to a public official who can personally create the institutional space and gather the resources necessary to convene deliberative forums. Fortunately, there is reason to believe that deliberation can cultivate the attitudes and abilities necessary for effective public deliberation. Moreover, deliberation has the potential to transform the larger political culture and, ultimately, to create better public policies and more legitimacy for municipal officials who need public support to govern effectively.

The Self-Reinforcing Quality of Deliberation

Burkhalter, Gastil, and Kelshaw (2002) present a more complete account of the connections shown in figure 20.1, but the basic argument is that deliberation changes participants in ways that make them more likely to deliberate in the future.

First, there is a generic aspect of human social interaction that makes deliberation habit forming. For example, Gastil and Dillard found that participants in the National Issues Forums often “discover that they can deliberate together, rather than arguing against one another” (1999: 189). Gastil (2004) also found that, statistically speaking, participation in those forums reduced participants’ eagerness to dominate their political conversations. In sum, the habitual experience of deliberating makes it more likely that one will come to see deliberation as appropriate in the future.

Second, deliberation has the potential to transform people from private individuals into public citizens (Dewey 1954; Gutmann and Thompson 1996; Warren 1992). Because it requires the consideration of multiple viewpoints, deliberation can make a person come to see himself or herself as part of a larger community, thereby sharing values with people who are very different in other respects. If deliberation also makes people more public spirited and tolerant,

Figure 20.1. How Public Deliberation Changes Participants

Source: Based on Burkhalter, Gastil, and Kelshaw (2002).

Burkhalter, Gastil, and Kelshaw (2002) argue, “It could also have an indirect effect on individuals’ future perceptions of the potential for common ground. After all, one is more likely to presume the possibility of shared beliefs and ways of speaking when one’s self-conception is that of a citizen, a member of a larger political community” (416).

Third, research has shown that deliberation can help people develop a broader knowledge base (Fishkin and Luskin 1999; Luskin, Fishkin, and Jowell 2002). It is likely that public deliberation also helps develop useful analytic and communication skills, just as it does for elected officials serving in legislative bodies (Bessette 1994). After all, two of the basic modes of learning are observation and enactment (Bandura 1986). Public deliberation, whatever its purpose, is always a form of adult civic education that teaches the very skills it requires (Gastil 2004).

Finally, deliberation is likely to boost participants’ sense of individual efficacy—their belief in their own ability to take effective action (Fishkin and Luskin 1999). Even if deliberation disillusiones some participants, who came into forums with unrealistic expectations about the potential for group action (Gastil 2004), it still makes participants more confident in their own, personal civic skills. Because people often prefer to do the things they do well, this boost in efficacy may, in turn, motivate participants to deliberate in the future when the opportunity presents itself.

Civic Culture and Institutional Legitimacy

If deliberation has these effects on the people who participate in public forums, it is likely to have a greater, ongoing effect on the character of the larger civic culture. Four decades ago, Almond and Verba (1963) popularized the notion

that democracy requires a strong cultural infrastructure—a set of habits, commitments, and attitudes conducive to self-government. More recently, Putnam (1994, 2000) has argued that democracy flourishes only when there is abundant social capital—the rich social network connections and public trust that help a large, diverse public work together. Deliberation can help shape the civic culture of a city—or even a nation—by teaching citizens a new mode of public discourse.

One reason deliberative forums are an effective means of cultural learning is that they are, for the most part, small. Small groups provide people with a tangible, visible microcosm of the larger society (Giddens 1984; Schwartzman 1989). Although not always consciously, people learn and test social norms, rules, and practices in these groups because those items represent the closest thing to a full society that a person can experience. In families, social groups of friends, workplaces, and other quasi-private spaces, we learn how to function and behave as private selves. In quasi-public spaces, and particularly in special settings such as deliberative forums, we learn who we are as public selves—as citizens.

A concrete example of this public self is the jury trial as it is practiced in the United States. Few people recognize that the jury was originally designed not only as a means of producing fair trials but also as a method for securing public legitimacy (Dwyer 2002). One means by which the jury achieved this legitimacy was by making plain the public's responsibility for its own decisions. In a jury trial, after all, it is the individual members of the jury who render the verdict or judgment, not the presiding judge. Not only does the jury make clear where responsibility lies, but also it teaches the kinds of attitudes and skills citizens need to perform effectively their other civic responsibilities.

Research that the present author has conducted with colleagues has found that participation in jury deliberation can have a positive net impact on how people view themselves and their public responsibilities. Jury deliberation can positively affect the future likelihood of voting and other forms of civic engagement (Gastil, Deess, and Weiser 2002; Gastil and others 2008; Gastil and Weiser 2006), as well as the public's underlying attitudes toward legal institutions (Consolini 1992; Gastil and others 2008; Gastil and Weiser 2006). (For the most current research from this project, see <http://www.jurydemocracy.org>.)

Given the generally low levels of voter turnout in the United States (Miller and Shanks 1996) and despite the public's relatively strong commitment to jury trials (Vidmar 2000), it is clear that jury deliberation is no guarantee of a highly engaged and deliberative civil society. It may be the case, however, that the lessons that jury service teaches are some of the most important positive inputs into civic culture in the United States. The jury may be sustaining even modest levels of public participation. Moreover, it has done a great deal to secure public legitimacy for the justice system, with overwhelming majorities of U.S. citizens expressing confidence in the criminal justice system (Hans 1993). (Perhaps the lower levels of public support for civil trials are due, in part, to the relative infrequency of juries in civil cases.)

This is not to say that all countries should adopt the jury system, *per se*, for resolving local disputes. Rather, the jury is simply an illustration of an institutionalized form of public deliberation that helps to sustain a larger civic culture by teaching basic civic skills and giving citizens a sense of ownership for their larger system of justice. It is reassuring to think that a truly democratic government can thus bolster its legitimacy by providing citizens the opportunity to be democrats—to govern themselves.

Higher-Quality Decisions

In the end, deliberation may be most valuable because it can yield higher-quality decisions. In one set of circumstances, deliberation can encourage government agencies to make tough decisions. When public officials watch deliberative processes, they often come away surprised by the quality of public discussion and the robustness of the recommendations that citizens make.

In New Mexico, for example, the Department of Transportation sponsored a series of Citizen Conferences on transportation priorities for the state (Gastil 1997). The department needed to understand the public's policy preferences so that it could set the flexible portion of its budget for the coming years, and it faced a difficult tradeoff between improving the most heavily traveled freeways or maintaining the much larger network of rural highways. The department had previously conducted telephone surveys, but these surveys did not give a clear sense of the public's preferences; the department was not confident that the surveys yielded an informed set of preferences. The six Citizen Conferences, which were held in each region of the state, provided a clearer picture of the public's preferences. Each conference lasted only one day, but after hearing testimony and deliberating together, each group of citizens reached a clear set of recommendations. Taken as a whole, they favored improving the core road system, and the department was able to move forward.

Public forums, however, do not always have the direct connection to the policy-making process that was present in the New Mexico example. In these cases, there is no guarantee that the public deliberation will result in better public policy decisions, even when the decisions offer clear and useful guidance to policy makers. For instance, the January 2003 National Issues Convention brought together a random sample of the U.S. public to deliberate on America's role in the world. After a few days of deliberation, the public opinion shift was clearly in favor of a more multilateral approach to Iraq and a less preemptive policy regime. The event went largely unnoticed, and the advice was not heeded.²

In other circumstances, it is the public that will make the decision directly. In these cases, the absence of public deliberation can result in short-sighted, unreflective preferences that dictate the outcome of an election. If a deliberative process can be inserted into such an election, as suggested by Gastil (2000) and Crosby (2003), such elections are likely to produce more prudent outcomes.

Conclusion

In the end, the benefits of deliberation tie together to make for a more educated and public-spirited citizenry that is more eager to govern itself competently. That benefit, in turn, is likely to yield more legitimacy for public institutions, because such deliberations can become nothing more than the public viewing itself as the legitimate keepers of the democratic flame.

Deliberative practices will have to be tailored to fit the particular needs of the particular local, state, or national government and its citizens. It would be ironic for someone to tell another public how it should choose to fashion its democracy. Designing one's public infrastructure is one of the most important processes of self-government. This act parallels Stiglitz's emphasis on "ownership and participation" in development. "We have seen again and again," he wrote, "[that] policies that are imposed from outside may be grudgingly accepted on a superficial basis, but will rarely be implemented as intended" (quoted in Chang 2001: 74). Thus, this chapter will go only so far as to advocate deliberative innovation without suggesting particular forms or practices.

Nonetheless, it is hoped that this chapter has offered useful theoretical background by highlighting some of the requirements and potential benefits of deliberation. If they are inclusive, carefully designed, well moderated, and influential, deliberative forums such as those described might make a valuable contribution to governments large and small. In turn, those same governments and the NGOs working alongside them might make a tremendous contribution to our global understanding of deliberation. Our many nations, states, and cities are ideal laboratories for developing the democratic innovations that will determine how we can effectively govern ourselves in this new century.

A Note on Resources

For more information on current research and practices in deliberation, readers may refer to these online resources:

- Web site of the Deliberative Democracy Consortium, which aims to assist governments and organizations developing deliberative practices and institutions: <http://www.deliberative-democracy.net>.
- Web site of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, which includes many useful tools and resources: <http://www.thataway.org>. It also includes a typology of the different approaches to dialogue and deliberation at http://www.thataway.org/exchange/categories.php?cid=105&hot_topic_id=1.
- Web site of LogoLink, an international network of civic reformers, researchers, and public officials promoting citizen participation in governance: <http://www2.ids.ac.uk/logolink/index.htm>.
- A list of international deliberation programs sponsored by the Kettering Foundation, which created the National Issues Forums: http://www.kettering.org/programs/international_civil.aspx.

- A periodically updated listing of international examples of participatory and deliberative practices: <http://democracy.mkolar.org/DDlinks.html>.

Notes

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2. For a transcript and details on the event, see http://www.pbs.org/newshour/btp/archive/transcript_20030112.html. For a related proposal to hold a “deliberation day,” see Ackerman and Fishkin 2004.

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Knowledge for Policy Making: Some Questions and Caveats

David E. Apter

Introduction

Years ago, while on a project with an international agency, I got into an argument with someone who said that programs are all well and good but only individuals matter. It was a point of view that failed to take into account the remarkable work done in the social sciences on group interaction, motivational analysis, and the mutual reinforcement of networks. It ignored the multitude of studies on adaptive change, crisis mediation, and, above all, political reforms and practices. That these could be confusing, overlapping, and sometimes intractable should go without saying. But whatever their deficiencies, they appeared to provide the only reasoned basis for defining problems, examining their ramifications, and making policy more relevant. Individuals, indeed!

Looking back, I am not so sure. Are there really good and reliable theoretical ways to instigate citizen demand for good governance and accountability in ways that would sustain governance reform? I am afraid I am increasingly skeptical. No doubt there are many plausible ideas, but too much depends on particulars of time, place, manner, and the nature of governance already in place. Every grand design proves to fall victim to situational contingencies—particularly so if we are interested in “instigating” democracy, or, for that matter, any kind of basic structural reforms. Like a good many architect’s designs, they look excellent on paper but fall short when built. Moreover, “instigating” reforms really requires extraordinary, in-depth knowledge of particular cases. One requires deep understanding not only of historical understanding and cultural practices but also of the actual relations of power

on the ground—relations that are often so disguised and hidden to the outsider that he or she literally walks a minefield without observing the dangers. Indeed, at a general level and as policy, “instigating” is a dangerous word—one that, insofar as it smacks of imperialism or missionary endeavors, carries its own baggage. And if one looks to the recruitment of “eligibles” coming from elsewhere to educate locals in ways to increase their participation in political and social life, a good number of experiences suggest that the practice may turn out to be more complicated than the idea.

Hence, if I sound skeptical, it is not the least because in my own time I have seen too many well-intentioned programs produce unintended negative consequences. This observation is by no means to be understood as a blanket judgment. Some efforts have, of course, worked better than others. One remarkable success in which I was privileged to have a hand was in developing and running the first Peace Corps training program. As a program for secondary schoolteachers in Ghana, it was the right program for the right moment. It occurred just after the birth of postcolonial regimes and before the spate of military coups, radical interventions, and failed experiments, some of which I was privileged (if one can call it that) to witness first hand. Indeed, one might argue that the political environments where the need for programmatic support is greatest and where donors are the most essential are also the most vulnerable—for example, where politicians, for reasons of their own, can destroy local governments and civil service systems, while squelching just the kind of citizen demand for good governance that good design aims to produce. Again, I have been witness to the negative social consequences of such vulnerabilities after having reviewed a variety of field programs in Africa and Latin America, studied experiments in participatory democracy in countries as widely different as the former Yugoslavia and Allende’s Chile, and done research in such diverse settings as Japan and China. One is not just chastened by how often good intentions end up badly. A variety of other “experiments,” some of them very well conceived, have had sticky consequences. Just ask George Soros about his experiences in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. There have been successes in the former but not much to show for efforts in the latter.¹

It is also fair to say that, explicitly or implicitly, civic participation has been in one way or another a component of a good many programs—most particularly of educational exchanges but also of field projects and programs with relatively immediate and limited goals. Some of the most successful have been long-running programs for academic training and research funded both locally and from outside sources. Here one thinks of Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales in Latin America as an exhibit A of success, especially as represented by the distinguished sociologist Fernando Enrique Cardozo, who not only instigated financial reforms in Brazil as a cabinet minister but also followed them through as president with long-term policies leading to a higher level of civic consciousness and participation. However,

with more mixed success, any number of nongovernmental organizations, philanthropic groups, and government programs have had as part of their purpose the inculcating and enhancing of citizen awareness, thus leading to more effective demands for good governance. Today, any reasonably sophisticated project—no matter how short term and what the objective—is likely to include some provision for follow-through, as well as some framework or institutionalized body to carry forward in a responsible manner work so instigated. Sadly, as has been said, such efforts fail in just the places where they most need to succeed.

Yet most projects that are worthy of succeeding and that are aimed at social engagement, participation, and democratization begin with the most worthy goals. It has long been recognized that policies directed toward the so-called developing countries require an articulated moral dimension including articulated responsibility norms, guides for appropriate action, and functional requirements standards. But whether under rubrics such as sustainable development, institution building, and community development, even those that temper high moral principle with pragmatic compromises have mostly fallen short of even modest such ambitions. Nevertheless, it has not been for lack of trying. Organizers of such projects, in my experience, continue to be acutely aware of the need to increase citizen participation and responsibility, to make government more accountable, and to engage citizens so that they might press for reform.²

If one looks back on theory, something to which I have contributed as passionately as anyone else in the belief that it opens up new ways of looking at and understanding events, circumstances, situations, and the like, it now seems as if everything has been tried and all has been found wanting. Thinking back, too, on the mountain of studies using, for instance, social theory, group dynamics, field theory, information theory, institutional political analysis, structural political-economy analysis, deliberation theory, group interaction strategies, analysis of intermediate institutions and firms, and theories of rational choice, one can state with some confidence that no political problem has gone unstudied in one or more of these terms. Nothing has been exempt: not the examination of different political systems, more or less open, more or less democratic, more or less stable, more or less institutionalized, not to speak of the “systems problems” they might confront; not the social settings, class, status, networks, degrees of cleavage, ethnic, religious, linguistic, ideological; and not the discretionary power of leadership, personalistic versus legalistic and constitutional power.

Have scholars been able to draw out of such analytical approaches and frameworks particularly useful policy directives? Not enough to give one a sense of probable successes for the purposes at hand. Today, perhaps it is only the economists who continue to show the necessary hubris, in large part because where their own plans fail, they can put it down not to deficiencies of their

own theories but to failures of other fields. What, then, are the prospects for further efforts given this grim rendition? Perhaps the one lesson to be learned is that only by restating general questions in empirical and site-specific terms will prospects for more knowledge and understanding be secured.

But the lesson will be learned only if one takes into consideration certain caveats. Let us assume that by using “we,” we are talking in terms of donors, policy makers, and indeed the architects and designers of policy in the World Bank (which poses a problem in itself today insofar as it is hardly a paragon of virtue in the eyes of many beholders). Insofar as efforts to “instigate,” in any meaningful sense, may require “instigators” from the Bank—that is, “outsiders” to engage “insiders”—the former are likely to be suspect from the start. This suspicion is especially the case if one of the aims is to have ripple effects on relevant communities.

Perhaps one way to ameliorate such difficulties is for the Bank to generate more high-quality, in-house research programs that are similar to the kinds of field research that universities engage in, but are more tailored to the specific projects already engaged in by the Bank. By this approach, I mean not simply improvements in reportage and evaluation but examination in detail of the entire process of project formation, design, practice, impact, and local ripple effects. One needs to analyze in ways that are site specific as well as program specific. Such a venture might begin with some of the better programs that the Bank has put in place, thus using them as venues for promoting the desired objectives.

Whatever the venue, however, to succeed, such effort requires a great deal of prior knowledge and experience of the history and culture of the places where such activities might be tried out. Included in this effort would be a review of the record of previous projects and their impact. This review would involve significant archival retrieval within the Bank itself, as well as extra-Bank efforts. In house, one should use the experiences of many years of officers and officials in the Bank (much of which remain untapped), especially those who have field experiences and who have accumulated a great deal of local knowledge.³ One could prepare symposia of materials in comparative terms, of changing social structures, of elite performance, and of popular participation. One can examine the differences it might make if a community has an inheritance of progressive elites able to play a constructive role in government and society, such as, for example, in India, where the activity of local elites in many instances has succeeded in keeping problems local rather than elevating them to national prominence, where they add to the burdens of central government.

Such knowledge is critical because without it one will remain more at the mercy of unforeseen contingencies of regime, economy, and engagement of groups whose social character and cultural differences become intensified with participation. One thinks of democratization as going hand in hand with pluralism—but pluralism and diversity can nullify the effects of democratization if and when there is a failure of civic or public space, and where the closer one gets to democracy, the more various groups elevate interests to the level

of nonnegotiable principles and, by so doing, increase the propensity to political checkmate and, indeed, potentialities for violence.

Especially insofar as a good deal of engagement today depends on the impact of globalization, on the social and political consequences of activities by global firms, one needs to have a good sense of whether the results have exacerbated or ameliorated internal social conditions. It is not just in Africa that one witnesses the effects of investment in capital-intensive rather than the labor-intensive industry and the negative consequences of marginalization, as well as the displacing, depatrimonializing, and dispersing of whole communities, thereby robbing them of more traditional pursuits without providing suitable alternatives. (One has only to go to the “oil rivers” areas of Nigeria to see some of the effects.) But so widespread are the consequences everywhere that a good deal of the unrest in the world today can be traced to a growing polarization between functional elites and the functionally superfluous. Among the consequences are the ethnic, religious, clan, and linguistic rivalries; the intensification of difference; and a propensity to violence.

If these assumptions are correct, then how can one presume even to begin to inject the kind of accountability that one thinks of as essential to civic society, the principles of national citizenship rather than parochialism, and the positive pluralism rather than monopolistic and hegemonic claims and tendencies? Alas, it now seems we are closer to the position I once so categorically rejected. Individuals *do* matter. And they matter a lot. A really effective individual who is agile, resourceful, and intelligent enough to improvise can save a badly conceived or flawed program. One must add, that same individual who may have succeeded admirably in one setting or situation might not do nearly as well in a different one. It is in individuals with the special ability to turn negative contingencies to social advantage—what Albert Hirschman has called the “principle of the hiding hand” (Hirschman 1967), the ability to make a leap from predicament to solution—where the gap between them seems too great to be negotiated. Moreover, any efforts to engage people on the ground require exceptional ability to instigate citizen demand for good governance whatever the venues, the media, the universities, the civil service, the churches, the trade unions, the ethnic or kinship associations, or the marching and chowder societies. And the ability requires a capacity to generate a great deal of local good will.

A word about criteria. By suggesting the need for intensive fieldwork and research, one cannot throw theory out. Theory is needed to understand what it is we know, how to evaluate, and what data to collect. But it has to be theory that is not remote but is embedded in empirical situations—what Clifford Geertz called “deep knowledge” (Geertz 1973). One needs theories that read events like a narrative, a narrative like a text, and a text like a sequence of practical intentions. We also need to be specific about the requirements of understanding that such theory will have to honor. What is meant by the term *good governance*? Should we settle for the standard stock-in-trade ingredients—the usual set

that includes political accountability and consent, transparency, tolerance and compromise, predictability, the rule of law, openness to popular opinion, public officials who can be held responsible to citizens for their actions, congruence between public policy and implementation, efficient and equitable allocation of public resources, appropriate institutional and legal safeguards against corrupt or self-serving official behavior, and an independent and capable autonomous judiciary—all of these operating within a political system of checks and balances, accountability, and consent? These high-flown objectives are most often honored in the breach everywhere. But what can that honor mean in concrete circumstances? To have even good hunches about such matters will indeed require deep knowledge.

Today, we hear much about the mutual tolerance of diverse and opposing views; the protection of rights and expression; and a spirit of compromise among public officials, party officers, and political figures rather than a “winners-take-all” approach to politics. The problem with this catalog of virtues is that if they are necessary conditions. Even these conditions are not yet sufficient if we are to reduce or prevent capricious and arbitrary decision making, while safeguarding laws, preventing assaults on persons and property, preserving the sanctity of contracts, and enhancing the rights of citizens—that is, the qualities and ingredients of political social life, the absence of which render civic action nugatory, or worse, subversive.

With such a sweeping bill of particulars, it might be argued that it is unrealistic to try to improve the situation without making matters worse. And if the result is yet another program that is not likely to have more than marginal consequence, then will not the “real” consequence be just another layer of bureaucracy, thus making it easier for a government to march to its own tune and act according to the way those in power choose to exercise their responsibilities—or not?

Three Frames

What these caveats and admonishments would suggest is not that no program should be attempted, but that any program needs to start small and operate in a political climate where it is likely to show visible success—and in places where the Bank has had a record of accomplishment. Similarly, the selection of sites would require differentiating different local polities. Obviously, to “instigate” groups aimed at government reform in Zimbabwe would be to put people at risk. But the outcomes are likely to be very different in places like Benin, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, and Uganda. Similarly, in a Latin America where there are signs of a “left” revival, programs aimed at governance reform might have an important strategic effect in avoiding some of the past mistakes that so-called leftist governments have made precisely in terms of accountability and governance. Would something like this be possible in Venezuela, for example, or Bolivia today? Perhaps.

This discussion suggests the need to design a limited number of pilot projects that would enable small inputs and individual efforts to have bigger effects. Although it is outside the scope of this discussion to suggest exactly what kinds of pilot projects one might establish, I would think that three frames of reference might help pinpoint some of the criteria that one might consider, especially in conjunction with field research.

Collaborative Dialogue

Employ those persons (a) who have expertise in particular countries where one might be able to best engage citizens as individuals or groups in a process of collective discussion and (b) who are skilled in encouraging collaborative dialogues with relevant groups and individuals. Here one thinks not only of formal levels, jurisdictions, or hierarchies of government and social system, but also of in-between institutional layers of the state and of between state institutions and levels of societal organization. By means of such collaborative dialogues, the aim would be to encourage people to think past the limits of their own understanding by reconsidering their circumstances, by breaking up what have been called institutional reflexes, and by thus making individuals more mutually responsive and institutional boundaries more fluid and flexible.

There are many different ways to accomplish this goal. My own preference is for using discourse theory in small groups—where it becomes possible through intensive and sustained interaction to break up and expose the underlying bases of ideologies and beliefs, of their components and assumptions, and of the myths and logic they embody—and, generally, for making people conscious of the limits of the narratives they use to account for their condition or to explain their circumstances. The object is to enable people to identify alternative solutions in terms of the ways in which they might think about their problems.

The groups in question would be those situated where decision-making obstacles become obvious, including local venues of authority and jurisdiction, and wherever opportunities appear to exist for stimulating citizen keenness. A sense of responsibility, zeal, and commitment most often needs to be down on lower levels in the hierarchy than on higher ones.

Subsidiarity

The second frame follows from the first. It follows a principle of the European Union, subsidiarity. In effect, as used here, *subsidiarity* means that, given a problem, its locus of decision making should be at the most appropriate jurisdictional level. This subsidiarity would favor a research focus and a process of dialogue going with it that might encourage citizens' participation where their interests are closest to home, including local government, education, medical services, agricultural programs, and provision of banking and investment activities, as well as where the promotion of programs such as HIV-AIDS prevention and basic health projects and training are likely to occur. One is

calling here for a virtual anthropology of method-using strategies taken from a variety of disciplines as tools for research and analysis. In short, the process itself should be designed to “instigate” activities likely to have the most immediate and visible effects. It should be in diverse groups such as those involved in local training programs, crafts guilds, cooperatives, centers of agricultural experiment, medical facilities, clean drinking water, drains, children’s play areas, and public bath houses and laundry facilities. Other group interest covers local community facilities and programs, local dispensaries, schools, libraries, day care centers, training courses, conventions, demonstrations, exhibitions, film shows, classes, and so forth. In short, apply the principle of subsidiarity both in terms of research for policy making, in designing policies themselves, and in terms of the practical working universes that people themselves understand. This application will play out in ways quite alternative and different from national, not to speak of international, levels.

Opposition

The third frame involves oppositional groups. Obviously, this is a very delicate matter. However, if one wants to know the range of what people are thinking on the ground, it is critical to examine their sources of dissatisfaction and anger. In this regard and at a minimum, studying opposition helps identify rectifiable grievances, as well as the groups and individuals who believe that the way society and government are structured is inimical to their interests. In this respect, opposition serves an information function. It suggests the raw edges of social and political life and indicates the degree to which people take their predicaments seriously. As well, some forms of opposition may provide opportunities for organizing groups that would indeed demand good governance and accountability in ways likely to sustain good governance.

Summary

What might be some of the advantages of such a threefold approach? One is that it enables us to think in terms of a double strategy, with intensive knowledge of particular places, a process that requires mutually interactive discussion, social reinforcement, and follow-up, as well as policy formation on the ground, as it were. One consequence might be that the more aware of opportunities one becomes, the more likely it is that one might recruit exceptional individuals who could otherwise remain outside the sphere of consideration. Another is that by such means one might be able to sensitize those at the top in host countries to the need for greater civic and community commitment, not the least because it increases their ability to use local knowledge for local solutions in contexts where transfers and shifts of resources and money, especially in the informal sector, are possible. Moreover, at a more local level, it is

more possible to understand the sources of grievance and the depth and scope of opposition. Localism also favors participation by women, whose levels of performance tend to be higher than their male counterparts.⁴ Finally, one might treat all levels of social and political activity as being in some sense local according to the appropriateness of the activities, the quality of those who might be involved, and the opportunities presented.

I have presented these ideas for discussion purposes only and in the hope that they can afford a means to open particular strategies and to suggest criteria that might be relevant—a beginning that is a long way from the end.

Annex I: Notes on Collaborative Dialogue

Once the public is organized and recruited, what is the best way to engage in activities that will stimulate public interest in reform? If we put the principle of subsidiarity together with the knowledge gained by “reading” the opposition, one might be in a position to do two things. One is to see what actual opportunities there may be for developing what might be called accountability groups and for deciding at which level they are most likely to be effective. A second is to consider what modalities might work best in pursuit of such goals.

More and more analysts are turning to one form or another of what has been called “deliberative policy analysis” in which deliberateness can take many forms (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003). It is in keeping with the idea of “governance” as against “government” or “regime” and the meshing of top-down and bottom-up approaches to participation. Here one needs to take into consideration the changing nature of political participation itself, through varieties of networks, thus enabling individuals to participate in political activities—or not—on a more fluid basis than by means of styled and formal electoral procedures, or even legislative and conciliar activities. This participation suggests that instigating citizen demand for good governance and accountability and sustaining governance reform is more and more a function of fluctuating opportunities within a political universe that Hannah Arendt has called communities of action, that is, “those able to arrive at shared problem definitions and to agree on common paths of problem resolution” (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003: 5).

Annex II: Notes on Subsidiarity

Subsidiarity refers to jurisdictions. It includes formal networks (for example, central, provincial, and local levels of government). It can include informal networks that arise in a variety of civic groups—ethnic, religious, racial—as well as functional groups, including private sector actors, agencies, and firms. Whatever the focus of attention, whether ministries, cabinets, or technical services, the emphasis is on social settings, channels and flows of information, and actual settings in which improvements in policy coordination and resource management are possible.

Subsidiarity, then, means finding the best and most appropriate levels of making decisions, engaging in public policy at each of these levels, and not only working out the best techniques for influencing policies themselves, but also holding the feet of decision makers to the fire when policies are inadequate or failures. In such situations, the problem is how to insert innovative techniques and influence without being socially and politically intrusive.

The principle also suggests that the closer such programs are to the ground, the greater the likelihood of success. By “close to the ground” is meant very practical projects that, depending on the kind of country or society we are talking about, may be as basic as clean drinking water and drains, provision of children’s play areas, public bath houses and laundry facilities, organization of local communities by means of training courses, conventions, demonstration exhibitions, film shows, and classes—in short, whatever “raw material” comes to hand. Here one thinks, for example, of the Saemaul Village program in the Republic of Korea and district teams in Uganda. Whatever the form, the success of subsidiarity programs depends on how good the working relationship is between levels of jurisdiction and how willing people are to remain flexible and experimental in their outlooks.

The great enemy of subsidiarity is bureaucratization, the perennial affliction of government agencies. Hence, it is at local levels where bureaucracy is least massive, information is most available, and talent is the most scarce that the greatest opportunities lie for reform of governance. The local level being made is to serve as microcosms for larger political situations. It is where information is most widely available and access to power is greatest.

Another problem is that although it may be said that the greater the degree of subsidiarity, and the more local the venue, the greater the availability of local knowledge. It can also be the case that quite often such information will not only be the wrong kind, but also be poisonous and punitive (who betrays whom, who steals what, who is sleeping with whose wife, who is manipulating power and money, who is trying to provide special access to both for clan or family members, and so on). In short, transparency is no more likely at lower levels of the political system than at the higher. Hence, the need is for more detailed information about the immediate history, cultural contexts, and networks of exchange that is appropriate to the area to be gained by consulting with local leaders. It means gaining cooperation from local personnel and administrative staff members and a search for appropriate elective mechanisms and procedures. It means identifying as governance reform the ways and means to integrate local governments and other institutions, so that they mesh better with other forms of social activities.

Whatever else can be said, the more local the level, the more everyone knows about everyone else, and the more people will have something to hide—a condition that reinforces both a passion for secrecy and a desire to expose. There is no dearth of strategies for maintaining silence, blood ties and kinship, sooth-saying and ritual priests, or mafia-like punishment. It is not suggested there is

something intrinsically “nice” about what goes on in local arenas of politics. And whatever else that can be said, local life tends to dance to its own tunes, even if someone else pays the piper.

All this suggests the need for great care in the organization of actual projects. It suggests a need for detailed research and knowledge of the particularities of place and circumstance before an attempt is made to put programs into practice. Great sensitivity is needed. Above all, it is necessary to recognize that much of what needs to be known will be site specific and not easy to generalize to other situations.

Annex III: Notes on Opposition

The importance of opposition is that it provides plenty of unrequited “instigation.” The problem is how to render some kinds of opposition more relevant and realistic in terms of demands in ways that make government accountability more effective. A great deal depends, of course, on whether democratic institutions are in place and political leaders are in some degree responsive to opposition views.

However, it is necessary to recognize that historically a great deal of good governance in terms of the conditions outlined above is a direct consequence of one or other form of opposition—so much so that one might argue that opposition has been the main driving force for political reform, as well as from a variety of groups, radical and militant, and others in the form of pressure groups, for instance, labor organizations or movements for civil rights, gender equality and women’s rights, and the expansion of civil liberties. Indeed, all the elements associated with accountability and reform on the largest scale—expansion of the franchise, decolonization, and development of the social welfare and social democratic states—have been in large measure responses to opposition movements that, whether because of fear of socialism or communism or more radical reforms in general, widened the scope of democracy and fine-tuned the sensibility of its moral claims. In this respect, opposition has been intrinsic to the democratic process itself. Insofar as this statement is correct, instigating support for good governance and accountability means addressing appropriate opposition groups.

Of course, to do this means distinguishing between oppositions and oppositions. One could argue that the most effective forms of opposition have been those most willing to take to the streets, to engage in mass action, to express extra-institutional protest, to pursue activities—in short, that “we” can hardly participate in without getting into political hot water. However, insofar as opposition is a critical source of information about what it is wrong, its presence and character can be used as a useful indicator of what kinds of reform might be required and the extent to which accountability needs to be strengthened.

This approach suggests that one needs to know how to “read” opposition diagnostically. That reading includes defining a political system according to the criteria of responsibility indicated in the first part of this discussion. One can begin by glancing at any local newspaper. As this chapter is being written, for example, one reads of growing opposition to the government by those supporting the wrongfully dismissed chief justice of Pakistan, who was fired for attempting to sustain the rule of law. A surprise victory of the opposition in one of India’s major provinces, which is a result of a hitherto unlikely Brahmin-Untouchable coalition, has opened up the possibility of multiple coalitions and the breaking up of the conventional mass parties. The ending of the long and bitter civil war between dominant Protestants and oppositional Catholics within the framework of a hitherto politically unacceptable coalition government in Northern Ireland has converted violent opposition into responsible government. In Bremen, Germany, the Social Democratic–Christian Democratic coalition was almost upset in an election in which Greens received 16.5 percent of the vote. One can cite many other examples.

Each of these examples contains a larger implication. In Pakistan, what we witness is a populist, public, extra-institutional protest that is more or less spontaneous while opposing the government for what is in effect the violation of its own constitutional norms and values, thus raising the question of not only when and how opposition takes to the streets but also whether there is an expression of a rejection to the authoritarianism of the state. The Indian case is an unusual example of social bargaining, the top and bottom of a hierarchical caste system with the Dalits and the Brahmins joining forces to bridge the great divide of caste, and by bringing those two opposite ends of the social spectrum together to defeat successfully the two long-standing and dominant main parties. The Irish case represents the juxtaposition of a long and exhausting civil war: the religious and the social combined in a bitter struggle over perceived inequalities and questioned jurisdictions, and it also shows how essential have been the (relatively recent) effects of a remarkable degree of economic growth and expanded opportunity.

Bremen represents what one might consider to be normal trade-off and political bargaining within the framework of conventional institutional and coalitional party politics. This case is also interesting insofar as the Greens, one of the main beneficiaries of the election, are themselves the product of a long evolution by a movement that was originally bitterly divided between Marxist hardliners and more instrumentalized *Realos* who desired to work within the prevailing political framework. By so doing, the party both reflected and affected public views about environmental and related issues. Their electoral power today is an indication of how their conversion to a responsible and improved political opposition made them more capable of influencing the public agenda.

As for Iraq, it is the null case. It has generated so many oppositions in competition with one another, which all too frequently follow the same fault lines

of political claims, beliefs, and ideologies, not to speak of fractionalization between foreign and local, that one could say that violence has created its own objects—its own structure, organization, and way of life.

Of course, such “reading” is only the tip of the iceberg. Any efforts to form reformist clienteles using appropriate opposition groups requires detailed knowledge not only of programs and people but also of their inner dynamics. At a minimum, however, whatever the mode of opposition, one can learn from it something about fluctuations in public support, what people see as preferred strategies of coalition and bargaining, and the kinds of rationality assumptions they make about self-interest politics.⁵

One can also “read” opposition to establish the extent of prevailing citizens’ trust, their sense of obligation, and the degree to which politics operates in a spirit of compromise where it is recognized that even if one’s party loses an election, there always is a next time.

At a minimum, one needs to evaluate the opposition to identify and articulate public responses to prevailing public policies and government activities. Opposition then serves an information function. It reveals the cracks and fissures in society. In authoritarian systems, it can be used remedially as something I years ago referred to as a “barometric” opposition (Apter 1962), one that has no hope of gaining power but that reveals to government what changes in public mood it needs to take into account. It is of particular relevance in the absence of accountability to what Dahl calls the *demos*.

Notes

1. Even with regard to Eastern Europe, he is frequently accused of using his programs as a cover for his private financial operations.
2. I have in mind projects aimed at raising the standards of the civil service in so-called developing countries, international associations and meetings, conferences of educators, businessmen, bankers, trade union leaders, local government officials, NGOs, and leaders of opposition parties. All are instruments for precisely the purpose of enlarging the circle of political responsibility; of providing options to government, information to agencies, and knowledge to decision makers; and by endorsing appropriate agendas to allow governments to become more aware of their policy alternatives and political possibilities in ways, at least it is hoped, that would promote political responsiveness and accountability.
3. For example, in some of the countries I know best, “history” includes not only colonial legacies and their political aftermaths but also patterns of local government, networks of expertise, and social groups of many varieties, some of which have already shown civic responsibility and the ability to reinforce reform—if not at national levels of government then at local levels. It also includes supporting schools and providing basic facilities like water and programs against disease. Some years ago, on returning to Uganda after a 25-year absence, I was surprised to find in Buganda remnants of what had been a “Victorian” middle class still active in supporting local schools, in insisting on standards of education, in questioning the conduct of civil servants, and so forth.
4. In this context, too, the subsidiarity principle is important for a number of reasons. One is that a good amount of economic prosperity will continue to depend on improvements

in agriculture, which is likely to remain more labor intensive than commercial and industrial enterprise. Rural growth reduces the prospects of marginality, functional polarization, and social pathologies that go with them in contrast to investment in industry. A great deal will depend on the extant condition of the labor force. Where there are great deficiencies in the labor force's education and skills, as, for example, in most parts of Africa, investment will be capital rather than labor intensive and concentrated in urban areas. Such forms of growth lead to displacement of rural to urban labor, the growth of urban poverty, and social and political unrest.

5. If one had been living in Weimar Germany, for example, the grievances identified and articulated by the Nazi Party should have been taken more seriously, not only in terms of specific claims—for a movement can generate its own meaning—but also in creating its own logic. By so doing, it will provide a space for myths of the past and a rectifying future, no matter how bizarre it might appear in terms of normal institutional politics. In this respect, when one speaks of the need to “read” opposition, the information so supplied is not simply a matter of grievances and claims, but it is the terms of its discourse, its narratives and texts, the paraphernalia of its symbols, its expertise in performance, its ability to establish itself as theater, its ability to convert private into public space where agency, its political theater, and, not least of all, its violence that will create its own momentum. In such a case, a diagnostic view goes well behind the notion of dialogue or the provision of venues for access to diverse points of view. That means looking at opposition as a form of power in and of itself.

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Case Studies



Participation, Transparency, and Consensus Building in Support of Public Sector Reform: The Case of Nicaragua

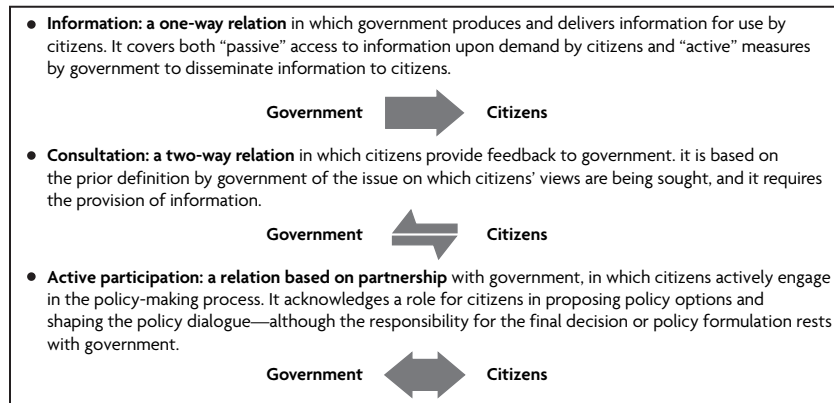
Michele Bruni

A reform encompasses a range of social dynamics and requires a wide spectrum of stakeholders to change their attitudes and behavior around an issue.¹ To be successful, a reform should seek the support of many different groups, from policy makers to the media, from mayors to civil society organizations—from all groups that influence each other while pursuing their interests.

The reform of the public sector is particularly complex, involving change at every level of society and posing the onerous challenge of creating consensus around a reform agenda among a great number of stakeholders with conflicting perspectives. By addressing this challenge, strategic communication—through integrating social and participatory communication tools, advocacy campaigns, and transparency measures—can help create a more enabling reform environment.

The comprehensive communication program developed and implemented in support of public sector reform in Nicaragua provides a unique case for the role of strategic communication in encouraging innovation in the policy design process and in promoting good governance and accountability. The program employed a holistic approach to communication. A holistic communication approach integrates a variety of one- and two-way communication techniques to strengthen the quality of the governance system and to promote participation both “internally” within the government and “externally” at the citizen level. Despite the political conflict between the assembly and the executive and the complexity of interests caused by the economic and social situation in the

Figure CS1.1. Information, Consultation, and Participation



Source: OECD (2001).

country, the communication program contributed—if only for a limited time because of political constraints—to building intragovernmental coalitions to ensure political will in support of the reforms and to strengthen citizen demand for accountability and participation.

Taking into account the political and economic landscape in Nicaragua, this case study explores three dimensions of strategic communication—participation, transparency, and consensus building—applied to public sector reforms for poverty reduction. The main purpose of this study is to analyze the government’s intervention in the sector, highlighting the strong interdependence among the three dimensions of communication in public sector reform. Finally, this case study will provide an example in which the three communication dimensions of participation, transparency, and consensus building can support a public sector reform program.

Before one delves into a detailed discussion of the Nicaraguan experience, it would be useful to refer briefly to the definitions of information, consultation, and participation as described by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In an effort to remain consistent, the case study will use these definitions to frame the analysis and to guide the conclusions (see figure CS1.1).

Background

Nicaragua’s Economy

Nicaragua’s recent history and the disparities in income distribution have led to considerable polarization in its politics and society. The economic and public sector environment is characterized by the presence of powerful interest groups that slowed the pace of a number of reforms. There is still a lack of a broad-based constituency for comprehensive reforms.

Nicaragua's economy is characterized by its vulnerability to external shocks, including natural calamities and commodity price cycles. Nicaragua in 2001 was considered the second poorest country in Latin America after Haiti, even though in 2005 the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index ranked the country above Bolivia, Honduras, Guatemala, and Haiti. The economy is also characterized by highly uneven distribution of income and a high level of poverty. In 2001, citizens living in poverty made up approximately 46 percent of the population, and those in extreme poverty were at around 15 percent. The results of a 2005 poverty survey indicated that extreme poverty had decreased and the distribution of income has slightly improved since 1998; the Gini Index decreased from 0.55 in 1998 to 0.51 in 2005 (World Bank 2007).

In the past 20 years, the country has faced an extremely high external debt burden and has engaged in many debt-relief initiatives with both the Paris Club and non-Paris Club creditors. In fact, in 2004 Nicaragua reached the completion point for the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and, consequently, benefited from the reduction of the external debt burden. Foreign aid as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) has been declining since 2003, though it remains an important factor of dependency at above 10 percent of the GDP.

Since the 1970s, Nicaragua's geopolitical characteristics and its vulnerability to natural disasters have defined its demand and supply factors for foreign aid. Within the framework of the Paris Declaration, between 2001 and 2006 Nicaragua prepared two generations of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and attained economic growth.² The government and donors began working on the harmonization and alignment of aid to the country.³

Preparation of and Consultation for the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper: Starting Point for Communication

Since 2001, Nicaragua has prepared in rapid succession two generations of PRSPs. Published in August 2001, PRSP-I comprised four pillars. The first pillar, "Broad Based Economic Growth and Structural Reform," was meant to strengthen the country's economic competitiveness to take full advantage of the market opportunities presented by the Dominican Republic–Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA).⁴ The second pillar, "Greater and Better Investment in Human Capital," and the third, "Better Protection for Vulnerable Groups," were focused on increasing human capital of the poor and on guaranteeing access to basic social services for the extremely poor, respectively.

The communication program in support of public sector reform was developed in the framework established by the fourth pillar of PRSP-I, "Good Governance and Institutional Development." This pillar's goals were as follows:

- Consolidating Nicaragua's democracy by developing strong, independent institutions

- Improving financial management in the public sector as well as transparency and the provision of timely information by government
- Fighting corruption and strengthening ethical values and promoting greater civil society participation in government affairs.

A well-functioning governance system was considered important to “maintain a participatory and decentralized approach to development and to continue efforts to foster a sustainable national consensus on critical development priorities” (World Bank 2005b). The importance of maintaining consensus on the reform processes, broadening and deepening the level of ownership, and continuing the policy dialogue established during the preparation of PRSP-I was underpinned by donors working in the country (World Bank 2005b), even though the lack of country ownership was mainly due to donor driven policies.

The main incentive for the introduction of poverty-oriented policies in Nicaragua was the prospect of debt relief promised by the HIPC Initiative. In the new context of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), donors operating in Nicaragua pressured the government to include civil society organizations (CSOs) more broadly in the process of building the Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, as the PRSP is referred to in Nicaragua.

Institutionalization of the Consultative and Communication Functions

The Consolidation of Consultative Processes

The Consejo de Planificación Económica y Social (CONPES, or National Commission for Economic and Social Planning) was initially created by the constitutional reform of 1995. Its purpose was monitoring the presidency on economic and social programs, socializing the stabilization and structural adjustment programs, making recommendations on the annual budget law, communicating the results of popular consultations related to specific issues in the national interest, and tracking and evaluating the actions taken on decisions made in the context of consultative group (donor) meetings (Grant and Bain 2006). In 1999, its first meeting was held as a result of donor pressure. The first draft of the PRSP-I was presented at the May 2000 donor meeting and approved three months later by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, leaving no room for consultation (Dijkstra 2005):

Initially CONPES included representatives of political parties, government ministries, and representatives from the chambers of commerce, trade unions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, the business sector, municipalities, and political parties. Additional ‘notables,’ appointed by government, also participated. The fact that CONPES’ members and the Executive Secretary are appointed by the government has led to a profound questioning of its legitimacy and representativeness within civil society and indeed within the legislature (Grant and Bain 2006).

Reforms were made to CONPES in 2002 that eliminated government representation and incorporated women, youth, autonomous regions, and media representation. This change strengthened the independence and autonomy of CSO deliberations. In 2005, it was reformed again, incorporating the Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo Sostenible (CONADES, or National Council for Sustainable Development) and allowing members of the regional and departmental development committees (Comités de Desarrollo Departamental y Regional, or CDD/Rs) to participate and vote in CONPES meetings. This reform “was intended to resolve the problem of disarticulation between the territories and the national level” (Grant and Bain 2006).

In 2001, the Secretaría Técnica de la Presidencia (SETEC, or Technical Secretariat of the Presidency, later renamed the Secretaria de Coordinación Estratégica de la Presidencia (SECEP, or Secretariat of Strategic Coordination of the Presidency),⁵ agreed with CONPES on the consultative process involving relevant stakeholders at the national level, as well as eight departments and several municipalities. The process was set up in coordination with several donors, among them Denmark, the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), and the United Nations Development Programme.

In May 2003, CONPES and CONADES published the results of the consultation in a report titled *Visión de Nación, la concertación de nuestro futuro* (Vision of Nation: The Consultation on Our Future). This process of consultation brought about the existence of a departmental level of participation, which was not yet formally recognized by the state at the time, as well as progress on various initiatives by the departments in cooperation with national and international NGOs and donors.

In 2003, Law 475, the Ley de Participación Ciudadana (Civic Participation Law), conferred legal status to the CDD/Rs. It recognized the preexisting local development committees and served as a significant step toward institutionalizing participation at the local level (Grant and Bain 2006).

Every CDD/R has developed a long-term, departmental-level plan, which has been incorporated into the national strategy for poverty reduction. The consolidation of the consultation process through legislation led to the formal establishment of an intermediate level of decision making between the central state and municipalities. In this context, the assembly, which is permanently in conflict with the executive, passed the Ley de Transferencia Municipal (Municipal Transfers Law) in 2003, which forced the central government to transfer immediately a significantly increased share of revenue (6 percent of the national budget) to municipalities—many of which were controlled by the opposition party—without requiring devolution of expenditure responsibilities.

The Establishment of the Strategic Communication and Governance Directorate within the Presidency

The public administration structure in charge of the preparation and supervision of the PRS was established in 1999 under the Aleman administration and

the SETEC name. This process was supported by the Inter-American Development Bank. Under the Bolaños administration, the Secretaria was renamed the Secretaria de Coordinación Estratégica de la Presidencia but kept all the functions of coordinating the PRS process. SECEP was in charge of defining the government's priorities; coordinating line ministries; planning the macro-economic framework and structural reforms; managing the national investment system; overseeing the design, promotion, and implementation of public sector reform; and supervising the implementation of public policies.

In June 2004, presidential decree no. 48-2004 created, within SECEP, the Dirección de Comunicación Estratégica y Gobernabilidad (DCEG, or Directorate for Strategic Communication and Governance) with the objective of supporting the governance reform process through the use of strategic communication. The DCEG team comprised 10 people, including two internationally hired consultants. Significantly, DCEG was detached from the presidency's press office; this change highlighted the difference between strategic and corporate communication.

Two key facts should be noted regarding the placement of DCEG in the SECEP organizational framework. First, it signified an understanding of the link between communication and governance, and it acknowledged the importance of holistic communication approaches to support and improve governance. Second, the high level at which DCEG was placed indicated the government's willingness to address important governance-related issues through communication and to provide the team with direct access to most ministries as well as the president.

The Communication Program Design

The design of the communication program involved the use of comprehensive and holistic approaches to communication and the integration of multiple communication techniques to strengthen the quality of governance for public sector reform. Dialogue was used as the cornerstone to build consensus and improve participation, goals that were themselves strengthened through transparency measures. Together, the whole framework created a positive feedback mechanism between policy-making and social monitoring processes.

DCEG's initial analysis was based on both qualitative and quantitative data, which had been collected from representative samples of the population and which used the results of the PRSP consultations. The analysis identified the most pressing issues in the country and defined the challenges that the communication program would seek to address, including

- The lack of transparency in the public administration system and the widespread perception of corruption among public officials
- The weak link between the central- and local-level investment planning mechanisms and the low level of trust toward association building mechanisms at the local level

- The negative and polarized attitude of the media toward public administration activities
- The lack of understanding of the reform among civil servants
- The negative perception of people toward their lives
- The incoherent image of the public administration as well as its incoherent messages.

Using this analysis, DCEG, with the support of CONPES, CONADES, and other allies within the public administration, started to build a framework for a strategic communication program and its implementing features, including criteria and main themes. These same data were used to develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system with 104 indicators.⁶

The overarching objective of the communication program was to “strengthen the transparency and participation processes of the public sector reform, and foster the change of people’s attitudes and perceptions toward the most relevant themes such as the country economic agenda, the PRS, the DR-CAFTA, and the public sector image, with a particular focus on fighting corruption” (Portal de Comunicología Mayanadia 2005). The results framework used to plan the communication program was developed using seven critical activities that had been identified as necessary for obtaining this objective (table CS1.1).

The communication program design was structured around two expected results: first, the development of an integrated and functioning participation system to provide citizens with better access to information and to establish two-way communication mechanisms between government and civil society; second, the strengthening of government’s communication capacity to establish a professionalized communication network in ministries and other key national institutions on the most important social and economic development initiatives.

The first step for designing a communication program was to come up with a vision. Following that exercise, seven criteria were established for the development of communication products:

- *People first*, which called for the use of real stories in the communication products, so that people would have the opportunity to recognize themselves and their neighbors in the stories and hence to trust the message
- *Useful infrastructure*, which sought to link any given infrastructure to its function (for example, roads with improved commercial opportunities and water systems with health) to prevent the infrastructures from being used as a means to showcase “achievements” of politicians
- *Government close to the people*, which aimed at providing practical information on public services and promoting knowledge of civic rights and responsibilities
- *Twenty-first-century modernity*, which looked to provide an image of a modern country of the future
- *Common project*, which sought to shift the focus from political conflict to development objectives

Table CS1.1. Nicaragua Strategic Communication Program Framework

Program Objective	Expected Results and Communication Challenges	Critical Activities	Outcomes
Strengthen the transparency and participation processes of public sector reform, and foster the change of people's attitudes and perceptions toward the most relevant themes—such as the country economic agenda, the PRS, DR-CAFTA, and the public sector image—with a particular focus on fighting corruption.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participation system integrated and functioning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Weak communication channels between CSOs and government to foster citizens' access to information – Absence of a legal framework enabling access to information – Weak CSO participation in decision-making process 2. Communication capacity of the government strengthened: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lack of a professionalized public sector communication network to deal with the most important social and economic development initiatives – Weak level of consensus around the reform agenda 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve institutional dialogue within public sector and between public sector and CSOs to improve public awareness of citizens' duties and rights. 2. Establish a legal framework for civic engagement to ensure citizens' access to information at national and local levels. 3. Strengthen technical and managerial capacities to deal with information management under a revised legal framework, including the design and implementation of the needed access to information mechanisms in key institutions. 4. Design, implement, and evaluate mechanisms for improved civil society participation in the decision-making process and for providing technical assistance on participatory and strategic communication. 5. Train on basic communication skills, including political analysis, message development, stakeholder identification, and design and analysis of public opinion survey. 6. Establish a public sector communication network. 7. Campaign to create consensus and ownership around the reform agenda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implementation of the communication campaign <i>iMejorando para vos!</i> on citizens' rights and the services of five ministries – Law that was not enacted on access to information and EVA implemented in eight ministries – Public sector communication network established in 17 institutions, visual coherent image achieved, and 47 communication specialists trained – CDD established in 14 departments and CDR in two autonomous regions – 643 CDD/R technicians trained on multicriteria analysis and on the Public Expenditure Framework and planning – Annual negotiation roundtable (national government–CDD/Rs) allowed territories to prioritize increasing percentage of public investment budget: 5% in 2004, 15% in 2005, 25% in 2006 – People's perception of government official corruption decreased by 7.2% – Public opinion expectation of a better personal economic situation in the future increased by 7.6% – 100 issues of <i>Paginas Azules</i> in both national newspapers

Source: Author's elaboration.

- *Friendly and verifiable data*, whose objective was to build trust and to have people understand the government's main message
- *Added value and open opportunities*, which provided useful information, such as contact information and the names of public procedures, among others.

The internal discourse on communication started, in the words of the DCEG director, around the idea that “Nicaragua is growing, and the country does not know.” The challenge was to instill in citizens a positive image of Nicaragua and to shift away from the political conflict to development objectives. The first step of the process was the strengthening of DCEG and consequently of SECEP in the design and implementation of a new institutional information workflow, and in the coordination of the working groups reporting to the president.

The DCEG partnership with CONPES and CONADES and the integration under one umbrella of participation, transparency, and social change activities were considered key at the inception of the program to guarantee adequate coordination among these dimensions and better influence the country's governance framework. The DCEG team decided that the most crucial step for enabling the institutional environment for the creation of an effective public sector communication network was to engage three main internal stakeholders on the strategy scheme: the cabinet, composed of the president and 10 ministries; the ministerial directors; and other high-level managers in the public administration.

Analysis of the Communication Program

The analysis of the government's approach to public sector reform through this communication program will highlight activities in the three dimensions of communication:

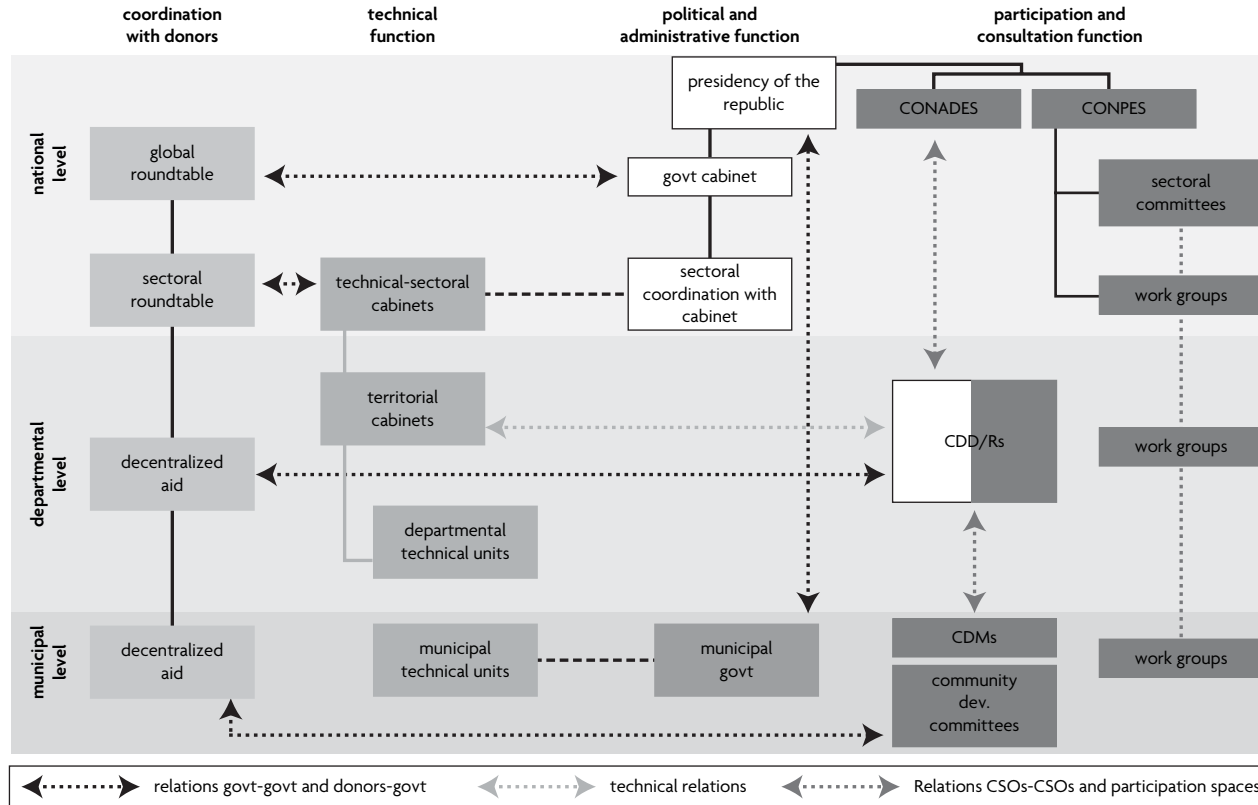
1. Participation
2. Transparency
3. Consensus building.

Participation

The active engagement of citizens in the policy-making process was considered a crucial challenge to strengthen the democratic system. Establishing incentives for public demand for social accountability and enabling the environment for political will at the local level were the most ambitious challenges for DCEG.

During the preparation process, the weaknesses of communication channels between CSOs and government were highlighted as severely limiting good governance of the country. In 2004, the consultations for PRSP-II were concluded, the CDD/Rs were established, and every development committee had its own long-term development plan. Local-level participation in Nicaragua has often been broad rather than deep (World Bank and IMF 2005). Even though the consultation process was carried out, CDD/Rs were not empowered

Figure CS1.2. The Consultation and Participation System: An Elaboration of the CONADES Chart



Source: Author's drawing.

Notes: CONADES = Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo Sostenible (National Council for Sustainable Development). CONPES = Consejo de Planificación Económica y Social (National Commission for Economic and Social Planning).

to participate actively and were not always able to operationalize their development plan. The participation scheme setup for the implementation of the Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (figure CS1.2) illustrates the complexity of the consultation and participation system in Nicaragua from 2005 onwards.

Coalition and constituency building at the local level was carried out to strengthen the local level of participation. To be effective, DCEG set up, with the support of CONPES and CONADES, demand-and-supply negotiations workshops. One of the guiding ideas of this component of the program was to establish an institutionalized space for dialogue between the local and the national levels with the objective of prioritizing the Sistema Nacional de Inversiones Publicas (SNIP, or National Public Investment System) and strengthening the social monitoring systems.⁷

A major problem that was identified was that investments at the local level were decided in Managua, whereas the private sector and CSOs had very little involvement in the process. To solve this problem, 643 administrative and technical staff members from 16 territories were trained between 2004 and 2006 on multicriteria analysis and on the public expenditure framework. Yearly roundtables between the demand (CCD/Rs) and the supply (ministries) were chosen as the most appropriate space for dialogue. These roundtables allowed the territories themselves to prioritize 5 percent of the national investment budget in 2004, 15 percent in 2005, and 25 percent in 2006.⁸

The objective of two-way communication between the central government and relevant stakeholders in the territories was to improve the quality of policy by allowing governments to tap wider sources of information, perspectives, and potential solutions to meet the challenges of policy making under conditions of increasing complexity, policy interdependence, and time pressure. At the same time, this improvement may help citizens participating in the plan to solve the most pressing issues. The inclusion of CDD/Rs in the planning of investments, following plans developed during the consultation of the PRSP-II, should be underlined as an important shift from “participation interpreted as consultation and information exchange between authorities and stakeholders, with no guarantee that priorities expressed by stakeholders will be heeded or incorporated into policy decision-making,” to meaningful participation (Barbone and Sharkey 2006).

Transparency

The absence of a legal framework and proper mechanism guaranteeing access to information was one of the barriers between the public administration and citizens and was sustaining the perception of government corruption among most of the stakeholders, thereby reducing the spaces for consensus around reform. To have a proper functioning transparency mechanism, the public administration should, first, be able to establish systems for the supply of adequate information and, second, be able to put in place mechanisms to respond to requests for information coming from citizens. The transparency strategy

designed and implemented by DCEG was able, in the short implementation period, to address only the information supply side.

The need for more comprehensive access to information for both CSOs and citizens at large had been clearly expressed in Nicaragua beginning with the consultation for the PRSP-I and with the clear objective of enhancing the quality of public services and strengthening the CSOs' watchdog role. In 2003, CSOs formed an advocacy group to discuss with the executive and the assembly the likelihood of passing an access-to-information law.

In 2004, this advocacy group's objective was converted into an institutional objective by DCEG, which included advocacy for a legal framework among its activities. The establishment of a legal framework for access to information became a priority for this component of the program. Nonetheless, persistent tensions between the National Assembly and the executive brought the law approval process to an impasse.

DCEG proposed, as an alternative to the law, a three-stage voluntary access to public information strategy, *Estrategia Voluntaria de Acceso a Información Pública* (EVA, or Voluntary Access to Information Strategy), which was eventually developed as a pilot in eight public institutions. EVA was an initiative of the executive with the intention to make available all the digital information produced by the public sector.⁹ The stages planned for the strategy were the following:

- Dissemination of information already available, such as public expenditures, annual operative plans of every institution involved, lists of services and how to use them, reference lists of institution managers, policy frameworks, organizational charts, and projects financed by source of funding
- Organization of preexisting paper archives with relation to documents, such as bids, contracts, laws, rules and internal regulations, publications, and images
- Creation of a *Centro de Transparencia* (Center for Transparency), an office in which the pilot institutions would have provided information to citizens through face-to-face services, or by phone and online. The center would have included the archives as well.

The pilot institutions that participated in EVA were the *Ministerio de Salud* (MINSA, or Ministry of Health), *Ministerio de Hacienda y Crédito Público* (MHCP, or Ministry of Finance), *Instituto de Desarrollo Rural* (IDR, or Institute for Rural Development), *Ministerio de Transporte e Infraestructura* (MTI, or Ministry of Transportation), *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos* (INEC, or National Institute for Statistic and Census), *Dirección General de Ingresos* (DGI, or Directorate for Tax Collection), and *Fondo de Inversión Social de Emergencia* (FISE, or Emergency Social Investment Fund). The strategy supported these different institutions by providing capacity building. It also created a space for dialogue between CONPES and the advocacy group regarding the law on access to information, leading to consensus on a legal project proposed to the assembly.

By the end of 2006, six of the pilot institutions were able to reach only the second stage of the strategy. Each institution had created a Web site with links to each other's sites, and had provided online most of the documents required by civil society to perform its watchdog role, such as budgets and bidding information. Several quantitative studies were conducted by DCEG to measure the impact of transparency measures on citizens' perception of corruption. After 12 months of implementation, the perception of corruption among government officials decreased by 7.2 percent (CIET International 2006). The National Assembly made its contribution by means of approval of the Law for Access to Public Information in 2007, which allows for the exercise of better citizen control in the performance of the public administration.

Some of the planned activities, especially the ones on the demand side that would have allowed citizens to ask for specific information, could not be implemented because the law became effective only when the program was already ending. Nevertheless, under the umbrella of EVA, the means for the design and implementation of the needed access to information mechanisms were put in place in key institutions.

Consensus Building

Creating adequate support for the reform process is key to sustaining the public sector with the support of citizens who are aware of public services, informed about their role and responsibilities, and willing to exercise their citizenship. Consensus-building efforts have concentrated not only on citizens, CSOs, and other "external" actors, but also on creating political will within the government and the public administration at large. The communication activities were designed to address the attitude and perceptions of internal and external stakeholders toward an improved ownership of the *res publica*. The consensus-building activities to support the overall communication program were prepared around four main themes:

- The economic agenda
- The attitude of people toward the county's development
- The Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Public services delivery and citizens' rights and duties.

The main challenges related to strengthening government communication capacities were the lack of a professionalized public sector communication network to deal with the most important social and economic development initiatives and the weak level of consensus around the reform agenda within the public administration. Establishing a communication network and gaining the support of high- and mid-level managers were considered crucial to creating a public sector that was able to respond to citizens' increased demand for accountability. The establishment of a coalition among internal stakeholders was considered to be the basis upon which public communication campaigns should be developed.

Among the first activities carried out was the capacity building of the public sector's communicators and the creation of a public sector communication network that was coherent and consistent with relation to the reform's messages and visual image. Forty-seven communication officers from six ministries and three national institutes were trained—through 17 sessions of strategic coaching—about design, implementation, and the monitoring and evaluation of communication products. This capacity building was important for establishing a new communication standard in public administration and for having a coherent governmental message on topics related to PRSP and public sector reform. DCEG conducted three series of workshops to share the vision, strategy, and tools available for the communication program. Specific training was dedicated to government spokespersons and government cabinet members.

Many institutions were doubtful about the need for a single strategy for the entire public sector. The main concern was related to the loss of power consequent to the establishment of a unique visual image. Nevertheless, thanks to the assistance of a presidential decree and only a few months after the beginning of the program, it was almost impossible to find a single institution that was not following the strategy, with both visual image and messages. Presentation of the new public sector corporate image and of the guidelines for communication was part of this activity.

Presidential support and enforcement were necessary to overcome the resistance. DCEG advocated with the president for a *no-logo* rule, inviting the executive to set the legal framework for the establishment of a coherent and unique visual image for public sector activities, even when funded with external resources. In late 2004, a presidential decree established the use of a national logo on every public document and communication product, where previously every institution had had its own motto and logo. The name of the president and motto were removed from communication products and public documents. The use of donor logos on development works and dissemination products was seriously limited. This process helped foster an image of the state as a whole, the perception of a more coherent approach in the implementation of the PRS, and citizen ownership of public goods.

Two important media for the diffusion of relevant information were developed. DCEG produced 100 issues of *Paginas Azules* (Blue Pages), a supplement to the two national newspapers distributed free every Monday for two years. The supplement, which was financially sustainable thanks to cost sharing among the different institutions posting information, contained 12–16 pages. Every issue was dedicated to a specific main theme that was relevant to the overall strategy, and then it contained bidding information, references to selection criteria and beneficiaries of development projects, announcements of scholarships and public sector jobs, and letters from readers. One of the most important achievements of *Paginas Azules* was the bipartisan distribution in *La Prensa* and *El Nuevo Diario*, newspapers with opposite points of view on the country's politics. Qualitative evaluations of the coverage and usefulness of this medium have been

extremely positive among samples of the population, but this use of media received criticism from some sectors of civil society for being too aligned with government choices, and it is no longer used by the new administration.

The communication program supported as well the development of a government services portal at <http://www.nicaragua.gob.ni>. This portal contained general information on services, public administration official contacts, and links to EVA and to all public administration Web sites. The *trait d'union* that characterized this Web site as a real government portal was the strong visual image aligned with the communication strategy and its serving as a hub directing users to any Web site of the public administration. The program also supported the development and diffusion of monthly economic reports and provided technical assistance to the government press secretariat.

Four different media campaigns were developed to sustain the country's image and deliver messages on the reform program, on the economic agenda, and in support of the EVA. The main impact of the campaigns was to change the public's perception of a fragmented public administration, to increase public expectations for a better personal economic situation in the future by 7.6 percent (M&M Consultores 2006), and to change the attitude of the media toward Nicaragua's public life, thus decreasing the level of conflict and focusing more on development goals. Here in detail are descriptions of the four campaigns:

1. *Nicaragua Avanza (Nicaragua Moves Forward)*. This campaign was built around the country's economic agenda. The main themes were DR-CAFTA, competitiveness, and economic clusters. The campaign was developed around a technical and territorial approach, thereby explaining the economic issues and data, focusing the messages on a sense of the development of the country as a whole, and reducing the amount of emphasis on political conflict. For every department, different products were developed focusing on success stories related to local production: dairy products in Boaco, crafts in Masaya, tourism in Rivas, tobacco in Estelí, and so on.
2. *La Nueva Era (The New Era)*. Real success stories from most of the territories in Nicaragua were used to produce short videos, posters, and radio programs to increase citizens' belief in the possibility of development, and to give hope and vision for the future. Real people, not actors, were recognizable in their territories and told their stories, illustrating the potential for the poor to develop their own life plan. This campaign was the one that received the most criticism from the opposition. The weakness of this part of the campaign was probably in the name, which was earlier used by President Bolaños to define his government. The approach was meant to bring consensus around growth and development starting from personal histories.
3. *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (National Development Plan)*. This campaign focused on poverty reduction, providing information on the PRS, its structure, and the development programs being considered. One of the main

achievements of this campaign was to explain the function of infrastructure and to show its positive impact on people's lives.

4. *¡Mejorando para vos! (Improving for You!)*. The messages of this campaign concerned the social contract between government and citizens, improvement of public services, and citizens' rights and duties. The campaign was linked to the development of new services to the public in five ministries. On-site communication products such as posters and service guides were developed to direct citizens to the services offered by every public institution.

Conclusions

This section will first explore general issues, such as the overall approach and sustainability, and then will draw specific conclusions on information, consultation, and active participation, following the OECD scheme presented at the beginning of the case study. These conclusions will highlight the interdependence among the three dimensions of communication in public sector reform: participation, transparency, and consensus building.

Communication instruments put in place to create consensus could not address political conflict at its highest level between the government and the assembly, thus limiting the results of the program, especially its sustainability. Nevertheless, the Nicaragua experience shows how governments can intervene using a comprehensive set of tools to listen and to talk to citizens. This experience demonstrates how communication can be used holistically in support of good governance, to build coalitions and constituencies around reforms, and to increase citizen demand for accountability and foster participation at the local level. Including communication in the design of public sector reform programs constitutes an innovative approach. Prior to the intervention, citizen perceptions and demands were not taken into account; now there are tools to include their views in policy design.

The communication strategy built around the three dimensions created the basis for strengthened citizenship at the local level. The main constraint of the intervention was the failure to engage the legislative branch in the process. The lesson from this experience is that communication strategies to support public sector reforms, regardless of the context, should focus more on the *res publica*. This approach would foster a broader definition of the concept of the state and of public administration beyond the concept of government, which is close to and often confused with the idea of the executive branch.

Information

A new, coherent visual image for the country through the use of a single logo has been important in improving the perception of Nicaragua's public administration as a whole for both citizens and the international community. In fact, since the implementation of the communication program, a sense of ownership has been fostered among public officials despite initial resistance to

the new visual image. Presidential support and enforcement were necessary to overcome resistance. The removal of the name of the president from every communication piece produced by the public administration was a step forward toward a modern public administration. In addition, limitations imposed on the use of donor logos on development works and dissemination products helped advance a sense of national ownership of development interventions.

The strategic coaching on strategic communication enabled high-level officials to communicate more coherently. This change, together with the media campaigns, helped to condition the attitude of the media, both broadcast and print, toward their coverage choices. In 2005, alarmist and sensational headlines were replaced by a more informed dialogue around development issues that, on several occasions, stole central stage from the political conflict. The 2006 election campaign brought the communication situation back to the situation of 2004, with the headlines in print and on broadcasted media focusing again on conflict between politicians. The communication program conditioned as well the private sector's way of doing business, introducing into the country equipment and techniques that had been hard to find before.

The access-to-information strategy demonstrated that it was possible in Nicaragua to coordinate several institutions to provide timely and relevant information to the citizens. The information provided was basically about bidding information, budgets, and types of services provided by the public administration. Given the program time constraints, only the first stage of EVA could be implemented. Therefore, only a one-way dissemination mechanism was put in place. Even though the strategy was not fully implemented, the seed for reform was planted, and the National Assembly approved the Law for Access to Public Information in 2007. As of December 2007, since EVA is no longer active, a need still exists for implementation of this law.

Consultation

With respect to consultation, it is important to refer both to the one carried out within government and the one that set the basis for an active participation system. One of the communication program's achievements was the intragovernmental coalition building that ensured coherence of messages and support for transparency and participation among high-level officials. This coalition, along with the positioning of DCEG at the highest level of government and its possessing blended functions of communication and governance, guaranteed the executive's political will in support of strengthened citizen demand for accountability and participation.

In the long term, the political capital gained by the program has been shown to be unsustainable given the robust spoils system, as well as the turnover in a public administration strongly conditioned by political change. The partnership with CONPES and CONADES allowed DCEG to build on the experience of the PRSP consultation process, which even if considered not to have been deep, nevertheless set the basis for CDD/Rs that have been prioritizing an increasing share of the national investment budget.

The last level of consultation that was planned, but never executed by the program, was related to the third phase of EVA. Flexibility and alliances with the civil society were the main features of the transparency strategy of the communication program and would have supported EVA with consultation. The consultation would have allowed the public administration to better understand the demand for transparency and accountability and, perhaps, respond to this demand.

Active Participation

The experience of CDD/Rs and the establishment of vertical links between the national and local levels, through multiple rounds of negotiations, highlighted a different path toward development that Nicaragua could walk. The two-way communication established between line ministries and CDD/Rs allowed the territories themselves to prioritize 5 percent of the national investment budget in 2004, 15 percent in 2005, and 25 percent in 2006. The program time frame did not allow the achievement of the expected outcomes. It did not provide the CDD/Rs with communication training and social accountability tools. Had the program been completed, citizens would have been able to participate, not only in the formulation of plans and projects, but also in social monitoring of the implementation, thus enhancing the quality of development initiatives and public control of spending and thereby contributing to improved accountability.

At the local level, where citizens and CSOs are closer to local politicians, the constituency building around CDD/Rs has proven to be more stable and has produced more tangible results. Where only a few years ago public money was spent in the interest of a few, expenditures are now prioritized following a development plan built by multiple stakeholders.

Vertical and horizontal social accountability mechanisms not only promote good governance, but also make sense for poverty reduction, because accountability failures hit the poor, the disadvantaged, and the excluded people the hardest (Mohiddin 2002). When the instruments of participation and social accountability function, the road that would otherwise be built solely to connect the mayor's house to the main road can instead connect a community of small farmers to the main road, thus expanding their ability to reach the nearest town, sell their products, interact with townspeople, engage in public discourse, and exercise their citizenship.

Notes

1. The author would like to thank Lucia Grenna for the support and the guidance she provided in the design and supervision of the communication program and Fumiko Nagano for the substantive input on preparation of the case study.

2. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers describe a country's macroeconomic, structural, and social policies and programs to promote growth and reduce poverty, as well as associated external financing needs. PRSPs are prepared by governments through a participatory process involving civil society and development partners, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.
3. It is expected that this process, in the midterm, will address issues related to the low coherence of donor-funded projects and programs and the lack of outcome-oriented efforts. The objective of harmonization was to have donors use simplified procedures and practices, undertake joint analytical work, enhance their focus on delivery of development results, delegate cooperation, use common procurement and financial management procedures, and pursue common arrangements for sectorwide approaches and budget support. These processes are expected to increase the long-term effectiveness of results-based aid. To support this process, Nicaragua set up sectoral roundtables (government-donors) to operate on the basis of explicit sectoral plans and strategies.
4. The Dominican Republic–Central America Free Trade Agreement initially involved the United States and the Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua) and was called the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). In 2004, the Dominican Republic joined the negotiations, and the agreement was renamed DR-CAFTA.
5. In 2006, the name changed again, to SETEC.
6. Quantitative monitoring was carried out on an annual basis, while qualitative polling collected information from the various government initiatives.
7. The main issue related to the management of SNIP is the conflicting approaches between donors and citizens priorities. SNIP is mostly based on a supply-driven approach, with approximately 90–95 percent of the total public investment financed by donors. This approach implies as well the creation of a great number of project implementation units clashing with ministry line directors. Because Nicaragua is still highly dependent on external funds, the problem of planning public investment according to the country's priorities is very complex.
8. The information presented in this section was provided by the government during the author's meetings in Nicaragua. At this stage, there are no documents to verify the magnitude of the increase in SNIP investments prioritized by CDD/Rs, even though an improvement has been seen following several meetings with grassroots organizations in CDD/Rs.
9. One serious problem faced during implementation was the lack of transparency in the release of the salaries of public employees, especially consultants performing line functions.

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Communication, Coalition Building, and Development: Public Enterprise Reform in West Bengal and Orissa States, India

S. J. Masty

Preface: Communication, Coalition, and the Political Act

Termites, squid, elephants, blue whales, chimpanzees, and human beings—each is a social species, and so it is axiomatic that each communicates, for without communication no cooperative activity is possible.¹ Consequently, a complex cooperative act, such as social or economic development, cannot occur without communication of some kind.

The more complex our developmental task, the more success depends on communication securing the cooperation of different stakeholder groups needed to work in concert to enable and sustain reform. The more numerous or varied the potential components of a multistakeholder coalition, the more there is a need for complementary but different communication strategies to address each constituent stakeholder group's unique self-interest and the pressures to elicit each group's cooperation. The compelling need for coalition, as well as the practical necessity of respecting stakeholder diversity, often means that development contains an aspect that is political in the broadest, nonpartisan, nonideological sense of the word. In a manner of speaking, the political act unites and empowers, and communication enables the political act.

There are broadly defined political aspects of communication to be found even in a relatively straightforward developmental task, such as promoting the use of antimalarial bed nets, in which it might appear that the involvement of only two stakeholder groups are necessary—government to speak and families to listen. Yet, at an institutional level, the donors, the political leaders, the cabinet,

the treasury, and the public health department, as well as other arms of government, must agree to prioritize and allocate. Even more controversially, they must reallocate the scarce resources of time, money, personnel and equipment. They must also motivate officials to alter their own established priorities to support the campaign, knowing that each displaced or reduced activity may risk slighting an established interest inside or outside government.

Civil society, too, must be encouraged to reduce the time or attention paid to some other task, so it can focus limited resources on this new developmental challenge. Each constituent part of civil society must be ready to rearrange its priorities and to deal accordingly with its own preexisting stakeholders. The media stakeholder is needed first to understand the issues, to recognize spurious objections (as in the case of AIDS awareness), and then to educate. Next, the coalition must work together to some degree. Helping stakeholders redefine priorities and overcome the pressures of the status quo, usually by altering incentives or increasing awareness of existing incentives, is often a political task in full or in part—but it always demands communication.

Where development problems are even more complex, the stakeholders are inevitably more numerous, and each one's self-interest can differ more widely. In a particularly sweeping reform, the enormity of the risks to some and of the benefits to others may generate conflict. There may be an existing antireform coalition of vested interests, led by elites who are all too aware of the threat posed by change. There may also be key stakeholders who would benefit from reform, whose cooperation might even ensure the success of reform, but to whom the virtues of change are far from obvious. This concern demands an even more complex, politically aware communication strategy to educate, as well as to create or strengthen, proreform stakeholder coalitions and often to weaken opponents. (As Nelson Mandela demonstrated, the most effective way to weaken opposition is often to communicate and change people's thinking.) Complex reform, requiring support from diverse stakeholder groups, usually requires government to take great care in deploying different microstrategies of communication that are varied in style and content, thus reflecting the thoughts, demands, and preferred media of each essential component in the multistakeholder coalition.

An example is found in the highly charged and potentially volatile sphere of public enterprise reform. There, we inevitably find many powerful and long-established stakeholder groups opposed to change, each with its own reason to preserve the current balance of power. We also find government, which must alter the balance of power to achieve reform by converting or muting opponents, as well as by recruiting stakeholder allies into a coalition that is stronger than its opponents. Those tasks are simply impossible without communication, and the complementary strategies that drive them are inherently political.

The importance of stakeholder groups and the need to address their unique concerns was appreciated by Adam Smith nearly 250 years ago when, in book II of *The Wealth of Nations*, he wrote: "It is not from the benevolence of the

butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from regard to their own interest. *We address ourselves, not to their humanity, but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities, but of their own advantages*” [emphasis added]. A stakeholder’s motivation may not be financial: it may be patriotic, professional, or charitable, but to catch and hold his or her attention, our dialogue must begin by reflecting the stakeholder’s interests rather than our own. Then the next communication task is to create a coalition from stakeholder groups.

Ultimately, what makes many development tasks sustainable is the political act of altering incentives, shifting the balance of power, and using targeted communication to create or strengthen a multistakeholder coalition with a common interest in achieving and then preserving reform. Coalition building is always and everywhere a process of dialogue—a result of participation—because it takes time, transparency, and patience for stakeholders to identify their own best interest, then to see a similar interest in another group, and finally to begin building trust and cooperation into a functioning coalition. Without such dialogue to build coalitions, the old balance of power remains ultimately unaffected, and our reforms are often no more than those flowers of a summer that bloom, only to fade and die, never to return again.

Introduction

This case study compares and contrasts the role played by strategic, developmental communication in two neighboring Indian states, each attempting to reform its respective public enterprise sector. Both state governments faced similar socioeconomic challenges demanding support from similar key stakeholders and facing risk from similar opponents of change for almost identical reasons. Both took patient approaches that were based on stakeholder dialogue and participation, on credibility building, on shared understanding of problems, and on broad support for solutions.

Yet there the similarities end. The state governments of West Bengal and Orissa could scarcely have used more different communication strategies, yet both were highly competent and effective. The two different strategies were each selected to address different political circumstances, but both shared the same profound understanding of the relationship that must exist between politics and stakeholder-driven communication to build the consensus required for successful reform.

It is important to note that this case study does not presume to critique either government’s public sector enterprise reform program in terms of optimal economic or social strategy, but rather to focus on communication and how it was deployed to achieve each government’s policy objectives. This study will discuss policy initiatives to demonstrate what they offered key stakeholders and how communicating those benefits led to government building a political

consensus for successful reform. For reasons of space, it will explore neither every stakeholder group, nor every stakeholder communication strategy deployed. Rather it will use selected stakeholder groups and their concerns to identify the strategic role of politics, stakeholder coalitions, and communication.

This case study will briefly review the political and strategic communication issues pertinent to public enterprise reform in general, then will briefly examine aspects largely peculiar to India. Next, it will look at how officials in West Bengal and Orissa used different communication strategies to solve their own political, social, and economic challenges and how each strategy addressed its respective state's unique circumstances.

Enterprise Reform in Political Perspective

There is scarcely a government on earth that has not had to grapple with the problems of its public enterprise sector, and the few that have refused to do so are often the most economically troubled, the least democratic, or both (for example, Belarus, Cuba, Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Libya until recently). Whether these enterprises were originally run privately and then nationalized, or were started afresh by governments, most suffer the same mounting problems. Often, as in West Bengal and Orissa, the government's portfolio of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) is a major contributor to budget deficits, depriving government of the resources with which to enhance economic growth and fight poverty.

Public enterprise failures are due to institutional shortcomings and pressures, internally and externally. These failures include a lack of entrepreneurship and business management skills among politically appointed or civil service SOE managers; pressure on cash-poor governments to deprive public enterprises of needed capital to support more important infrastructure and social spending (that is roads or medical care); interference from politicians, chiefly in terms of promoting overstaffing or by interfering in the collection of debt owed to public enterprises; interference from trade unions, which in many countries are formally linked to various political parties; and sometimes issues of corruption. These problems are often related to the powerful effect of political pressure on ostensibly commercial enterprises, and the politically driven impediments to profitability are often removed following a shift to full or partial private sector ownership. Privatization means depoliticization, so the simpler incentives attached to private ownership, whether or not extraordinary state regulation is required, are provided chiefly by the profit motive, the competition, and the need to please consumers. Privatized companies are often more effective and profitable as a result: many enterprises that were loss-making "tax eaters" become taxpayers after reform.

Yet reforming these enterprises inevitably poses unpleasant decisions for government, and that process implies risk. Officials in line ministries often

resent privatization because it reduces the size and budget (and, many feel, the influence and prestige) of their ministry or department. Similarly, privatization can deprive them of access to SOE vehicles, guesthouses, or even rent-seeking opportunities. The managers of loss-making, industrially backward public enterprises may see little chance for future employment among their more modern competitors, or indeed elsewhere in private industry. Trade union leaders often fear that they will lose credibility among surviving members if they are seen to permit public enterprise downsizing. In addition, in countries where trade unions are allied openly with various political parties, union members populate political rallies and opposition-led strikes, so downsizing diminishes a trade union leader's political clout. This often causes politicians themselves to resist public enterprise reform. The cooperation, or in some cases the mere acquiescence, of these stakeholders is required in order for reform to occur, and that cooperation requires communication.

In addition to needing consensus from politicians, the civil service, public enterprise managers, and trade unions, the issues of SOE worker redundancy (such as downsizing or retrenchment) can pose the biggest political challenge to government. Whether a public enterprise is reformed internally and full government ownership is maintained, whether government privatizes it partly by selling a minority or a controlling interest, or whether government privatizes it fully by selling it in its entirety to private investors, the hardship for at least some public enterprise workers is often considerable. Overstaffing is almost always the single biggest contributor to public enterprise losses, and a reduction in workforce is almost always required to permit any hope of newfound profitability. Yet in most developing countries, the redundant, former parastatal workers are among the least likely to find new jobs. During a public enterprise's long slide into industrial decay, little or no expansion or improvement means that most public enterprise workers are middle-aged or older, that many have been adversely influenced by management systems demanding poor work habits, and that most have outdated skills on antiquated machinery long abandoned by their private sector competitors. So, for public enterprise workers at midlife, privatization threatens to eject them into a growing, developing-world economy full of younger, better-skilled labor, in which they see little hope of finding a job. Often they have with no state-run, social safety net to reduce the shock. In reforming public enterprise, then—even with support from politicians and acquiescence from trade union leaders—government often faces a threat of volatile opposition from public enterprise workers fearing redundancy, as well as the opprobrium of the general public. In fact, the public may be sympathetic to the plight of these workers even if, as consumers, the public has no immediate relationship with a particular public enterprise or the product or service it provides.

These complex problems of political economy, along with the concomitant disincentives to the cooperation of various stakeholder groups capable of slowing or halting privatization, are readily apparent to civil servants engaged in

Table CS2.1. Privatization, Stakeholders, and Issues

Stakeholders	Objections	Benefits
Political leaders	Labor unrest, party dissent, loss of PSU workers to populate protests	Less debt, financing for social and infrastructural improvements
SOE managers	Poor chance of reemployment	Few
Civil servants	Lost prestige, perks, rent seeking	Recognition and advancement from government
Labor leaders	Membership and power reduced through SOE worker redundancy	Cooperation with government later, member recognition for driving the best bargain
SOE workers	Loss of income, unemployment, poor chance of reemployment	Few for workers made redundant, for others quicker payment, promotions, etc.
Media, public, etc.	Concern for worker welfare	Better services (for example, utilities), money for social services and infrastructure, and growth

Source: Author.

Note: PSU = Public Sector Unit; SOE = State-Owned Enterprise.

enterprise reform almost anywhere in the world. Civil servants often need policies to address these concerns, and they inevitably need stakeholder communication to enable change (see table CS2.1).

In dealing with core stakeholder resistance to public enterprise reform, more is needed from communication than simply offering benefits that make change seem worthwhile. Moreover, the benefits rarely outweigh the risks, particularly for those employed in underperforming public enterprises or for labor leaders whose members face redundancy. Governments around the world find that they must also solicit stakeholder support or acquiescence; three possible strategies are the following:

- By inculcating a sense of the inevitable, and by educating core stakeholders that the status quo is not sustainable and that, eventually, the alternative to enterprise reform is closure and liquidation; additionally, that government will not retreat from its commitment to public enterprise reform
- Through policy and transparency, convincing stakeholders that government respects labor and will be as generous as possible in terms of retraining workers and providing terminal benefits
- By explaining the larger social cost of public enterprise loss making, resulting in growing deficits constraining economic growth, which means fewer resources with which government can fund expanded infrastructure and needed social services.

Last, one ought not discount the motivational power of frank, patient, and transparent discussion among stakeholders, particularly as the problems become known and when the realistic options are few. There is little doubt

that, had these two state governments in India not taken such a patient approach—which was based on transparency, dialogue, and participation—they would not likely have succeeded, given the potential volatility of the issue elsewhere in India or worldwide.

Public Enterprise Reform in India and Its Challenges

Despite India's vibrant, entrepreneurial culture, its rich and varied media, and its rapid development as a global economic powerhouse, several factors make the political act of public enterprise reform more challenging there than almost anywhere else.

First, India's civil law, often unchanged since the nineteenth century, demands extensive judicial reinterpretation to accommodate modern circumstance, resulting in a national docket of civil cases that, at present rates of adjudication, could take upwards of two centuries to conclude. So, civil litigation could easily stall an act of public enterprise reform by years or even decades. This length of time puts an additional burden on Indian civil servants to build strong coalitions for reform and, in particular to ensure the cooperation of trade unions and workers to the greatest degree possible, to minimize the threat of litigation and delay.

Second, in the world's biggest democracy, party politics is not limited to electing legislators. In a single labor sector, workers might be represented by a single trade union elsewhere; in India, that sector is often subdivided into labor unions representing major political parties. This division can mean that labor representation, ostensibly covering a single industrial activity, can be split into two or more trade unions whose positions may reflect issues driven by external state or national political opposition rather than focusing solely on the immediate concerns of their working members. Hence, what is elsewhere a difficult enough negotiation between labor unions and government becomes, in India, something that enjoys an additional level of political complexity and often frustrating discord.

Third, across the world, competitive, commercial pressures encourage media to increasingly downplay the dispassionate reporting of fact in favor of popular controversy. Nowhere is this more apparent than in India. India is media rich, and Indians are for the most part indefatigable consumers of media. Among even the poor of Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) in West Bengal, newspapers are read and then handed on to other readers, at an average of eight times or more per copy and often circulating until the newsprint is virtually unreadable. Although India's (largely English language) newspapers and magazines are often international-caliber models of professionalism and probity, the vernacular press can be highly inflammatory indeed, with daunting implications for policy negotiation. The value to government of Indian newspapers as a means to explain complex issues versus the risk of media sensationalism hijacking the policy debate

poses a dilemma for political leaders and civil servants who are involved in any potentially controversial task. Officials reforming the public enterprise sectors in West Bengal and Orissa took two very different approaches to this challenge.

Last, any potential political difficulty in public enterprise reform is magnified considerably in India. The dynamic and pervasive nature of Indian democratic politicking and the sometimes volatile Indian labor movement are partly responsible. Also, tensions are heightened by India's rapidly changing economy and its vast labor pool, which exacerbate the difficulties of worker redundancy, especially for older workers and the underskilled. So Indian public enterprise reform can be a political minefield. In many cases, competent strategic communication (or a lack thereof) makes the difference between success and failure.

Politics, Miscommunication, and Riots: BALCO

In 2000, India's central government began to privatize BALCO, an antiquated, 1950s, Soviet-designed aluminum-smelting plant in Chattisgarh state. It found an ideal strategic investor in a large company based in South India that had other successful smelters, a sound business plan for BALCO, and sufficient technical expertise and capital to double or treble the plant capacity needed for long-term profitability.

After a few cursory and informal meetings with workers and managers, the government's private sector communication consultants faxed the company a single-page letter to be posted in the workers' canteen, in English (a language that few BALCO workers could read), saying little more than that their company would soon come under private sector ownership. This posting appeared to be government's only communication directed at the BALCO workforce. Uninformed of anticipated redundancies (which were very few, but workers feared the worst) and unaware of terminal or retraining benefits, BALCO workers went on strike and shut down the plant; the smelters began to cool, threatening to render the entire facility inoperable thereafter. Trade unions, particularly those allied to opposition parties, plus opposition parties themselves, flew in sympathy strikers, candidates, and other activists to Chattisgarh from across the country. Strikers issued death threats, as the BALCO strike became a political and media cause célèbre that nearly brought down the national government's ruling coalition.

Episodes such as the BALCO strike made Indian state-level politicians and civil servants involved in enterprise reform both cautious of the political risks of privatization and aware of the need for stakeholder cooperation driven by sound communication. Such controversy also begat lasting problems of political inconsistency, particularly among state political parties and their national counterparts.

India's current national governing coalition is headed by the Congress Party, which over the past decade (like many former, center-left parties around the world) has shifted to support public enterprise reform. In this case, such a maneuver in 2005 helped to unseat its predecessor, who was equally committed to such reform. This history encouraged the former ruling coalition, upon going into opposition, to at least nominally reverse its support for public enterprise reform. The Congress Party leads a national coalition government supported by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), or CPI(M), which has, at least for now,

effectively stalled national-level public enterprise reform. Adding complications, the government of West Bengal state, led by the CPI(M) for nearly 30 years, has embarked on a program of public enterprise reform that mirrors the approach of the national party, particularly opposing the divestment of profit-making public enterprises. The communication strategy used by the West Bengal government to clarify this position, to retain the support of its own state-level CPI(M) stakeholders, and to not appear inconsistent is discussed next.

Prelude to Reform: West Bengal

Noting West Bengal's venerable reputation for labor unrest, one civil servant there remarked: "So far as I know, the only Bengali word to enter the *Oxford English Dictionary* is *gherao*" (an often violent protest occupying an office or a factory). Across India today, experts are still amazed that West Bengal could succeed at public enterprise reform without significant labor opposition, especially when so many attempts elsewhere in India have failed.

In 1997–98, the newly appointed principal secretary of West Bengal's Public Enterprise Department (PED) had no idea of the dramatic policy initiatives that lay ahead. "We weren't building a case for disinvestment at that stage; we simply made the argument that government has the right to see how PSUs [public sector units] spend public money," said Sunil Mitra, the architect of West Bengal public enterprise reform. "Before that," Mitra explains,

[T]he PED was [a] low-profile department. We oversaw 26 sick PSUs, but we had little to do but subsidize losses year after year to pay salaries. Of our public sector companies, apart from three, 20 or more were inherited from the private sector in the early 1980s. They had been run into [the] ground by previous owners, until finally trade unions asked government to take them over. We had no money for capital assets or revenue expenditure, but meanwhile private sector competition kept growing. The rest of India changed dramatically throughout the 1990s while the public enterprise sector progressively went under, due to a shrinking PSU market share, less product, no shedding of surplus [personnel], and so forth.²

State finances faced considerable difficulty, as PED documents reported later (Government of West Bengal 2005: section 1.6):

The state witnessed a significant rise in revenue deficit in the nineties. In 1998–99, the revenue deficit had risen to 8 percent of gross state domestic product, which was an increase of 6 percent point[s] over the revenue deficit in 1995–96.... Following the same trend, [the] state's fiscal deficit, which represented net borrowings, also shot up from 2 percent in the early 1990s to 10 percent in 1999–00.... A large part of the state's borrowings every year was simply being used to finance salary, pension, and debt-servicing commitments of government.... This clearly reflected a highly vulnerable financial condition of the state.

A significant share came from 89 public enterprises, of which 26 were the immediate responsibility of the PED. Hoping to cut losses, Mitra replaced civil servant SOE managers with private sector executives, recruited a panel of strategic advisers from the Kolkata business community, and then began an exercise in stakeholder communication that was, in hindsight, the single-most important step in public enterprise reform. Mitra explained:

In 1998–1999, we began to hold large quarterly meetings, with nine people from each PSU. There were more than 200 people in all: for each PSU, three came from trade unions, three from supervisory levels, and three senior managers comprised of the CEO and two deputies. We reviewed the performance of each PSU, comparing targets against quarterly achievements, losses versus profits, sales, and potential improvements as possible without the availability of institutional investment.... Over time we came to understand the similar problems faced by all these PSUs. Peer pressure and group understanding increased the awareness that there were severe limits to improvement without institutional investment, and, over time, we earned buy-in from all participants on the need for structural change.³

Mitra stressed government's nonideological approach throughout the entire process, both in this early stage of exploring common problems, when dialogue was started and participation begun, and later when government began to solicit institutional investors. No stakeholders were singled out for blame, nor at any stage did government risk alienating either trade union leaders or CPI(M) traditionalists with sweeping ideological declarations to remove government entirely from its role in owning and managing enterprises. Instead, the public enterprise problem was approached on a case-by-case basis that clarified the common problems, requesting full participation from all PSU stakeholders.

In a low-key and transparent manner, government launched a broad, consultative dialogue among public enterprise managers, unions, and government: first by identifying individual SOE problems together, then by drawing conclusions about the similar problems faced by the majority of firms in the public enterprise sector, and next by exploring the few options available. As we will see, this approach removed from the reform process neither politics nor the need for further communication, particularly as it involved labor, but it did give labor leadership an essential sense of shared ownership of the problems together with management and government.

In 2000, a reform-minded CPI(M) politician, Buddhadev Bhattacharjee, became deputy chief minister of West Bengal, and Mitra saw that the consensus that Bhattacharjee had formed could ultimately broaden, thus permitting government to solicit strategic investment to rejuvenate some of the state's public enterprises. Mitra sent Bhattacharjee a signed note explaining the volume of public enterprise losses, which formed an enormous drain on the exchequer. In 2001, Bhattacharjee had enterprise reform inserted into the CPI(M) election manifesto. Then the CPI(M) and its partners won an unsurprising 90 percent

of the seats in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, and Bhattacharjee became the state's chief minister.

In this second important act of strategic communication, Mitra's letter gave the state's political leadership a welcome avenue of escape from severe financial problems, thereby holding open the promise of otherwise unavailable funds to fight poverty, build infrastructure, and enhance economic growth. The letter reflected Mitra's keen understanding of stakeholder analysis and stakeholder self-interest: it did not focus primarily on the PED's institutional interest in enhancing public enterprise performance; rather, it focused on the issue that mattered most to politicians in government, namely, how to cut losses and free assets otherwise unavailable in a state with severe economic problems. The PED now had support from the top. It had used dialogue and participation to build shared understanding (if not complete agreement on reform) among PSE insiders. Its next task was to deepen the limited stakeholder comprehension and to convert it into action.

West Bengal: From Understanding to Action

Ordinarily, civil servants hope to start any major reform with support from the highest echelons of government and later to elicit support from other key stakeholders. Yet, in this case there was an element of happenstance that reversed the usual order. The West Bengal PED had already begun to build stakeholder support for internal public enterprise reform when, three years on, they realized that they had already created a nucleus of the coalition required to enable wider reform and to permit outside investment and a change in public enterprise ownership. Political support followed participation and dialogue.

Another aspect unique to West Bengal is its major political stakeholder, the ruling CPI(M), with its nearly 30-year electoral domination of state politics. Longevity and a near 90 percent majority in the state legislature (enjoyed by a broad-left coalition overwhelmingly dominated by the Communist Party) still does not fully convey the broad base and pervasive nature of the CPI(M) political machine, with its numerous party subgroups representing almost all walks of life and a strong rural presence. One local development expert remarked: "In a West Bengal village, if you have a noisy row with your spouse, first thing the next morning, the local CPI(M) party official comes around to see if he can help you patch things up. They are involved in everything." So once the CPI(M) party executive embraced enterprise reform, there was an uncommonly powerful, competent, and well-disciplined party apparatus to inform and mobilize labor organizations, politicians, government, and other key stakeholders. Yet, like any organization, the West Bengal CPI(M) survives by maintaining consensus, and so government recognized the need for building a better understanding of, and support for, its reform program both inside and outside the party structure.

Indeed, it is only through the agreement, forged by participation and dialogue through the PED meetings, that government felt safe to endorse reforms. Without the participation, there would have been no basic agreement, and without the agreement, which made reform less risky, there was no government will.

Sunil Mitra and the PED made an unusual tactical decision to work quietly, building support among key stakeholders before involving the news media (the opposite of what we will see in Orissa). Mitra perceived that government need not risk media sensationalism in the preparatory stages when other key stakeholders could be courted more discreetly. He said, “The news media [were] involved, but late in the process after consensus was formed, and it was kept low key. Stakeholders such as labor, PSU management, and politicians were addressed from the beginning, but the media [were] not brought in until a privatization transaction was ready to begin. First, government educated the core stakeholders, and then they went to the media.”⁴

Mitra recognized that the unique political circumstances in West Bengal would permit reforms to be started more or less *in camera*, and he designed the communication strategy accordingly. The coalition and CPI(M) support were, however, no guarantee of success, for had any core stakeholder opposed reform strongly enough to challenge either the policy overall or a single transaction, there was always a possibility that the ruling party might decide to delay reform, temporarily or even indefinitely, thus sapping momentum, disturbing potential investors, and perhaps jeopardizing the entire process.

West Bengal: Messages, Media, and Credibility

All told, from the first multistakeholder, public enterprise performance reviews in 1997/98 to its first successful disinvestment in 2005, the PED spent seven years building consensus, taking more than three years after enterprise reform became government policy.

Instead of using mass media to build stakeholder consensus, government relied on two decidedly low-tech methods of communication that were far more personal and that proved thoroughly effective: meetings and letters. From 2002, when public enterprise reform transactions began, until 2005, when the first pending transactions were publicized through mass media, Sunil Mitra wrote dozens of long, multipage, painstakingly crafted letters to unions and workers, public enterprise managers, and civil servants, describing the issues and the stakeholder agreements reached thus far. These letters were accompanied by thoroughgoing minutes of stakeholder meetings. Models of transparency, the hard-copy letters and minutes were circulated among core stakeholders, ensuring that each member of the new coalition felt thoroughly included and fully informed. When stakeholders raised objections in meetings, their concerns were answered in letters and distributed widely. A 2005 PED report concluded (Government of West Bengal 2005: section 3.9): “All letters

were responded [to] by PED in detail with facts from market analysis, financial and other assessment findings, government policies, rules, and even comparison with other similar efforts in other states. The replies underlined government's inability to continue supporting losses and its commitment to ensure a fair deal to all its employees."

An Indian communicator notes that dialogue appears to exist only when the participants are told where their comments were heard and are shown where their suggestions were adopted. Otherwise, there is no record of their participation. Government understood this principle and, in its long and thorough letters, vivified dialogue and recognized participation by recording it.

Meanwhile, a communication "second front" was maintained by the state cabinet's second-most influential figure after the chief minister, Nirupam Sen, the minister of industry and planning. Sen was trusted within the CPI(M), who—between meetings with party officials and union leaders in addition to articles in party journals and elsewhere—built credibility for the reform process within government and the ruling party.

The communication strategy followed logically from the political nature of the problem that communication was required to address. Once the decision was made for government first to work with core stakeholders and later to involve mass media, there was no large audience involved at the beginning, and the core stakeholders could meet more or less in one room. The most intimate, flexible, and credible medium, then, was face-to-face meetings; the second-most was written correspondence. Nirupam Sen and Sunil Mitra deployed both.

These letters and minutes not only kept all core stakeholders aware of how the policy debate progressed, but also put stakeholder positions on the record and discouraged participants from backsliding or shying away from earlier concessions. The success of this strategy underscores the importance of recognizing that strategic communication need not be dominated by either high-tech communication or mass media. West Bengal's PED believed that personal meetings and transparent statements on paper were effective means of building transparency, credibility, and trust.

Of great importance was the content of government's communications, in meetings and on paper, where they argued from four basic premises:

- *The undeniable nature of the problem:* the vast majority of public enterprises suffered from overstaffing and insufficient capital
- *The inevitability of change:* government had no more capital to invest, and so the alternative to change was a further, relentless slide into public enterprise uncompetitiveness, which would one day lead to closure of loss-making units
- *The moral high ground of reform:* public enterprise losses absorbed funds needed for statewide economic growth and poverty alleviation
- *The "human face" of reform:* government's reform policy respected stakeholder concerns as much as possible, particularly those of public enterprise workers.

The first and second premises were established among the PED, public enterprise managers, civil servants, and labor leaders, starting with the analytical public enterprise review process of 1997–2001. They were amplified in many meetings, briefings, circulated letters, and minutes, effectively broadening and deepening understanding among each participating stakeholder group.

Credibility was enhanced when in 2002, with support from the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID), the consulting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) prepared a study assessing strategy options open to the ailing SOEs. The first obstacle was overcoming considerable suspicion of donors and international consultants. Shantanu Das, a senior official in DFID India, explained: “Many here believed that the donors, the World Bank, and others had some hidden agenda.”⁵ These fears were overcome by PWC and the PED in three ways:⁶

- Involving labor unions (as well as all other core stakeholders) in the assessment process, making the project fully inclusive and consultative
- Downplaying global economic principles and foreign experiences of enterprise reform while focusing on the practical examples of private versus public enterprise performance in West Bengal; by comparing both on a competitive, case-by-case basis, which built support by enhancing credibility and minimizing ideological content
- Using a PWC team comprising of almost wholly, Indian experts, most of them Bengalis, thus reducing fears of foreign conspiracy or of foreign remedies that might not work in West Bengal.

The government further established credibility, over time, by accommodating stakeholders with concrete policy measures identified by this process of internal communication. Two examples are provided next.

The government introduced its third premise, the moral high ground of reform, soon after public enterprise reform became official policy. Sunil Mitra wrote to the state’s accountant general and circulated to all core stakeholders: “Government has ... undertaken to deploy the budgetary resources freed as a consequence of restructuring of those loss-making enterprises for higher spending in poverty alleviation sectors with special emphasis on primary education and health care.”⁷ This rationale for reform, repeated throughout the program, had the tactical effect of discouraging “special pleading” by any one stakeholder group or public enterprise unit by putting individual stakeholder interest into perspective against the greater need of the poor. It also gave the chief minister a virtually insuperable argument to use among party members (see table CS2.2).

West Bengal: Unions, Workers, and the Human Face of Reform

Labor unions and workers are, in West Bengal as elsewhere, the stakeholders demanding the most attention in enterprise reform, because public enterprise

Table CS2.2. Time Line: Building Stakeholder Support, West Bengal

Stakeholders	1997/08–2001	2001/02	2002–05	2004–05
SOE directors, SOE managers, labor unions	Quarterly SOE performance reviews	Negotiations, meetings, letters, minutes	PWC study, negotiation, meetings, letters, minutes	As before plus news media
Political leaders, party cadres		Enterprise reform in party platform	PWC study, letters, minutes	As before plus news media
Civil servants, SOE workers			Letters, minutes	As before plus news media
Journalists				Briefings, field trips
Businesses, general public				News media

Source: Author.

Note: PWC = PricewaterhouseCoopers; SOE = State-Owned Enterprise.

workers facing redundancy have the most at risk. Even if the labor leaders were subject to considerable pressures from the CPI(M), to which most unions were affiliated, they could still quietly engage in effective dilatory maneuvers by encouraging worker litigation had the unions not been willing to cooperate. Even were they wholly supportive of government, the unions needed to retain the respect and support of workers statewide, inside and outside the public enterprises undergoing reform. (We development officials—and even developmental communicators—oftentimes forget that “our” stakeholders inevitably have stakeholders of their own.) Consequently, in terms of politics, policy, message design, and communication, the PED eventually gave labor top priority.

Mitra’s public enterprise performance review process made trade union leaders recognize how overstaffing and lack of investment contributed to SOE losses. They could see that, without structural change, many public enterprises were on a relentless path to closure and liquidation. They could see that fewer jobs in a privatized enterprise (which, indeed, might one day strengthen and grow) were preferable to no jobs at all. Yet, driven by the genuine concerns of their own stakeholders, the unions were reluctant to embrace reform for three reasons. To a lesser degree, they were affected by the ideological issues (including suspicion of foreign donors and their ultimate intentions) and, to a greater degree, the practical concerns of ameliorating the pain of SOE worker redundancy. Also, many felt compelled to drive a hard bargain no matter how generous the initial offer. Supporting reform in theory was easier than agreeing to the details, so PED discussions with labor were many and often difficult.

The government was determined not to abandon SOE workers who were to be made redundant by the reform process, but even after enterprise reform was put into the ruling party platform, how to finance redundancy benefits posed a seemingly unsolvable problem for cash-starved West Bengal. In 2002, Sunil Mitra visited neighboring Orissa state, where DFID financed terminal benefits and retraining for workers made redundant by enterprise reform.

After sponsoring the PWC-led feasibility study, DFID agreed to support a generous worker redundancy package, counseling, and long-term medical coverage. That sponsorship, plus a well-designed program of retraining (chiefly for self-employment), would provide former SOE workers with around three-quarters or more of their former salaries. It also included a poverty-impact assessment to permit later adjustments in the program. The PED later made the following report (Government of West Bengal 2005: section 3.2):

The feasibility study, initiated by PED and funded by DFID in mid-2002, confirmed the feasibility of the proposed reform programme, and growing acceptability among key stakeholders consulted (government, enterprise managers, trade union representatives, and employees)... The stakeholder consultations also brought out the fact that the age of most employees likely to face displacement would be on the higher side. Qualifications would be lower than the minimum required for getting redeployment. Thus, it was very important that Social Safety Net Programme should have a human face and [that] there should be adequate compensation and security measures to activate all-round consensus.

Once they considered that the alternative was likely to be SOE closure in a few years, when workers were offered a package that was rapidly seen to be the best conceived and most generous of its kind in India, there were strong incentives to cooperate with government. PWC and the PED made numerous presentations to core stakeholders in which they explained the study to which the core stakeholders had themselves contributed.

PED officials say that communication with unions resulted in other policy measures that helped to reduce the fears of labor. These measures included contractual restrictions that stopped successful bidders from closing an enterprise and stripping assets because many public enterprises occupied land of ever increasing value in growing, urban, or suburban Kolkata. Contracts also stipulated strict time lines for implementing the strategic investor's business plan. Each action reinforced government's commitment to revitalizing former public enterprises and generating jobs, rather than merely absolving itself of liabilities through disinvestment. Here, the process of stakeholder communication led to procedural adjustments that ultimately resulted in labor support.

In 2005, the Public Enterprise Department reported (Government of West Bengal 2005: section 3.9):

The PED adopted a tone of assurance and assertion to impress on labour, government's commitment to undertake reforms with a definitive 'human face.' This was followed up by letters ... to trade unions seeking support, and regular follow-up meetings with central and unit specific trade union leaders.... The PED undertook intensive discussions with trade unions, central leadership, and political parties; responded to their concerns and queries; assured commitment to welfare; and clarified the role of DFID.

Two brief examples of PED's written communications convey the transparent nature of government's internal discussions with labor, in the presence of

other core stakeholders. These examples were circulated widely to politicians, government, public enterprise managers, union leaders, and workers directly through SOE management to ensure that government's positions were neither misunderstood nor misrepresented. In a 2002 status note prepared for labor representatives, Mitra explained the rationale for reform:

The majority of these enterprises have come to ownership of government through acquisition by different mechanisms, from the private sector. At the time of their acquisition, they were without exception in near-terminal stages of industrial "sickness." The stated objective of government was to protect the interests of the workforce and these acquisitions were not affected in consideration of their intrinsic potential for viability. Having taken over these industrial assets that inherently suffered from technological obsolescence and shrinking markets, government has discharged its responsibility to the workforce by providing budget support as working capital loans year after year, to bridge the operating deficits of these enterprises. Government's constraints have not, however, permitted adequate capital investments necessary for the modernization, diversification, and technology upgradation that could bring vitality to their operations in an increasingly competitive market environment. In view of this lack of viability, these enterprises have not been able to generate adequate resources to repay the loans provided by government, thereby accruing accumulating losses and a negative balance sheet that has denied them access to institutional resources for capital investments and working capital.⁸

In another letter from 2002, explaining the purpose of the PWC-led assessment of public enterprise performance and reform options, Mitra sought to dispel labor's considerable misapprehension of government's intentions:

There is a commonly misunderstood belief that we intend to use the restructuring exercise merely to reduce the manpower in our enterprises. This is far from the truth. The primary objective will be to identify measures for optimally restructuring the business of your enterprise that have the best possibility of long-term viability.... I believe that, apart from other gains, achieving this objective will bring each of us significant self-esteem in being able to utilise our skills with success in comparison to the best industrial manufacturing practices, in our country, and in the world.⁹

Throughout this arduous consultative process with unions, government had no direct communication with workers, apart from through its negotiations with unions and when letters and minutes were posted in SOEs by SOE management as instructed by the PED. This lack reflects the intermediary role between workers and employers jealously guarded by trade unions everywhere, as well as the need of the ruling party to respect the traditional role of a historically important stakeholder group. There was some initial reluctance by the PED to engage directly with workers, a point stressed by DFID in its discussions with government. By ensuring that workers had direct access to letters and minutes provided through public enterprise management, even if government could rarely meet workers in person, it broadcast its transparency

and protected itself from any misrepresentation of its views and policies. Mitra explained:

Eventually, we overcame considerable worker and union mistrust with good policies for redundancy benefits and retraining, plus hundreds of hours of presentations to the unions. The workers always differ somewhere from union leaders, and they never completely see eye to eye. Workers require independent assurance. They received our letters through the parastatal companies, and when some union officials objected to our letters, we said as shareholders we had [a] right to reach them not just through the unions. Throughout these long negotiations, whenever there were nasty allegations from unions, I dealt with these through transparency, and whatever unions said, I responded openly.¹⁰

Beginning in 2004, as the first transactions were under way, the communication strategy toward workers changed and broadened. Public enterprise workers were offered redundancy packages by SOE management, and then redundant workers were given individual counseling by an internationally respected NGO, the Rama Krishna Mission, which helped workers cope with the stresses of change, as well as introduced them to the panoply of retraining options.

Rather than government contracting out the management of the worker counseling and retraining component, it created a small cell within the PED to work directly with the Rama Krishna Mission, thus allowing government to oversee quality control and to ensure that the concerns of redundant workers were well addressed. Government recognized that were this important aspect of public enterprise reform handled ineffectively, word would spread fast, discouraging union and worker support for the future reform of other public enterprises. Here a change in structure enabled communication and quality control. The degree of direct observation and stakeholder communication that this permitted between the PED, the implementing NGO, and the redundant workers underscores the degree to which structure, policy, transparency, and communication are often inextricably intertwined.

West Bengal: Ideology, Consistency, and Communication

Thirty years of Communist Party rule in West Bengal have left a considerable legacy of ideology and rhetoric among unions, politicians, government officials, and other key stakeholders. To some, government's commitment to form new partnerships between its public enterprises and the private sector appeared to contradict venerable positions of the CPI(M). On a national level, the CPI(M) publicly opposed elements of enterprise reform advocated by its larger partner within the ruling national coalition, the Congress Party. Clarification was needed, particularly by the party faithful. The PED again used its letters and minutes to explain how the CPI(M) at state and national levels held consistent views, did not oppose public enterprise reform per se, but chiefly objected to the sale of profitable units, and how state and national branches

shared objections to other elements of central government strategy. The PED asserted that the central government sought to abandon entirely state ownership of public enterprises, while West Bengal pursued a three-part strategy of closing units with no hope of regeneration, partially privatizing those that could be regenerated with outside capital investment and retaining full government ownership of profitable firms. It also accused the central government of building up salary arrears owed to public enterprise workers in order to encourage them to accept unfairly low severance benefits. One PED letter stated:

The approach of State Government in restructuring its loss-making PSUs reflects Government's belief that the public sector has not lost relevance and it's capable of contributing to national economic growth. State Government's policy is also in stark contrast to the policy of *withdrawal from manufacture and provision of utilities/services through dismantling the public sector* that is being pursued by the Government of India....

*Government has consistently opposed the policies that seek to dismantle the Central public sector with large investments in public funds, as being inimical to the national interest. There is an essential difference in Government's approach in respect of the State public sector that seeks, instead, to free the assets of unviable enterprises for deployment in economic activity, [to] restructure its loss-making undertakings with the objective of promoting their viability and, in the process, adding to the growth of the State's economy while freeing, simultaneously, budgetary resources for investment in social and infrastructural development. [emphasis in the original]*¹¹

In part because of these assertions, there was no significant dissent on issues of ideological consistency.

West Bengal: Engaging the Media

Shantanu Das, head of DFID's West Bengal office, says:

In 2004, government had built consensus among labor, government, and PSU managers, and it had finished restructuring the PSUs to be sold. Then they began their media campaign. Intellectuals, including reporters, were pro-reform or neutral. Most of the West Bengal media [are] Calcutta-based, middle class, and not opposed to reform. The publishers were pro-reform and supported the new chief minister, and the PED was totally transparent. Even before the PED's media campaign began, most journalists were to some degree aware of the coming reforms because Sunil Mitra talked to the media informally and often. Altogether, the public mood was in favor of disinvestment, and the media coverage of enterprise reform was 90–95 percent positive.¹²

DFID recommended that the PED expand from a stakeholder-targeted communication strategy to a more comprehensive approach. It recognized that, as transactions began, there were more stakeholder groups than before, including journalists, potential investors, other elements of the business

community, and the overall public. The PED concurred, and the campaign broadened, in particular through interaction with mass media.

In addition to Mitra's numerous background briefings to reporters, the PED engaged Grey Worldwide, a communication agency based in Delhi and Kolkata, to educate the media, in particular to explain the benefits for redundant workers. Grey established a Web site and produced several attractive publications focusing on the "success stories" of former SOE workers who were given counseling and retraining and who became self-employed. They also conducted numerous press briefings and media visits to the counseling and retraining projects where reporters could interview the counselors, trainers, and redundant workers. The positive media coverage generated by this exercise dwarfed the small amounts of negative reporting on enterprise reform.

Here government used a carefully targeted communication strategy to strike at the center of potential public opposition, namely, fear that redundant workers would be abandoned and would suffer. The social and economic costs of public enterprise loss making had been made clear since reform was adopted by the ruling party in its election platform and had built over time through newspaper coverage of state finances. The remaining potential source of controversy was the plight of the public enterprise workforce. There was little or no chance that rural groups, such as farmers' movements, would rise up in protest, partly because those were normally under the control of the party apparatus. Government workers and their public sector unions, too, were heavily influenced by the ruling party that defined policy for West Bengal's disciplined communist cadres. So this part of the PED communication strategy addressed the largely private sector stakeholders that tended to exist outside the party structure: the middle classes of West Bengal, who were chiefly Kolkata urbanites or suburbanites. They were not likely to consume products made by these public enterprises, so they had no reason to fear change in that respect, and they had plenty of reason to welcome the rise in public spending anticipated after enterprise reform. Thus, government's retraining awareness campaign addressed the middle classes's last likely concern over reform—and did it well. Although no opinion sampling was undertaken, middle class displeasure would have registered in Kolkata's prolific print and broadcast media, and it did not.

Even the PED media campaign was hallmarked by a personal touch that conveyed transparency and credibility. Ardenhu Sen, now principal secretary of the Public Enterprise Department, recalls the strategy as transactions began: "We did not use many advertisements; rather, we focused on stakeholders including the media. We were very active with electronic, print, and broadcast media. There was both criticism and appreciation of the program, and we kept communicating through nearly constant meetings, interviews, and road trips with the press. Much of our dealings with the press was personal, with lots of one-on-one and group meetings with Mr. Mitra and me, on down throughout the PED staff."¹³

Ultimately, the only issue that attracted significant negative coverage was the privatization of the Great Eastern Hotel, the PED's first transaction, concluded in November 2005. This was chiefly the legacy of several attempts to sell it in the 1990s, which were clumsy efforts that ended in failure. When there was labor resistance against the sale of the hotel, a sound communication strategy helped to elicit favorable reporting from the media. Many newspapers wrote editorials supporting government's attempt to sell it, ensuring that there was no popular support for negative agitation.

West Bengal: Reviewing Communication Strategy

By any practical assessment, the West Bengal government's communication strategy for this first phase of enterprise reform was a clear success, and the PED remains committed to an active, stakeholder-driven communication strategy throughout the second phase. During the first phase, the vast majority of enterprises were strengthened, several were privatized, and a few beyond rescue were liquidated. Because of a sound communication strategy, it was done by minimizing risk, with no damaging controversy and without significant protest, ultimately enjoying levels of stakeholder cooperation that governments elsewhere might well envy. Only one court case attempted to slow or stop public enterprise reform, and there appear to have been only a tiny handful of critical articles in the newspapers.

There were no communication metrics: no polls or focus groups and neither quantitative nor qualitative surveys were commissioned because government felt that they were not essential to coalition building. Government was in close contact with all core stakeholders throughout the process (apart from direct contact with workers who were informed by public enterprise managers and trade union officials). That contact, in addition to a watchful eye kept on news media coverage, provided as much stakeholder feedback as government felt it needed. Their success proves the government officials were right.

This and government's unorthodox order of stakeholder recruitment was, like the entire communication program, driven partly by government's adapting communication to suit circumstances and partly by government's flexibility, patience, and eagerness to communicate transparently, as it participated in dialogue with targeted stakeholders under the rubric of a cohesive communication strategy that understood the politics of change in West Bengal.

Orissa: Public Enterprise Problems and Political Challenges

While enjoying rapid economic growth in the past few years, Orissa is one of India's poorer states. It is located on the east coast just south of West Bengal and north of Andhra Pradesh. On the eve of the new millennium, the state government's financial woes and the condition of its public enterprises mirrored

that of its larger northern neighbor. A respected national daily, *The Hindu*, reported in 2002: “Orissa’s debt burden at the end of 2000–2001 was Rs 21,035 crore rupees [1 crore = 10 million, est. \$4.2 billion] and, were no action taken, this would likely to go up to Rs 34,063 crore [est. \$6.8 billion] by 2005–2006. The state’s own revenue, together with its share of central taxes and grants from the Centre, now fell short of the expenditure on salary, pension, interest repayment, and repayment on principal by more than Rs 150 crore rupees [est. \$30 million]” (*The Hindu* 2002). Meanwhile, the state owned 68 public enterprises, of which 34 were in operation and only 9 were profitable. Altogether, they generated losses amounting to around \$1 million a day.¹⁴

While Orissa’s economic and public enterprise problems were similar to those in West Bengal, the political environment differed enormously. The new chief minister, Naveen Patnaik, son of a populist and much-loved politician, had been a Delhi-based author rather than an Orissa political activist. He inherited a political machine that lacked the discipline and the pervasiveness of the West Bengal’s communists. Even among Orissa state legislators and many senior civil servants, there was neither an appreciation of the size and scope of the public enterprise problem nor the resolve to confront it. Yet the new chief minister understood the need to tackle the state’s daunting financial pressures, including the role played by public enterprises. Together with the chief minister, a small group of senior civil servants undertook the task of championing needed reforms, taking the debate to the people, and building a statewide consensus.

Orissa published white papers on state finances in 1999 and 2001, which admitted that government’s indiscriminate borrowing had not yielded expected results in terms of development, growth, and poverty alleviation. Instead, the state was in a debt trap and at a crisis point. The papers suggested the need for immediate and drastic steps to turn the fiscal situation around and proposed detailed discussions and public debate on the issue. The link between the sharp rise in the wage bill and government’s inability to finance developmental expenditures was made in easy-to-understand yet unequivocal terms. The costs of public enterprises in terms of direct investment, contingent liability, and implicit subsidies were quantified and explained. The need for enterprise reform, part of a much broader government drive toward solvency, began to resonate inside and outside government. One Indian economist commented: “The fact that Naveen Patnaik is among the few chief ministers to be returned to power after a state election is a testament to the fact that the people supported the tough approach taken by his government in its previous tenure.”¹⁵ That success was, first and foremost, the result of competent communication.

The Orissa Department of Public Enterprise (DPE) lacked the capacity available to their counterparts in Kolkata. The state’s industrial sector was small, so the DPE could not access a vast pool of private sector talent similar to that which

reviewed public enterprise performance in West Bengal. The DPE was tiny, its capacity was weak, and its permanent secretary served double duty, splitting his time between being DPE and acting as secretary to the chief minister. Although that position afforded him easy access to the chief minister, it cut his time at the DPE in half. The government turned to DFID for assistance. In 1999, Adam Smith International (ASI), a consultancy based in London and Delhi, began to help DPE design and implement a public enterprise reform program.

Despite government's having stated its policies in white papers, because it lacked a fully effective DPE and a disciplined party machine, there was as yet no strong stakeholder coalition. It was clear from the beginning that communication would make the difference between success and failure.

Orissa: Strategic Communication and Stakeholders

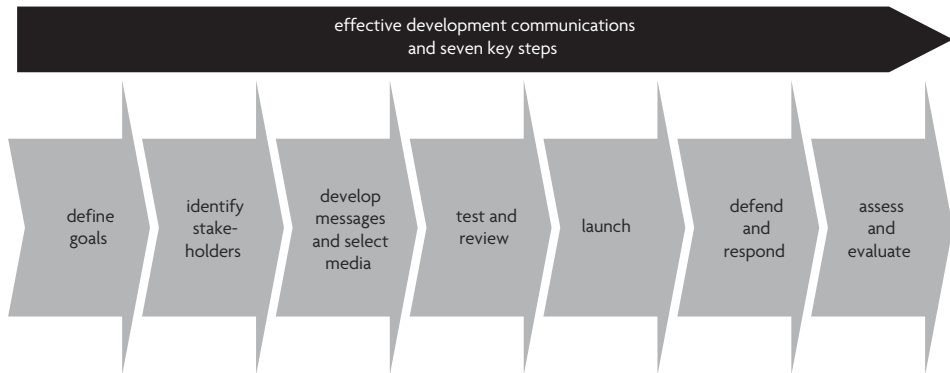
From the very beginning of the reform process, some senior officials in Orissa recognized that effective communication needed to be driven by a political awareness of key stakeholder groups and the need for coalition teamwork. B. K. Patnaik, who now leads the second phase of public enterprise reform as principal secretary of the Department of Public Enterprise, said that designing a stakeholder-based communication strategy

is a very difficult exercise, because you may not recognize some stakeholders, but they may be very important. That's why it's very important to think through, right in the beginning, asking who are the people whom you must convince before you take up reform. A small group can potentially be very, very powerful if [it has] the right access to the right people. Sometimes they could be just a handful of legislators who can shut down the reforms. First, we have to identify who they are.

Next, if you want reforms to take place, you should always start in the top. It could be a chief minister, a prime minister, or it could be anyone for that matter, since only once he is convinced can you really go for it. But that's not enough. You should also have some champions within the organization or just outside the organization to add momentum and take it forward. It is not just one person's interest and effort that delivers necessary results. Then we must identify the other stakeholders, where are they from, within or outside the organization. A very careful strategy has to be built to take all of them on board. All of them may not be on our side, but if you start talking to them, start communicating with them, then, certainly, a number of them will see your point of view.²²

Patnaik's views are shared by Amar Jyoti Mahapatra, the ASI communication expert who designed and implemented the communication strategy for Orissa public enterprise reform. He said that privatization cannot succeed without clear and unequivocal leadership—unlike inherently popular social welfare programs—such as building schools and hospitals, which are essentially all giveaways, all positive.

Figure CS2.1. Effective Development Communications



Source: Adam Smith International 2004.

The DPE communication program used a seven-step, systematic approach developed by ASI (reproduced in figure CS2.1 with DPE's permission). This method for designing and implementing communication is stakeholder driven, thus minimizing the risk that government would issue communication inappropriate to a chosen stakeholder audience and thus fail to achieve its objective, or worse, to convey an unintended message.

Stakeholders were identified according to a variety of criteria:

- Their importance to reform, either to enable or to slow the process
- Their attitudes toward reform
- Key aspects of reform of which they may be unaware
- The most effective medium (or media) through which to influence them
- Their ability to influence other key stakeholders
- Their potential role in a proreform coalition.

This system imposed a mental discipline and structure onto the overall communication effort that proved most successful. By virtue of its being stakeholder driven, it was inherently political, focusing communication on the already identified groups and issues essential to successful reform, then deploying the media and message most appropriate to each target audience.

Orissa: Building Consensus for Reform

With a communication structure in place, the DPE's next task was identifying key stakeholders and assessing their understanding of, and commitment to, enterprise reform. Although the government overall had made strong calls for enterprise reform in its white papers and in speeches and statements by the chief minister, there was, nevertheless, a worrisome lack of commitment within the cabinet and further down through the bureaucracy. Amar Jyoti Mahapatra

recalled that, at the earliest stages of reform, apart from the chief minister and a handful of senior civil servants,

there was a lack of support at the highest level, due to different personalities and different ideas of what constitutes political leadership: some wanted to be seen as reformists, others were prepared to consider reform if it did not make waves, [and] others were simply reluctant. Often letting an enterprise die is an easier option for a politician than taking the bull by the horns and doing something. At the middle level, there was no consensus because many civil servants saw it as a threat to their powers. Line ministries had different ideas of what must be done, and they were reluctant to give away the control of their PSU. Altogether, there was a lack of sufficient political will, and even elements within the DPE were reluctant to give up their control of PSUs. Governments are big believers in the status quo. These kinds of reforms need to be top driven; otherwise government finds a billion reasons not to move.¹⁶

With support from DFID, ASI built a support unit for the DPE, staffed with external international and Indian specialists who began to assemble data on the perilous financial condition of Orissa public enterprises. ASI and senior civil servants briefed the chief minister, who concurred that swift action was needed to staunch financial hemorrhaging and to free up needed resources. Next, government brought in a dynamic, young official to head the DPE: Jugal K. Mohapatra, an officer in the elite Indian Administrative Service with a degree in corporate governance. Government found an equally farsighted civil servant in B. K. Patnaik, then principal secretary of the Water Resources Department, which oversaw the costliest loss-making public enterprise.

Besides needing to educate and motivate politicians and civil servants, the small band of reformers faced considerable challenges in attracting other core stakeholders:

- Orissa had a poor reputation among investors nationwide, while sufficient strategic investment was unlikely to come from the state's small industrial sector.
- Government faced the same labor union resistance as did West Bengal, but without a disciplined ruling party apparatus to confront it.
- Unions were opposed to any job loss in the public enterprise sector.
- Journalists were insufficiently aware of the public enterprise problem, in particular the issues facing individual SOEs and the steps toward reform.

Faced with a need to increase stakeholder understanding, ASI urged that the media should be the key component in DPE communication strategy (unlike in West Bengal, where attention to media came almost last among stakeholders). Media coverage reached all key stakeholders, including potential investors outside the state, and problems reported in the media applied palpable pressure on politicians and civil servants, without which many felt disinclined to embrace change. "The role of the media cannot be overstated,"

ASI reported later (Media Colloquium 2002: 3): “in terms of its potential for being an influencer of public opinion, as well as forming a bridge between the larger public and the government. Reforms cannot succeed if pursued behind closed doors and in particular by alienating the media. ... [T]he sooner the media [were] brought into the reform loop, the better it was.”

Unlike in West Bengal, where government began a slow process of dialogue with stakeholders heavily involved in public enterprises, Orissa needed a different approach. It needed to be faster. Working from a low level of understanding inside and outside public enterprises, the approach needed to start by creating participation and dialogue with mass media.

The DPE and ASI organized media field visits to each of the public enterprises, at least 50 over three years, in addition to several to successful privatizations in other states. Besides frequent briefings, the DPE sponsored numerous lunches, giving journalists an opportunity to quiz the principal secretary on any SOE-related issues and sometimes focusing on single topics such as the valuation process for public enterprises to be divested. Such transparency and access was rare in Orissa, and reporters knew it.

In the same manner in which West Bengal’s Sunil Mitra produced a copious volume of official correspondence, Mahapatra, a former Orissa journalist, wrote many one-shot press releases, each so individually tailored to the interests and style of each newspaper that they appeared in print almost exactly as released by the DPE. Mahapatra recalls: “We rarely did single, big newspaper press releases. Instead, we wrote tailored stories for each journalist, [stories that] were almost always printed verbatim. We selected different aspects of an issue for different newspapers, different lead paragraphs, different quotes, but the rest was the same for all of them.”¹⁷ Orissa’s overworked journalists welcomed the assistance, recognizing that the material was credible and responsible. On more than one occasion, reporters recognized the author’s writing style in competing newspapers and, rather than complain, called to ask for similar help with material to meet deadlines.

The government’s media strategy took a major step forward in a 2002 Media Colloquium on Economic Reform—again sponsored by DFID—that was held in the resort and historic temple town of Puri, near the capital city of Bhubaneswar. Nearly 30 Orissa print and broadcast journalists and editors attended, along with an almost equal number from government, NGOs that by then were involved in public enterprise worker retraining, DFID staff members, and ASI advisers. National perspective was provided by a well-known columnist and advocate of public enterprise reform, Tavleen Singh, and by Pradip Bajjal, principal secretary to the central government’s Ministry for Disinvestment, then headed by the equally dynamic Arun Shourie.

The two-day event, an intensive exercise in dialogue and participation, let journalists voice their concerns about enterprise reform and suggest ways in which government could be more responsive to media. In return, they received

detailed information on enterprise reform in Orissa, across India, and globally. That event alone generated such a substantial volume of positive news coverage that—had the same amount of newspaper space been purchased for advertisements—it would have cost 30 times more than the colloquium itself (Media Colloquium 2002). Although news media coverage of this first phase of Orissa’s enterprise reform program was not wholly positive, it was largely so, and media opposition to any individual transaction was soon countered patiently and effectively by the DPE.

The government continued to use white papers and policy pronouncements to press the case for enterprise reform, making powerful arguments that resonated with the media, policy makers, and the public. A 2002 white paper (Government of Orissa 2002: 8) on public enterprise reform explained that “if the hidden subsidies availed by the PSEs were diverted to [social] sectors, it would have led to the creation of about 21,000 new primary schools, 26,000 kilometres of new metal roads, 17,000 new doctors, nearly one lakh [100,000] resettlement houses or five lakh new jobs over three years, 1997–2000. By putting money into PSEs, these opportunities for development in social sectors have been lost undoubtedly.”

Lacking West Bengal’s disciplined and integrated political system, and with the need to educate a large number of stakeholders rapidly, the Orissa government’s emphasis on communicating through news media was a wise decision. In an effective manner, government statements from the chief minister and through white papers strengthened the PED’s media campaign, told stakeholders that there would be no retreat from enterprise reform, and reaffirmed that the public had everything to gain by government’s rescuing Orissa from its financial crisis.

Throughout the DPE’s first phase of enterprise reform (1999–2004), media coverage was largely positive. Where negative reports occurred (and they were not many), they were mostly driven by media’s professional responsibility to cover newsworthy events, usually relating to stakeholder protests or political criticism, to which the government responded swiftly, appropriately, and transparently.

Orissa: Communication to Motivate Government

Even with external support and sound information provided by the media, Orissa’s tiny Department of Public Enterprise was in no position to enact reform on its own. It needed active support from the cabinet and line departments controlling various public enterprises scheduled either for closure or for restructuring and private sector investment. Besides numerous briefings to the chief minister and cabinet, line departments, SOE management, and labor unions, the DPE deployed another communication strategy that was as novel as it was effective.

As we will see shortly, some important stakeholder groups (for example, SOE workers and rice farmers) to some degree welcomed reforms or, at least, strongly

resented the problems incurred by government ownership and management of public enterprises. Yet many politicians, along with senior and midlevel civil servants, had little time to read reports, much less to visit these stakeholders and solicit their opinions. Consequently, they sometimes mistakenly presumed opposition to reform where there was little or none. Mahapatra produced five-minute video memoranda to virtually put stakeholders onto the desktops of policy makers. Videotaped over a weekend by camera crews more accustomed to filming wedding parties, these low-budget, low-tech productions recorded stakeholder interviews, cut and edited them into sound bites, and let decision makers hear directly what ordinary people thought (often expressed in salty language).

“In one case, there was a spinning mill in which workers, still on payroll, had been idle for some years and had not been paid for many months,” Mahapatra said.

Besides needing to be paid, workers were eager to take redundancy and retraining benefits, but the trade union officials blocked the flow of information. We learned this by unofficially visiting the workers’ colony near the mill, where we found that some union officials hired the underemployed mill workers in their privately owned bakeries, trucking companies, and so forth. So they had a vested interest in keeping the mill workers from receiving terminal benefits and retraining that [would allow] workers to make better money elsewhere. Our first video memo gave workers a voice and got the officials moving. The workers were paid their arrears, and government made sure that they were offered redundancy benefits.¹⁸

“I don’t know how long it would have taken for officials to read one more report in their overfilled in-boxes,” Mahapatra recalled, “but who can resist a movie?”¹⁹ Video memoranda proved to be powerful tools, both to educate uninformed policy makers and, by vividly demonstrating stakeholder support, to strengthen the arguments of officials who advocated reform. Mahapatra also directed and produced a video documentary, *Elephants Can Dance*, on privatization and worker retraining that was provided to 350 parliamentarians, civil servants, public enterprise managers, and journalists.

Orissa: Investors and Labor

Unlike West Bengal with its large industrial base, Orissa needed to look outside the state for strategic investors. The chief minister soon began a vigorous investment drive, still under way, that has put Orissa among the fastest-growing state economies in India. Starting in 2001, the DPE began a communication program of investor recruitment, which was based on individual public enterprises or by sector, with nationwide and even global outreach. For each transaction, the communicators prepared informational “bid packs” that provided potential investors with background data on the firm being privatized and

explained procedures for submitting expressions of interest, for enacting due diligence, bidding, and for understanding government evaluation of bids. They also developed individual and sectoral marketing strategies.

To privatize a large cement factory, the DPE advertised in international magazines specializing in the cement industry. For smaller concerns, such as spinning mills or sugar mills, they targeted areas within India, either with strong private sector involvement in the respective sector or with a historical tradition of investing in Orissa. They limited their advertising to tender announcements that requested expressions of interest from prospective bidders, correctly assuming that this approach would be sufficient information to attract investors familiar with that sector. They also augmented their campaign with well-advertised, promotional “road shows” to neighboring Hyderabad and Kolkata, where DPE officials and public enterprise managers met sugar mill owners. This low-budget, targeted communication strategy proved successful as well as cost-effective.

Trade unions presented a considerable obstacle to reformers. Early on, the Orissa government created a voluntary redundancy program with a sound counseling and retraining component for former SOE workers. Furthermore, there was another strong, if unintentional, incentive for public enterprise workers to accept the government’s offer. Over the better part of a decade, the cash-poor government paid its public enterprise workers partially and often late, until some were owed the equivalent of three or even four years’ salary. This problem, in addition to the fact that many public enterprises were effectively idle and unlikely to be resuscitated, provided strong incentives for workers to accept terminal benefits (funded through government by DFID). Nevertheless, labor leaders were often highly uncooperative: some perceived a lack of consensus in cabinet and believed that if they remained uncooperative long enough, government would back down and seek to cut losses elsewhere. Others profited off labor in idle public enterprises, whom they underpaid for informal work in some labor officials’ private companies, so those labor leaders saw reform as a direct threat to their business costs. Some resistance, too, was ideologically inspired, and some was driven by the (mistaken) belief that driving a harder bargain would release even more funds for workers’ terminal benefits.

Unions initially blocked the DPE from meeting directly with workers to offer them a terminal benefits package. “Due to opposition from the unions, we had limited opportunity to meet workers and explain our policies,” said Mahapatra: “The government had money for retirement and also its retraining program, but we had few takers. It was essentially a communication problem, and at our then-present rate we calculated that it was going to take 275 years to spend the retraining budget. Few line departments were aware of the options for PSU workers, and apart from writing letters, government made little effort.”²⁰

DPE Principal Secretary Jugal K. Mohapatra met public enterprise managers to explain the program for workers; with their cooperation, DPE approached workers directly. In one idle spinning mill, where workers were owed salaries going back 40 months, their only contact with the enterprise was to approach locked factory gates monthly in the often futile hope of partial payment. DPE officials informed the unions about the program, posted notices, and then, together with the public enterprise managers, met workers and explained the voluntary redundancy program. Government's offer was so popular that "the riot police had to be called in, to break up a scuffle of workers demanding application forms," Mahapatra recalled.²¹

Thereafter, DPE took an active role in advertising terminal benefits and meetings to explain to workers the government's offer, including retraining, by hanging banners across streets near public enterprises, through posters on factory walls, and through local news coverage on television and radio. This approach effectively bypassed those trade unions hoping to stop workers from learning of the government's redundancy package; over time it convinced many labor officials of the futility of opposing the process.

Orissa: Reforming the Lift Irrigation Corporation

The largest single loss maker in Orissa's portfolio of public enterprises was the Orissa Lift Irrigation Corporation (OLIC), which owned more than 13,000 water pumps and wells serving small farm communities, each pump irrigating 10–30 hectares on average. Pumps were overseen by 8,000 OLIC employees, and each farmer paid a fee depending on the crop irrigated (rice, the thirstiest crop, incurred the highest fee).

Overstaffed, undercapitalized, and plagued with petty corruption, OLIC lost the government roughly \$10 million a year, and its performance was poor: frequent pump breakdowns and a persistent shortage of spare parts meant that farm communities often went weeks without irrigation, and their crops suffered accordingly. Government decided to close OLIC and to convince farmers to form community water-users committees (*pani panchayats*); to assume group ownership of the pumps and wells; and, in return, to bear the costs of their own repairs by local, private sector engineers who already serviced the many privately owned irrigation pumps on farmland not serviced by OLIC.

The government, unions, and OLIC employees were key stakeholders, but none were as important as farmers. Patnaik, then principal secretary of the Water Resources Department, explained:

The important thing that the farmers had to know was that, with the reforms, the quality of service would be improved. Secondly, it wouldn't be costlier than what it used to be under the corporation's management. So, the farmers had to be convinced that what we were going to do was in their interest and it would empower them to manage their own pump. After they took over the point, they

could attend to repairs immediately, so if something went wrong, they could immediately get it fixed. They could attend to this in a day or two, whereas under the corporation they had to wait for weeks and months.²²

Patnaik strengthened the coalition, briefing parliamentarians, senior civil servants, and media on the high cost of OLIC inefficiency and on how that money was needed elsewhere for infrastructure and social services. Meanwhile, ASI engaged three local public relations firms to sample opinions of farm communities, to hold stakeholder meetings, and to mount advertising campaigns across two-thirds of the state. Mahapatra soon discovered that farmers resented OLIC's inefficiencies and the cost to their harvests, and he produced a video memo to relay their views to policy makers, who had incorrectly assumed opposition from farmers.

The communication team created a logo and an identity for the *pani panchayats*, and they marketed the concept to farming communities in a variety of ways, many of them reliant upon dialogue with villagers rather than one-way communication:

- Direct village meetings, conducted by local NGO personnel
- *Jatras*, or traditional plays adapted to campaign messages, performed at *haats*, rural farmers' markets, by three traveling theatrical troupes
- Story-telling posters, conveying detail through the fictional story of a village that overcame local skepticism to form its own successful *pani panchayat*
- Radio and television news, covering the chief minister's (and other officials') visits to rural rallies
- Radio advertising with specially designed jingles
- Leaflets and fliers focusing on the financial benefits to farming communities, using "success stories" from the earliest *pani panchayats*.

Over the three-year campaign, more than 6,000 *pani panchayats* were formed. This communication campaign for farmers was well orchestrated and well mapped—a necessity because it covered so many communities spread over so large an area. It incorporated a wide variety of media ranging from the conventional (that is, print and broadcast, news, and advertising) as well as traditional activities such as traveling theater. Periodic opinion sampling was undertaken to see if overall messages resonated with farmers, and individual communication outputs were tested to ensure that each conveyed the desired message.

Convincing the unions and the OLIC employees to accept terminal benefits was more difficult. Patnaik recalled:

There were about 10,000 employees of OLIC, and they were opposed to it tooth and nail. They knew that once these *pani panchayats* took over, there would be no reason for OLIC to continue. Yet, the background was that many of these employees didn't get their salaries for months altogether. Or if they got paid, it was only for part of the year. They themselves were in financial distress. So they wanted to discuss these problems with the OLIC management, with senior

officials, and with ministers. We had very frequent and long meetings with the unions and with their federations. There were about 43 unions, and since we could not talk to each one of them separately, they formed a federation to fight for their cause. The federation alone consisted of nearly 40–50 people, and all of them used to come into my office for discussions. They eventually came to realize that this loss of Rs 55 crores per year, or \$10 million, was just not sustainable and something had to be done. Government offered workers a ... [terminal benefits package] including retraining. Once the unions realized that the status quo could not continue forever, they stopped opposing and began instead to bargain for a better package for voluntary retirement. It was worked out, but it went right up to the cabinet for final approval.²³

Here the DPE pursued the two-part worker education strategy that they used in other public enterprises, maintaining transparency with the unions while educating workers on available terminal benefits through public enterprise management. Once again, this was an effective communication strategy: personal, serious, transparent, and patient, tailored to the concerns of the targeted stakeholders.

Initially, news media coverage of the OLIC reform was hostile, as reporters responded to critical stories in obscure rural newspapers, which were thought at first to be planted by opposition politicians, and to complaints launched by trade union officials. However, this hostility diminished considerably once farm-community support was made clear by the DPE and its communicators.

Orissa: Reviewing Communication Strategy

Orissa's Department of Public Enterprise was faced with an almost insuperable challenge, given the widespread stakeholder ignorance of the problems and the limited remedies available to the public enterprise sector. Unlike reformers in West Bengal, the DPE needed to launch a complex information campaign on several fronts simultaneously, and it lacked many of the advantages of size and structure—and of political discipline and longevity—that were enjoyed by its equally reform-minded northern neighbor.

Nevertheless, the DPE wisely adopted a politically aware, media-centered strategy that alerted key stakeholders to the core problems even as the remedies were still being designed. Then it expanded that base of knowledge to address as best as possible the chief concerns of the main stakeholders. The strategy worked, overall and incrementally. Risk was contained, news media opposition was minimal and did no lasting damage to the process, those portions of government needed to enact reform cooperated sufficiently, and SOE workers were given access to important information—often against opposition from labor unions, which allowed them to choose or reject government's terminal benefits and retraining benefits. Throughout the process, government communicated with admirable transparency and integrity, which no doubt helped to build stakeholder trust and support (see table CS2.3).

Table CS2.3. Communication Tools for Stakeholders

Government white papers, speeches	Core stakeholders (politicians, civil servants, SOE labor and management, investors, media) and public
DPE-produced news articles, press releases	Media (then to) policy makers, stakeholders, public
Lunches, interviews	Media (then to) policy makers, stakeholders, public
Media visits to public enterprises	Media (then to) policy makers, stakeholders, public
Video memoranda	Politicians, civil servants
Video documentary	Politicians, civil servants, media
Media colloquium	Media (then to) stakeholders, public
SOE ads, requests for expressions of bidder interest	International, national, and statewide investors
SOE promotional investor "road shows"	National investors in other states
Posters, pamphlets, radio ads on water-user groups	Farm communities (OLIC reform)
Meetings, traveling theater troupes	Farm communities (OLIC reform)
Terminal benefit, retraining brochures, meetings, radio	SOE workers

Source: Author.

Note: DPE = Department of Public Enterprise; OLIC = Orissa Lift Irrigation Corporation; SOE = State-Owned Enterprise.

Orissa and West Bengal Communication in Review

As explained earlier, this case study does not presume to pass judgment on the enterprise reform process itself. In Orissa as in West Bengal, the first phase resulted in some public enterprises being liquidated, some failing to find an appropriate investor, and others successfully transferred to partial or full private sector ownership. In each state, the second phase of enterprise reform is now under way, communication continues, and more public enterprises are scheduled for reform.

From a communication perspective, each state enjoyed genuine success after taking the following steps:

- Recognizing that a stakeholder-driven, communication strategy must be an integral part of overall strategic policy planning, not just a programmatic afterthought
- Recognizing that, just as changing events affect the process of policy reform, they drive strategic communication at the same time and in the same manner
- Identifying the stakeholder groups that mattered most to successful reform
- Identifying stakeholder attitudes and preferred media
- Engaging wherever possible in stakeholder dialogue, letting participation help build consensus and a demand for reform
- Testing communication outputs and sampling stakeholder opinion when necessary

- Deploying appropriate messages to stakeholders through appropriate media
- Building and strengthening stakeholder coalitions and encouraging existing coalitions to promote reform
- Minimizing risk to government overall and to the reform process in particular
- Functioning with optimal transparency
- Functioning with optimal flexibility in terms of policy, negotiation, and stakeholder communication
- Minimizing negative media coverage (and indeed, other stakeholder opposition) in the best manner available.

Considerable credit is due to the governments of West Bengal and Orissa, to their advisers, and to the U.K. Department for International Development, all of whom recognized, from the very beginning, the need for a dynamic and flexible strategic communication strategy based upon, first and foremost, appreciating the unique perspectives of each key stakeholder group.

Lessons Learned

The successes in West Bengal and Orissa offer useful lessons for strategic communication, not just in public enterprise reform, but in most areas of development:

- Start program planning by looking at the political or tactical landscape, stakeholder by stakeholder, to see which group's support is essential and where opposition may delay or stop your reform.
- Integrate communication into each step of project development, then in project implementation. At each stage ask, "Who needs to be told what?"
- Study the stakeholders: what they think, what they need to be told, where their self-interest lies, and through which media to best reach them.
- Consider where pro-reform coalitions might ensure success and, later, sustainability, and ask which stakeholder groups are likely members of a coalition.
- Test each communication to determine whether the message reaches the target audience, and, where possible, establish benchmarks of stakeholder attitude through which you can later attempt to measure communication impact.
- Use dialogue and participation to build stakeholder understanding, demand, and then coalitions among like-minded stakeholder groups. The patience that this approach requires can often make the difference between a program's success and failure.

Notes

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2. Interview, Sunil Mitra, former Principal Secretary, Public Enterprise Department (1997–2005), Government of West Bengal, Kolkata, September 2006.
3. Interview, Mitra.
4. Interview, Mitra.
5. Interview, Shantanu Das, DFID/Kolkata, September 2006.
6. Interview, Arindam Guha, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Kolkata, September 2006.
7. *Restructuring the Public Sector in West Bengal*, letter, Sunil Mitra, to accountant general, February 17, 2004, section 2.4.
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10. Interview, Mitra.
11. *Restructuring the Public Sector in West Bengal*, Status Note to Trade Unions, September 3, 2002, p. 97, section 8.
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16. Interview, Patnaik.
17. Interview, Amar Jyoti Mahapatra, Adam Smith International (1999–2004), communication advisor to the Department of Public Enterprise, government of Orissa, September 2006.
18. Interview, Mahapatra.
19. Interview, Mahapatra.
20. Interview, Mahapatra.
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Slovakia: Public Opinion and Reform

Introduction

In the late 1990s, the Slovakian government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda, embarked on a set of economic reforms.¹ The reform plan included the following elements: macroeconomic framework and public finance reform, tax reform, pension reform, health care reform, social and labor market reforms, public administration reform and fiscal decentralization, and business environment improvement. Economic prosperity and integration with the rest of Europe were the stated benefits of the reform package.

The Dzurinda administration designed a strong economic reform program, but it lacked the internal capacity to communicate the reforms to the Slovak public effectively. To address this lack of capacity, an international consulting firm was employed to help manage the Slovak government's communication strategy. The consultants' work included providing support to the government in designing the communication strategy and helping build government capacity to carry out public information activities. The latter task included advising on the design of survey instruments, delivering communication training, and monitoring communication effectiveness.

Bolstering Government Communication Capacity

The Slovak government, in cooperation with the World Bank, established a program titled "Strengthening Government Capacity to Develop and Implement Public Information Programs in Support of Economic Reforms." Key to

the program was establishing a center to coordinate all communication activities. In addition to its clearinghouse role, the center—according to its terms of reference—was expected to engage in both analytical and training activities:

- Analytical: a public opinion research program based on both quantitative and qualitative methods, ongoing media monitoring, study of public opinion polls and surveys conducted by third parties, and comparative analysis of relevant trends in other countries. During the 18-month period of grant implementation, the center conducted two representative face-to-face baseline surveys, two representative computer-assisted telephone interviews, and 12 focus groups.
- Training: targeted training of key communication staff members engaged in the reform effort on strategic communication and providing media training for senior officials entrusted with communicating the reforms to the public at large.

Focus on Pension Reform

The pension reform stands out as an example of global good practice in the effective use of communication in managing public change processes. In contrast to the macroeconomic issues of the larger reform package, reformers had to take public opinion into account because the pension reform directly affected the public. This example also serves to illustrate some of the more common communication challenges faced by reformers: namely, finding the best methods for securing political will, securing the public will, and gaining the support of public sector middle managers.

The pension reform was implemented by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family (MOLSAF) as the agency having oversight of the National Labor Office and the Social Insurance Agency. The primary reason for the pension reform was to forestall the imminent collapse of the old centralized system, which was becoming unsustainable because of changing demographics and the pressures of Euro-integration. The old system, in which workers paid the pensions of retirees (the pay-as-you-go model), was replaced with a new system, which combined the old model with obligatory personal pension accounts administered by private companies, as well as voluntary private accounts into which people could contribute additional pension savings.

Communication Challenges

Reformers faced various communication challenges, including lack of political will, lack of public support, and lack of support from middle managers.

Lack of Political Will

One challenge was gaining the support of members of parliament (MPs) so that they would vote in favor of the proposed reforms, including the pension

system reform. Thus, reformers needed to provide MPs and other decision makers with sufficient information and arguments in support of the proposed reforms.

Lack of Public Support

Gaining support of the Slovak public and relevant stakeholders in favor of the proposed reforms was a challenge. The rationale behind reforms needed to be explained to the public, and expectations needed to be managed in regard to the reform's benefits and costs. A constant flow of information between the government, on the one hand, and the media and stakeholder groups, on the other, was needed to secure public support.

Lack of Support from Middle Managers

Gaining support of the middle managers in the Slovakian civil service was a challenge. Thus, the reformers needed to engage members of the civil service, show appreciation for their work, and explain the reforms in terms of the middle managers' enlightened self-interest.

Communication Objectives and Interventions

To address the above mentioned challenges, MOLSAF's media team bolstered government communication capacity by hiring the requisite communication expertise: a local consultant to manage the communication campaign.

The interventions described next had a threefold purpose: to secure the political will of the legislature in enacting the necessary laws, to secure wide public buy-in or public will, and to engage middle managers in the ministry to implement the reforms effectively.

Securing Political Will

To gain legislative support for the new Slovak pension system, communication objectives were defined as follows: to provide MPs and other decision makers with sufficient information about the new pension system, to win the support of the MPs and other decision makers for the reform, to provide a constant flow of information to the media and stakeholder groups, and to generate support from the general public and special stakeholder groups.

During this phase of the campaign, the following activities were conducted:

- Analysis of the key stakeholder groups to address them separately with specific messages
- Preparation of an “influence pack”—a set of arguments and information about the forthcoming pension reform for different target groups
- Media training for key officials at MOLSAF and the Financial Market Authority who would comment publicly on the pension reform
- Regular workshops, seminars, and business breakfasts for opinion leaders, especially MPs

- Regular workshops for the media
- A special two-day workshop for MPs, attended by foreign consultants
- A study tour to Chile by Slovak MPs, designed to give them an empirical understanding of how similar reforms operated elsewhere.

Securing the Public Will

The issue of pension reform resonated with the public. It was clear that given the shifting demographics, the state-controlled, pay-as-you-go system could not guarantee future financial security for younger Slovaks entering the labor market.

To gain public trust and increase understanding, messages were kept simple. Through effective use of public opinion research—surveys, polling, and focus groups—reformers were able to measure increasing public support for the reforms. A local company carried out both qualitative and quantitative public opinion research.

The public campaign was aided by an advertising blitz sponsored by pension companies. Ads saturated the airwaves and increased public awareness of the reforms. MOLSAF's simple message—that “you can manage your own money” if you subscribe to the privately administered options—was reinforced by private sector advertising.

The campaign was successful, as evidenced by public opinion data. According to Markant's Public Information Survey Company, “In the first survey of June 2003, 65 percent of respondents approved of the change in the pay-as-you-go system. From June 2004 to May 2005, the share of those who agreed with the proposed, or implemented, reform increased from 37 percent to 58 percent. The share of those who did not agree with the reform remained relatively constant in the observed time period, thus reaching about 25 percent.”

Securing Middle Management Support

One common challenge in implementing reform programs is working with members of the civil service—they can be your best allies or the worst enemies. Breaching the redoubt of middle-level managers who did not support the reforms for a host of reasons was a key challenge in Slovakia's pension reform.

The reformers' approach was first to gain the trust and respect of middle managers by attending all their meetings, inviting key influential people to external meetings and events, and setting a positive and appreciative tone in their interactions. By showing appreciation for middle managers' work, explaining the reforms within the context of their own enlightened self-interest, and projecting a forward-looking and inclusive vision, reformers were able to secure middle managers' support in advancing the reform campaign. The success of the pension reform can be largely attributed to the cooperation of the MOLSAF middle managers.

Outcomes

Approximately 1.7 million Slovaks, or close to 30 percent of the population, have subscribed to the pension reform, thereby locking it into the financial

system and making a policy reversal very difficult. Slovakia's pension system is now rated among the most progressive in Europe.

More generally, the broad set of economic reforms was successful in improving Slovakia's overall economic condition. Although the Dzurinda government, which was responsible for the reforms, is no longer in power, the communication interventions managed to secure the public will and to lock the reforms in place. Public opinion still favors the reforms.

The Slovak public's current support for the reforms and the Dzurinda administration's electoral loss in 2006 testify to the complex relationship between public will and political will.

Box CS3.1 Communicating Difficult Reforms: Eight Lessons from Slovakia by Jeremy Rosner

The communication lessons from the broad economic reforms include the following:

1. *Connect with the national mood.* Happy talk about how well things are going will not be effective in a country where the majority of the public believe that the country is headed in the wrong direction. Instead, leaders need to connect with public sentiment through research on how people feel. If the public sees the country to be going in the wrong direction, there is a need to take that direction seriously and to engage with a frame of communication that acknowledges that things are not going as they should. If the reforms are already in place and things are not going well, explain why that is the case or how the reforms will deal with it.
2. *Adopt a clear, unifying message.* In many cases, as in Slovakia, when one explains a complex reform or set of reforms to the public, it is important to pull back from the myriad details and to construct a unifying message that makes sense to people, is memorable, and ties pieces together. In Slovakia, the Dzurinda government was seeking to build support for at least seven different major reforms. The ministers and civil servants working on these reforms had strong explanations about why each of these reforms was important, but the cumulative impact of all the information on the public often was more akin to white noise. However, the research suggested that if the government were to use a central set of ideas and messages that explained what the reforms were about—that, taken together, they were aimed at attracting new investors and new jobs for Slovakia—it was possible for the government to increase support for their reforms. With a unifying message, the reforms suddenly became—for many people—intuitive, memorable, and attractive.
3. *Explore opportunities for reframing the debate.* Leaders and reformers often exhibit a stubborn streak in fighting against public opinion, as if presenting their facts over and over will eventually sway people, unaware that there may be opportunities to reframe the debate in ways that can generate more agreement for support. In Slovakia, by early 2005 the dislocations and other costs of the reforms had left the Dzurinda government with only minority support on the question of whether people approved or disapproved of the reforms. Yet focus group discussions revealed that people were against the idea of repealing the reforms; even though much of the public resented many elements and consequences of the reforms, they felt strongly that repealing the reforms would make their country even worse off. Subsequent quantitative research indicated that about three-quarters of respondents actually wanted to improve on the reforms rather than repeal them. By rephrasing the alternatives as whether to keep the reforms and to improve on them or to repeal them, the government was able to pursue a dramatic reframing that opened the door to a much more positive and receptive dialogue with a very large majority.
4. *Act macro; talk micro.* Leaders in many transitional governments often think and talk too exclusively in macro-terms. Unfortunately for their communications efforts, life is lived in micro-terms. For example, in Slovakia the dominant goal of the health care reforms was to reduce the debts imposed by the health care systems. This message did not resonate with

(continued)

Box CS3.1 continued.

the public because it just did not relate to people's lives. Most citizens do not come in contact with the debts of the health care system, but, rather, with doctors and hospital beds and pharmacies. Naturally, quite a different set of concerns with the health care system surfaced during focus group discussions, but the government had not sufficiently addressed these concerns in its communications. By listening to the public through opinion research, and by doing more to look at the problem through the eyes of the citizens who are the consumers of the health care system, the government found the door opened to new lines of communication that could explain the micro-benefits of the health reforms. All this action requires looking through the other end of the telescope, to go from a "macro" lexicon to a "micro" lexicon.

5. *Confront the public's biggest concerns.* Reforms almost always entail costs that are usually unevenly shared, generating fears and resentments. Instead of confronting those fears and resentments, many reformers try to avoid the subject and to keep things focused on the positive aspects of the reforms. This approach can leave the public feeling that the government is out of touch. One of the most powerful things that a government can do is to admit and give voice to the public's biggest concerns. It takes enormous political courage to deal with them head on, but this act buys the government credibility and opens it up to hearing about other difficult issues.
6. *Build capacity on the ground.* It is often important to build the capacity of ministers, state secretaries, and spokespeople on how they frame messages and communicate with the media. In Slovakia, an extensive training program was conducted for government officials; the benefits of such capacity building may play out only over the long term, but they will tend to contribute to building the capacity of transitional governments to take the public's views seriously, to investigate and research those views, and to frame messages that will connect and address those views constructively.
7. *Stop talking politics.* Government officials love to talk politics because, in many countries, the way to get ahead in political life, at least under predemocratic political regimes, was by doing battle within the inner political circles rather than by talking to the public. Thus, many leaders are eager to air their political intrigues, designs, and grievances, which in turn allows or encourages the media to focus on those issues rather than on any discussions of reform. When this happens, the result is that all the public hears about is political battles, the personalities, the parties, and the coalitions. In Slovakia, by a three-to-one ratio, people said the bigger problem was that the government was spending too much time talking about politics and not about the reforms, rather than the alternative choice that the government was bad at explaining the reforms. Politics crowds out explanations of reforms. If government wants its messages about reforms to get through to people, it needs to stop talking politics.
8. *Start early.* When reformers build a process of listening to the public early on and develop their communications around dialogue with the public, there have been impressive results. Pension reform in Slovakia had two very talented communications consultants who built a conversation and a process of messaging from the very first stages of the reform design, which brought about state-of-the-art thinking on how to research and frame the reform effort thoroughly from top to bottom. That reform, in turn, made a huge impact on the success of the reform.

Note

1. This summary is based on the findings of field research conducted by Tunji Lardner. A full case study on this topic is scheduled to be published at a later date.

Building Support for the Rule of Law in Georgia

José-Manuel Bassat

Introduction

When the government of Georgia began the process of judicial reform in 1997, it became evident that technical measures alone would not be sufficient to promote the rule of law in the nation after decades of Soviet rule. Widespread corruption and political interference, coupled with inefficient management and poorly trained judges, meant that most citizens would do anything possible to stay away from the courts. Reforming the judicial system, therefore, had to be accompanied by a comprehensive communication effort to help regain trust in the judiciary as it was being revamped, in addition to educating members of the public about their newly acquired rights and helping users navigate the courts.

As an integral part of its Judicial Reform Project, the World Bank included an ambitious communication program. The project was well funded and provided with international technical assistance. It was implemented by a non-governmental organization (NGO) that was willing to work constructively with the judiciary. The communication program started off with an opinion research study that outlined Georgians' attitudes toward the judiciary and their level of understanding of their rights and the mechanisms in place to protect those rights. With the results of the survey, a communication strategy with a corresponding action plan was put together and implemented between early 2001 and 2004 (annex CS4.1).

Background: The Court System in Disarray

In 1997, the government of Georgia launched a far-reaching judicial reform process. Georgia, until 1991 a republic of the USSR, had never enjoyed an independent, professional judiciary valued by society. On the contrary, judicial decisions were weak and often politicized, and the endorsement of the Politburo was more important than a credible case or a good defense. In turn, this state of affairs meant that the judiciary was never seen as a field in which a young professional could lead a meaningful career, and the system attracted rather mediocre individuals. Corruption became rampant and to this day remains a serious issue.

The World Bank was asked to assist with the process of judicial reform, first in the form of a Judicial Assessment, which was a detailed study of the status of the country's judiciary, and then with a project aimed at addressing specific pressing issues identified in the assessment. The World Bank project was to assist in the area of court administration, judicial training, rehabilitation of infrastructure, and communication. During project preparation, a communication needs assessment was carried out to identify the most important issues to tackle in the area of communication and to help design the program. As part of this exercise, an opinion research project was commissioned, which consisted of a series of focus groups and a nationwide survey.

Opinion Research: Placing a Mirror in Front of the Judiciary

In 1998, the World Bank commissioned a baseline study of the perceptions of the Georgian public vis-à-vis the judicial system, the public's understanding of its mode of operation, and the readiness to use it as a means of resolving potential disputes. The research, completed by an international consultant and a team of Georgian researchers, included a countrywide survey (a sample of 1,000 urban and rural residents), a series of focus groups, 30 in-depth interviews with key decision makers and civil society representatives, and a media content analysis.

This initial research indicated that there was a high degree of mistrust of the legal and judicial system in early 1998. The courts and law enforcement agencies were perceived by a large majority of the population as very corrupt, and money and political influence were seen as better guarantors of one's rights. The research also pointed out, however, that despite the deep cynicism shown by most respondents toward the judicial system, a majority of Georgians still believed in the importance of the rule of law as the basis for a democratic society and a market economy. This specific finding became a vital tool to help design the communication strategy.

The media content analysis revealed that the level of legal knowledge of most reporters was extremely low and that very few of them understood the constructive role that the media could play in educating members of the

public about their rights and how to use the judicial system. Media coverage of the judicial world revolved more around personality issues and scandals rather than substantive matters.

The results of the opinion research were instrumental in demonstrating the need for the judiciary to be in constant dialogue with the public. The lack of knowledge of many basic issues showed that the public needed to be educated and continuously informed about the judicial system. Just as significant, the research also showed how important it was for the judiciary to listen regularly to what the public thought in order to be more responsive to the needs of the citizens it served.

Program Design: Getting It Right at the Right Time

With the results of the opinion research project in hand, the communication program had to be set up, its parameters and objectives outlined, the implementation arrangements worked out, and the indicators defined. This stage turned out to be one of the most crucial parts of the intervention, and the capacity to understand current and future challenges proved decisive in ensuring the program's success. This section discusses some of the most difficult questions faced at that stage.

How Large Should an Intervention Be?

Up until the 1990s, few World Bank projects beyond the health sector allocated money to communication, and those that did limited their funding to side interventions, mainly public information activities such as producing brochures and leaflets, in the hope that someone would read them and find them useful.

The opinion research in Georgia clearly showed that this kind of intervention would not be enough. The lack of knowledge and low level of trust in the judiciary required much bigger thinking. The effort had to be comprehensive to help tackle issues on different fronts and in the long term so as to be able to get to the root of the problem and to count on adequate funding. The project's communication program was given an allocation of \$1.6 million for a four-year period.

Was There a Real Need for International Technical Assistance?

An important question raised at the time of program design was whether bringing in international consultants to assist in the project was justified. International technical assistance can be very expensive, and it is always difficult to justify the daily fees of senior consultants, which can be higher than annual per capita gross domestic product in the host country.

In Georgia, it was a tough decision. At the time, the country could boast little communication expertise beyond the field of journalism. There was, therefore, another real danger: the risk of investing substantial sums of money in a communication intervention without having a team of Georgian experts

able to use these resources strategically and to develop an effective program. The decision was made to involve international experts to help design and launch the communication program but, more important, to build capacity in the country to be able to continue this work and take it further. As a result, training became a top priority of the international consultants and not an ancillary activity. As the local team became more skilled, the international consultants were phased out.

How Broad Should the Scope of the Communications Effort Be?

The idea of the communication program was to support the process of judicial reform. The opinion research showed, however, that the average citizen knew little about the workings of the judicial system and, more worryingly, about the rule of law in general. It was felt that the communication program had to be broader than a campaign for the judiciary and must help advance the rule of law in the country.

Hence, the main challenge was how to avoid the risk of being too broad and of diluting the effect of the intervention. The decision was taken to focus on work on behalf of the judiciary but with an approach that would be broad enough to make the initiative of interest to the general public. The judiciary, after all, exists to protect citizens' rights and to foster the establishment of an environment conducive to the social and economic well-being of society. It is within this general context that the communication program would be implemented.

If the Court System Was So Discredited, What Impact Could a Communication Program Emanating from the Judiciary Have?

This obstacle was the trickiest one faced during the design phase of the program. The results of the survey and focus groups were unequivocal: citizens thought very poorly of the judiciary and showed a strong mistrust toward the institution. The new leadership of the judiciary was capable and reform oriented. However, changes in the system were not going to happen overnight, and when they would take place, they would be perceived only by those using the courts. How effective could a communication program be if it were aimed, in part, at explaining those positive changes, but if the messenger enjoyed no credibility whatsoever? It was felt that the communication effort in support of judicial reform could be much more successful if it were to be carried out by a more neutral entity.

Several NGOs were active in Georgia in the field of justice, and the project convinced them to join forces in creating a new entity—the Association for Legal Public Education (ALPE)—to be responsible for implementing the communication program. Thus, four NGOs (Georgian Young Lawyers Association [GYLA], Open Society Institute Georgia, Liberty Institute, and the Judicial Training Center) and a state body, the Council of Justice, established ALPE and gave it guidance during the project. ALPE was given the responsibility of

walking a very thin line: while remaining an NGO with a strong, independent voice, it had to work constructively with and to engage the judiciary to become more open and transparent while at the same time helping the judiciary to reach out to society.

Once the idea of ALPE and its “bridge” position were envisioned, the difficult task became getting official approval for it. The World Bank gives loans to state entities, and it was unheard of that such a large share of a loan would go to an NGO.¹ The project counterparts, the Ministry of Finance, and the management of the World Bank had to be convinced that this was a worthwhile undertaking and that the communication program in support of judicial reform would be more successful if implemented by ALPE than if carried out by the Ministry of Justice or the Supreme Court.

How Could the Sustainability of the Communication Program Be Guaranteed?

Would there be any continuity of the communication effort after the project’s end? As mentioned earlier, the project gave great emphasis to capacity building, both within the judiciary and within ALPE itself. One of the objectives of the international consultants brought on board was to leave behind a fully trained team, capable of implementing the communication program and of developing it further. The project also dedicated considerable resources to increasing the communication capacity within the judiciary. It provided continuous media training to select judges, customer relations training to court clerks, and strategic communication training to the Media Office of the Supreme Court.

In Such a Politicized Environment, Could the Communication Effort Be “Hijacked” and Used for a Different Purpose?

In the late 1990s, judicial reform was at the center of a political debate between reformists within Georgia and those who wanted to maintain the status quo. Even if the project counterparts were committed reformers who deserved support, there was a risk of the substantial resources committed to a sensitive issue as communication and of the media programs being diverted for political purposes.

The project was clear from the beginning: the communication program should support judicial reform. If the “champions” of the reform would later take credit for the success in their own political career, this approach would be fine. It would be a different story if the project were used to fight a political battle. By having the communication program implemented by ALPE, the project already achieved a high degree of insulation. In addition, the “champions” of reform quickly understood the value of having a third party endorse and highlight the positive developments that were taking place in the reform. There were very few attempts to try to capture the initiative for political purposes, attempts that were duly defused.

How Could the Communication Intervention Be Measured in a Meaningful Way?

Assessing the impact of the communication program posed several challenges. As was mentioned, World Bank projects had seldom funded initiatives of this kind, and the focus had tended to be on “deliverables”—outputs in the form of number of brochures printed or the training seminars for journalists organized—without paying sufficient attention to the quality and impact of those activities.

From the beginning, the issue of an increase in the level of trust in the system seemed to be a reliable indicator of success. However, the communication intervention was only one of various factors to have an effect on such an increase in trust. It was, therefore, too risky to use this as an indicator alone. The decision was made to assess the success of the intervention on the basis of four different criteria: (1) institutionalization of the communication approach, that is, succeeding in turning the judiciary into a more open and transparent institution; (2) building capacity in the form of teams, within and outside the judiciary, that are able to sustain an ongoing dialogue between citizens and the courts; (3) an increase in the level of understanding and trust of citizens in the judiciary measured through opinion research against the baseline study; and (4) improvement in the coverage of the courts by the media measured by regular media monitoring.

Objectives and Strategy Development: The Guiding Light

It is an unfortunate reality that many development initiatives see their communication strategies gather dust on a shelf, never to be implemented. For a communication strategy to be effective, it has to serve as a useful document from the outset, moving smoothly from the stated challenges to the objectives. It helps if the strategy is simple and has coherent principles that will guide the choice of activities to be implemented. Those activities need to be laid out in a way that they reinforce each other, so they can ensure that the sum is greater than its parts. The strategy has to be accompanied by a reasonable action plan, with its corresponding time line and budget.

In the case of the judicial reform initiative in Georgia, much effort was put into getting the strategy right.² Although there was pressure to start implementing communication activities immediately and to show results from day one, sufficient time was allocated to developing a strategy that the judiciary and ALPE could work with.

The first task in designing the strategy was to determine its overarching goal. After long discussions, it was agreed that the goal of this undertaking was to “increase support for a society based on the rule of law.” Although the primary “client” of this effort was the judiciary, and although what the judiciary needed most in the year 2000 was to regain the trust of the Georgian citizens, the goal was broadly framed to provide a context within which to

foster trust in the institution of the judiciary. Devoid of this context, the communication program would have fallen into a vacuum.

To complement this general goal, six specific objectives existed against which the performance of the communication program would be measured:

- Build communication capacity within ALPE and among key officials in the judiciary.
- Help the judiciary become a user-friendly institution and responsive to the needs of the citizens it serves.
- Foster transparency in the judiciary and promote values of integrity.
- Increase public understanding of the judicial reform process.
- Inform members of the public on how the system works and help them “navigate” the courts.
- Help develop a responsible and accurate media reporting on legal and judicial issues.

The strategy was fleshed out by EurO&M, a public communication firm that is based in Brussels and was selected through an international tender to provide technical assistance to the project. EurO&M outlined a series of strategic principles that would help guide the implementation of the program: the communication tools had to reinforce each other so as to be more compelling and, equally important, to avoid contradictions and mixed messages. ALPE had to cooperate with existing initiatives from both civil society and the judiciary, thus building partnerships with likeminded organizations. It had to mobilize networks, like the school system or the trade associations, that would act as trustworthy multipliers and would carry the message to the relevant audiences. Finally, it had to maintain a sense of reality and proportion and to ensure that judicial reform was not “oversold.” The judicial system exhibited many shortcomings, but solutions for them were outside the scope of the project. The communication style, therefore, had to remain sober and to steer clear of glitzy formulas that would compromise the credibility of the effort and raise unrealistic expectations.

Implementation: The Proof Is in the Pudding

The implementation of the communication program started early in 2001 and continued for three years. Early into their contract, EurO&M launched an ambitious capacity-building effort that included specific workshops, on-the-job training, and internships in Western Europe for several ALPE members. The goal was to turn ALPE staff members into capable communication professionals. EurO&M had a full-time presence in Georgia until the end of 2002, after which ALPE was in the driver’s seat, and EurO&M helped guide the implementation of the communication program from Brussels and through periodic visits to Tbilisi by its team leader. As of June 2003, ALPE began operating without any

technical assistance and continues to do so today (early 2008), providing strategic communication services to a vast array of development initiatives.

An important share of the resources was spent to educate members of the general public about their rights and how to protect those rights. This endeavor required a substantial investment in the use of mass media. First, ALPE partnered with one of the leading national newspapers, *Kviris Palitra* (Weekly Palette), to create what became the first section dedicated to addressing legal issues published by any print media. With a focus on how the average citizen could exercise his or her rights, the legal supplement was an immediate success.

It also provided many of the stories for the television program *Court TV*, produced by ALPE. The program, which ran for more than 20 episodes, was successful in that its soap opera format had wide appeal, and studio audience discussion was very lively and animated. It also had the benefit of showing, in a lively way, what a defendant in Georgia could expect to find in a courtroom. The *Court TV* program was educational and informative, but in an entertaining way, so that people didn't feel they were being taught, which was the project's aim.

A second TV series, *In Search of Justice*, was produced together with *Courier PS*, a very well-regarded current affairs TV program. The series highlighted real cases in which citizens had gone to court and received justice. One of the programs featured the story of Irakli Tsintsadze, a retired KGB employee who, against the advice of his colleagues and friends, decided to take the former secret police to court for not having granted him a special pension to which he was entitled. To the surprise of many in Georgia, the Tbilisi court ruled in favor of Mr. Tsintsadze, who was quickly awarded a compensation of 2,000 (lari) (\$1,000).³ Soon after the program aired, 25 similar cases were filed, highlighting the potential of the mass media to educate citizens about the functioning of the judicial system.

In parallel with the public education work undertaken through the mass media, an initiative to bring young people into closer contact with the courts and the parliament was established. What started as a small activity became a big success, due in part to the enthusiasm of the education establishment, which saw this as a great opportunity to instill a sense of civic responsibility in students. By the end of the activity, more than 7,000 young people from various regions of the country had visited the Supreme Court in Tbilisi, the parliament, or their district court.

ALPE also launched a public relations campaign to support the actual reform process of the judiciary. Among other things, ALPE developed a monthly newsletter that was on reform issues and was circulated to key decision makers in the country, including parliamentarians, government officials, and judges, so they could be kept abreast of the project's progress. Although this campaign seemed a minor intervention at first, providing timely and reliable information on the reform allowed a very important group of internal stakeholders to be kept in the loop as opposed to remaining in the dark or receiving partial and often inaccurate reports through the media. ALPE was always prompt to

mobilize the media to draw attention to important achievements of the reform, such as the adoption of a new code of ethics by judges.

The most challenging task for ALPE was trying to help the judiciary become a more open, transparent, and user-friendly institution. As mentioned earlier, the starting point was so low that a few well-conceived initiatives were able to go a long way. With the understanding that the first official that most citizens interact with in a court is not a judge but a low-level clerk trained in Soviet times, the project decided to focus initially on improving how these clerks interact with citizens. ALPE helped establish and train a network of court clerks responsible for information and customer service, and it provided them with a set of brochures and other materials to be distributed to the public. A small group of judges who had been identified as “spokespeople” for the judiciary, together with the Supreme Court’s public relations teams, were trained in communication and media relations to help them better articulate the views of their institutions both internally and vis-à-vis society. Although several of these initiatives did help the judiciary open up and show greater responsiveness to citizens’ needs, the disappointing reality is that their impact was limited. Regrettably, the momentum needed to make those transparency measures reach a point of no return was not achieved, and the attempts to promote openness in the institution were not continued.

Finally, the project had an ambitious plan to strengthen the media’s capacity to report on legal and judicial issues. Several workshops were organized for reporters covering the courts, in which they were acquainted with the basic tenets of the legal and judicial system. More interesting, however, was the course on legal and judicial reporting developed by ALPE and taught at an independent school of journalism financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Although training future journalists did not seem a priority at first—those receiving the instruction would become reporters only after the project ended—the partnership with the university helped institutionalize this activity and facilitate its sustainability. In retrospect, however, the media-strengthening aspect of the overall communication program was probably the least successful. Unfortunately, many constraints exist to ensuring the media’s constructive role in the promotion of the rule of law. Most editors and readers alike do not appreciate accurate reporting as much as sensational unqualified stories. Also, journalists’ salaries remain too low to attract talented young professionals to the field, and those who join the profession may be more susceptible to bribery.

Conclusion: Was It Worth It?

There are several ways to assess whether the communication intervention described here succeeded. First, one can look at the World Bank’s own ex post evaluation of the project. The Bank’s Implementation Completion Report considered that “the inclusion of the public information/education component

was thought to be critical to support the demand side for judicial services and accountability in Georgia. The choice to locate these activities in a new NGO ... was deemed necessary to increase credibility with the public. This innovation proved to be an important one in Bank lending at the time and later one of the more successful components of the project.”⁴

Another way to assess the impact of this effort is to review whether the objectives originally established in the strategy were achieved. Although not all of the specific objectives were attained, and some only partially, the results seem positive overall: the project helped build capacity within ALPE and the judiciary. At this writing, ALPE—four years after receiving the final disbursement of funds from the project—has established itself as a reputable organization providing strategic communication services for development initiatives in the justice sector. It has worked for a variety of clients, including the European Commission, USAID, and the Eurasia Foundation. The judiciary, although not having fully internalized the communication function nor having deepened its commitment to transparency, has become, on several accounts, a more open and citizen-oriented institution. Media monitoring carried out during the project confirms the earlier observation that strengthening the media was not as successful as anticipated. There was an increase in the coverage of judicial issues, but content of the stories remains too focused on scandals and personalities.

It is more difficult to ascertain whether there was an increase in public understanding of the judicial system and trust in the institution, or whether the program’s overarching objective, namely, to “increase support for a society based on the rule of law,” was met. The opinion research leaves room for ambiguity, and results can be read in different ways. According to a Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey, only 29 percent of firms operating in Georgia in 2002 were confident in the judicial system’s ability to uphold property and contractual rights. By 2005, this figure jumped to 71 percent.⁵ The studies surveying the general public, however, give a less rosy picture. Whereas they do tend to confirm a slight increase in understanding and appreciating the judicial system, the changes are too small to be attributed to the communication intervention. The reality is that overall trust in the institution remains alarmingly low.

With the benefit of hindsight, a lesson can be drawn from an impact evaluation of a communication program using opinion research studies. The surveys have to be designed to capture very subtle nuances, not only in the perceptions, but also in the expectations, of the respondents. Otherwise, there is a risk of falling into a paradoxical situation—as probably happened here—whereby a communication effort that may succeed in increasing the public’s understanding of the role of the judiciary will probably lead to a constituency that expects more of the system. Hence, the 2000 and 2004 survey answers about a “certain degree of dissatisfaction” with the judicial system may mean very different things, if by 2004 respondents have come to expect, in part

because of the communication intervention, a much higher level of performance from the courts.

There is, however, a very different way to assess whether Georgia experienced an increase in support for a society based on the rule of law. Although this evidence is anecdotal, its sheer magnitude makes it impossible to ignore. In November 2003, when Georgian and international election observers confirmed the suspicion by all opposition parties that the ruling regime had rigged the parliamentary elections, tens of thousands of citizens peacefully took to the streets of the country's main cities to demonstrate against the fraud and to demand new elections. What came to be known as the Rose Revolution became the first instance in post-Soviet Georgia when society mobilized itself en masse to demand that a fundamental right that had been violated must be respected. An interesting further development, however, is that Georgians—who overwhelmingly elected the leader of the Rose Revolution, Mikhail Saakashvili, as president—did not grant him *carte blanche*. Citizens have become much more engaged in monitoring government policies and demanding that government take responsibility for its actions, as the public pressure on the government in late 2007 to review certain unpopular policies exemplifies.

As far as the judiciary is concerned, there are mixed views in the country on the success of the reforms of the 1990s. Nobody denies, however, that the institution is still burdened with many serious problems that fundamentally affect its performance and credibility. What is clearer now—and the opinion research confirms—is that the court system and not organized crime or any other form of “alternative” dispute resolution is the venue in which citizens expect to find justice. Although there have been many factors behind the increased awareness of citizens' rights, as well as of the deeper understanding of institutions and of how they have to be accountable, the role that the communication campaigns may have had on these achievements cannot be underestimated.

Annex CS4.1: Overview of Communication Strategy

Specific Objectives	Target Group	Messages	Outcomes	Activities
Internal Communications				
1. Build communication capacity of ALPE.	ALPE staff ALPE board	Build an organization that communicates issues important for the development of Georgia as a civil society.	ALPE is a modern communication organization that can run an independent judicial reform communication program.	<p>Activity 1: Building ALPE staff capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-the-job training • Governance training for board • Short training sessions, including Train the Trainers • Short placements in the West <p>Activity 2: Building ALPE logistic capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office setup and staff recruitment • Design of ALPE visual identity • Set up of ALPE Web site • Development of ALPE resource center
2. Build communication capacity among key communicators involved in judicial reform.	PR officers in courts, Council of Justice, Ministry of Justice Judges	Get the message out. Be partners in communication.	<p>Key communicators are acting effectively as voices for judicial reform.</p> <p>Judiciary receives regular feedback on the public's understanding and perceptions of the judicial system and the ongoing reform.</p>	<p>Activity 3: Building communication capacity among key communicators in judiciary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of key communicators in judiciary • Analysis of training needs • Short training sessions by foreign trainers and ALPE • Regular information-sharing workshops • ALPE newsletter <p>Activity 4: Building feedback mechanism for judiciary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance by ALPE in setting up a media-monitoring mechanism • Continuous opinion research and analysis • Feedback to judiciary through key communicators during regular meetings and ALPE newsletter

Annex CS4.1: Overview of Communication Strategy *(continued)*

Specific Objectives	Target Group	Messages	Outcomes	Activities
3. Help judiciary to become a user-friendly institution.	Court employees Judges Legal associations Ombudsmen University journalism students	Remember, you are the face of the law. Remember, you are the servant of the people and the law.	Access to judiciary and to court decisions is improved. Judges have a better understanding of the media and can handle it more effectively.	Activity 5: Setting up a system of access to court decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up court officer network. • Design tailor-made notice boards for all courts and train court officer network to use and update them regularly. • Create ALPE newsletter. Activity 6: Media training for judges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train judges on how to handle the media as part of the curriculum of the judicial training center and other judicial training initiatives. • Include questions on basic media relations in exams of judges.
External Communications				
1. Increase public understanding of the judicial reform process.	General public International business community	The contract between citizen and state in a modern society is underwritten by trust. That trust did not exist previously. The reform process is developing a system in which this trust is created.	Mass media campaign informs about the achievements of reform and what still needs to be done.	Activity 7: Mass media campaign to increase understanding of judicial reform process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of public service announcements (for TV, radio) • Ads in print media • Court chronicle supplement in regular media • Media relations • Articles in journals that target international and local business community • Regular presentations and updates to organizations that target international and local business community

(continued)

Annex CS4.1: Overview of Communication Strategy *(continued)*

Specific Objectives	Target Group	Messages	Outcomes	Activities
2. Inform the public about how the judicial system works.	General public with a focus on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools: teachers and pupils • NGOs • Business community • Lawyers • Relevant media 	You have rights; find out how to use them.	General mass media campaign informs about the basics of the judicial system. Improved knowledge of judicial system exists in the educational system. Improved understanding exists of the basics of alternative dispute resolution and where it could be used sensibly, in addition to the regular judicial system.	Activity 8: Mass media campaign to inform about the basics of the judicial system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series of Court TV programs in cooperation with other donors or private sector • Monthly TV insert in regular TV program • Media relations • Through the ALPE Web site • Creation of and dissemination of public education material, including a guide to the judicial system Activity 9: School program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's visits to courts • "Street law project" that is run together with other donors (Soros and GYLA) Activity 10: ADR awareness program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize ADR seminars for lawyers and business community. • Create and distribute literature on the subject. • Include articles on ADR in ALPE newsletter.
3. Help to develop responsible and accurate media reporting on judicial/legal issues.	Editors and political or legal correspondents in mainly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 TV channels • 5–6 newspapers • 2 radio stations 	Tell me the truth. Get the story right. Be just and find justice.	Quality of media reporting on judicial and legal issues has improved.	Activity 11: Legal reporting program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a database of journalists who cover the subject. • Create a workshop for large group of journalists on basics of the judicial and legal system • Encourage editors to have regular court reporter columns. • Develop a workshop on legal journalism as part of the journalism degree course at the university. • Award the legal journalist of the year.

Source: Author.

Notes

1. The World Bank has different mechanisms for giving smaller grants to civil society and other organizations but for a different purpose.
2. See Annex CS4.1 for an outline of the communication strategy.
3. Interview with Zura Guntsadze, ALPE director, March 7, 2006.
4. "Implementation Completion and Results Report (IDA 32630)," (Washington, DC: World Bank, March 2007).
5. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTECAREGTOPANTCOR/Resources/BAAGREV20060208Georgia.pdf>.

Tax Reform and Communication in Bulgaria: Getting It Right

Background

The Bulgarian government decided to unify, simplify, and modernize its tax collection facilities by combining the revenue-collection function of the National Social Security Institute (NSSI) and the General Tax Directorate (GTD) into a new, single tax authority: the National Revenue Agency (NRA).¹ The need for change was enormous: Bulgaria's tax system was encumbered with a Byzantine bureaucracy and deterred foreign investors and citizen-taxpayers alike. According to the NRA's deputy executive director, three objectives of reform were to increase economic efficiency, cut tax rates, and benefit from economies of scale in revenue collection. The government recognized that this reform would likely result in higher revenues, and they were proved right.

A key component throughout this reform effort was strategic communication, which included government understanding the attitudes of stakeholders and then enhancing demand while breaking down reluctance with open and honest dialogue. The reform effort overcame initial resistance from within government to working with local and international communication consultants and ultimately changed and institutionalized new departmental attitudes toward both external and internal communication. Whenever possible, the project measured changes in stakeholder attitudes and understanding, and wherever problems emerged, they were addressed. The project, which is still active, has regularly been rated "highly satisfactory" by the World Bank. This favorable rating is due in part to one government agency's command of strategic communication.

Communication Challenges: Lack of Internal Consensus and Public Support

Technocratic and bureaucratic reluctance to internal and external communication was endemic in a civil service that was historically averse to transparency. In large-scale changes in public administration, the most dangerous opposition can come from civil servants, who fear change either with or without good reason.

Public demand for reform was high, but information on new modes of compliance was nonexistent. Opinion surveys showed that taxpayers had little idea how their money was spent, and the vast majority felt that Bulgaria's tax rates were punitive. For NRA communicators, political uncertainty and delay were part of the problem. Legislation brought the agency to life only 72 hours before it had to begin collecting taxes, which left it little time to promote itself and which denied the project the period of time ordinarily needed to inform people about new tax collection procedures. This haste, in addition to a small advertising budget, led the NRA to focus on disseminating practical information in the hope of building name identification and institutional justification simultaneously.

Communication Objectives and Interventions

The NRA needed structure and strategies to deal with internal and external communication, and so it set up a communication unit with components for each task.

Building Internal Consensus

The NRA devised an internal communication strategy, starting with a steering group of employees drawn from across the country from both of its predecessors (GTD and NSSI). These employees included senior staff from the new NRA in addition to teams from each of Bulgaria's administrative regions such as senior management, specialists in business taxes and other taxes, communicators, and strategic planners.

From October through December 2005, the NRA held 25 half-day meetings, each with 100 to 300 participants from the GTD and NSSI. In each meeting, all local agency employees were invited.

Senior NRA officials, together with participants from the two merging agencies, made presentations summarizing public survey data on attitudes about taxes, discussed the need for enhanced revenue collection, and sketched out how the government planned to unite the two revenue-collecting agencies and to reform the tax collection process. An hour was spent discussing opportunities for personal advancement and career development, challenges to be overcome, and benefits for the small number of employees who would lose their jobs in the merger.

At each meeting, the organizers announced their new procedures for answering employee questions through the government e-mail service and a newly

created NRA intranet. At each stage, the process ensured dialogue plus mechanisms for feedback.

NRA communicators followed up on the meetings by sending personal letters to each of the 8,000 employees of the two merging organizations. The letter repeated the information from the meetings, highlighted issues raised there by employees, and explained again the intranet system through which queries would be answered. This letter was recognized, correctly, as being an important step in the process of consensus building: it acknowledged the NRA's comments, addressed employee concerns, and set up mechanisms for future enquiries. Without timely reporting back on dialogue in reform efforts, participants may have felt that their concerns were later ignored. The NRA avoided this common pitfall.

Subsequently, NRA communicators also created an "employee of the year" program with awards for different echelons of civil servants, both in each administrative region and nationally. NRA is currently engaged in dialogue with the staff from its Business Services and Taxpayer Services departments to prepare a Code of Practice and to further hasten a new organizational culture. Meanwhile, its Analysis Department has used dialogue to build support for 300 performance indicators that now have the backing of their civil servants. Transparency and dialogue must be credited in building the consensus by employees to allow such rigorous and unfamiliar demands to be placed on them.

Building Public Support

The NRA needed to advertise itself to the taxpayers, and so it began a media campaign targeted incrementally at three areas:

- Image making—creating public awareness of the new institution
- Practical information—filing taxes and various new regulations and changes
- Public relations—justifying the changes and encouraging greater compliance.

Opinion sampling had been performed before the 2006 tax season; it chiefly noted customer complaints about tax collection, which was used to inform the process of employee dialogue (as described later). This sampling also served as a baseline of data for deeper research in 2006 and 2007, which permitted government to track changes in consumer attitudes.

Through public opinion research, using a combination of polling, focus groups, and individual interviews, the NRA and the Center for the Study of Democracy in Sofia found that their customer base could be divided into four components: individuals who paid taxes, small-scale entrepreneurs and the self-employed, corporations, and the nation's biggest taxpayers. The research team was interested in the reasons for noncompliance, the attitudes toward the NRA, and the rationale behind respondents' viewpoints. Surveyors tabulated the major complaints of each taxpaying stakeholder group.

Data gave the NRA a good, if complicated, view of stakeholder attitudes, which indicated the following:

- Around 67 percent of the rich, 40 percent of individual taxpayers, and 15 percent of entrepreneurs and small business owners were aware of the NRA.
- Everybody had difficulties filing their tax returns.
- Half of the rich and three-quarters of sole proprietors thought Bulgaria's tax system was inequitable, and a smaller, but significant, number thought the tax burden was too high (although low by European standards).

Respondents' reasons for noncompliance included that rates were too high, tax procedures changed too quickly, and there is lack of transparency in how government spends tax money. Reasons for compliance included taxpayer integrity and fear of arrest.

The NRA's public campaign paid attention to citizen demand for change in tax collecting practices. It identified threats to the NRA's credibility because of problems that were bound to arise because of the agency's rushed start-up, and it responded with a faster, more inclusive, and transparent approach to communicating with the public. Communication that furthered name identification was combined with material that covered compliance with tax regulations. Thus, two essential tasks were performed in one stroke.

The campaign activities were conducted for the 2006 and 2007 tax filing seasons and included the following actions:

- The agency created a compelling public service docudrama that vividly showed what tax money buys and how people's everyday lives benefit. An especially innovative, cost-effective element of the campaign was to broadcast the advocacy spots on newly installed monitors in the most highly used public buses. The campaign was strategically complemented by targeted billboards and print and by Web-based advertising.
- The NRA developed a "myths and facts" information sheet and drafted an article titled "Fair Already" that addressed the primary concerns of individuals and corporate payers alike.
- The agency produced a short documentary film that aired nationwide, further raising awareness and reinforcing the fact that Bulgaria's tax rates are among the lowest in Europe.
- The NRA sent out 15,000 personalized letters to businesses and accountants, followed up by personal and small group meetings wherever possible.
- Taxpayers were referred to the new NRA Web site for further information as well as given e-mail and telephonic resources for getting questions answered. A 50-person telephone bank was set up to answer public enquiries.
- The agency held regular media briefings, which its two predecessor tax collection agencies had not done. The introduction of regular media briefings proved to be the most important external communication activity because

the NRA's relatively meager advertising budget was compensated by heavy media coverage of the new agency and new tax-paying procedures.

- Attitudinal research by the NRA permitted the agency to devise different approaches to radio and television advertising. These ads provided practical information for taxpayers: how to file, tax information for families, online services for business, and information that intermediaries such as accountants needed to know.
- TV advertisements in 2006 used a familiar animated format that, for example, showed a man relaxing at home and filing his tax return online while drinking a glass of beer—an attention-grabbing concept in Bulgaria where paying tax was regarded as a bureaucratic nightmare. TV ads in 2007 showed flood disaster relief, educational upgrades, and infrastructure repair and explained that entire communities would be helpless without tax revenues. Taxpayers were even urged to demand receipts for minor cash transactions to ensure that their purchases were “on the books” so that shopkeepers could not dodge the tax collector. The television campaign also promoted the NRA's telephone help-line.
- The NRA began a national, televised extravaganza celebrating each year's biggest taxpayer.

Results

By the end of the 2006 tax season, awareness of the NRA's activity among corporate taxpayers—the greatest source of NRA tax revenues—more than tripled, from 21 to 79 percent. Awareness of the agency exceeded that of the Ministries of Finance, Economy, and Labor, as well as the national bank. Meanwhile, corporate trust in the NRA doubled during these initial months.

This success in communication played a role in the NRA's financial achievements: revenues increased 54 percent, from 4.8 billion leva in 2005 to 7.4 billion leva in 2006, in part because the NRA set a record in 2006 for tax filings, exceeding 1 million for the first time.

Lessons Learned

Development program managers wishing to profit from the NRA's successes might consider the following lessons learned:

1. Perform a communication capability and needs assessment as part of the project design process. This approach means identifying capacity, key stakeholders, stakeholder demand, and potential opposition.
2. Use expertise inside and outside government. International and local communication experts not only bring skills and perspectives that government often lacks, but also help savvy civil service communicators build an internal consensus for best practices.

3. Budget for measurement. Establish first a baseline against which to measure progress; then follow up appropriately later (by reporting back to government to strengthen political will) and test communication outputs to ensure that audiences understand key messages.
4. Leave enough time to engage in dialogue to reduce stakeholder reluctance, build support, and let participants identify potential pitfalls.
5. As part of the design process, determine advertising budgets. Had the NRA project lacked such strong stakeholder demand and inherent media interest, its advertising budget alone would have not accomplished the project's goals. Reform projects should not be caught short.

Note

1. This case study is a condensed version of a work by S. J. Masty titled "Bulgarian Tax and Communication: Getting It Right" to be published at a later date.

Political Economy of Reforms: Learning from the Delhi Water Sector Experience

Avjeet Singh

In 2005, the government of Delhi decided to embark on reforms in its urban water sector with support from the World Bank.¹ The reforms entailed harnessing the private sector's technical and managerial expertise on a pilot basis for improved service delivery. However, the innocuous proposal, which was meant to enhance the lives of millions, has been put on hold in the wake of vocal opposition led by a misinformed nongovernmental organization (NGO). Those crusading against the reforms believe that, for example, they "entail privatization of a social good," "are antipoor," and "promote the World Bank agenda." Simplistic arguments like these which are founded on ideological conviction rather than facts and in the absence of any credible alternative, have put the issue of water reforms in the forefront of the public agenda. The experience is not unique, for similar situations are unfolding in other parts of the country. They cause one to ask the question, "How do you introduce and sustain change in a democratic society?"

Background

Even though Delhi has access to an adequate supply of water by Indian and international standards, the actual service is intermittent and inequitable. Despite concerted efforts, the demand-supply gap is on the rise. This gap is further exacerbated by the high level of technical and commercial losses, estimates of which range between 40 and 50 percent. Focus continues to be on "filling a leaking bucket"—augmentation of the water supply while transmission and distribution remain inefficient.

The institutional arrangements are not geared to promote accountability. Even though the Delhi Water Board (DWB) is the primary provider of water and sanitation services, the government plays a significant role. The chief minister of Delhi is the chairperson of the board. The current institutional framework does not allow for a separation of the roles of policy making, service delivery, regulation, asset ownership, and financing. As a result, there is blurring of accountability. State functionaries are reluctant to give up the patronage and rents acquired in the present system. Civil works seldom meet the least-cost criterion and are overdesigned to further inflate their valuation. It is estimated that water and sanitation utilities in South Asia spend 20 to 35 percent more on construction contracts than is represented by the value of the service rendered (Davis 2003).

Despite the fact that the DWB Act mandates full cost recovery,² this philosophy is not reflected in the tariffs set by the DWB. In fact, prior to the tariff increase in 2004, Delhi had the lowest water tariffs among all metropolitan areas in India. Even today, the tariffs are still insufficient to cover operations and maintenance (O&M) costs (let alone depreciation and financing costs). Tariffs have been kept low on the pretext that services should be affordable to the poor. But the irony is that the poor are particularly hard hit and receive hardly any municipal water. People who do not have access to water services resort to a variety of measures to meet their needs. Example would be private hand pumps, tube wells, and reliance on private vendors, which imposes a substantial cost—in terms of finances, health, and time. A recent willingness-to-pay survey estimated that typically for every US\$1 a household spends on its DWB bill, it spends an additional US\$1.50 for coping with the poor service.

The poor performance is further exacerbated because of low revenue collection efficiency, poor operations management and maintenance of assets, and huge energy and administrative costs. Given the huge revenue deficit accumulated to date, business as usual is not sustainable.

Proposed Reforms

Given this context, the government of Delhi decided to embark on reforms with assistance from the World Bank. The approach was to adopt a phased program toward full-service coverage and high-quality service provision in an efficient and financially sustainable manner. The project design was embedded in the principle of improvement in the accountability framework by separating the roles of “ownership, policy making,” and “service provision” and of establishment of a transparent contractual mechanism between them. The project was designed in consultation with the stakeholders and while keeping in mind their concerns. Workshops were held in 2004 to bring representatives from DWB management and staff, central and state government, consumers, multilateral and bilateral development agencies, NGOs, and experts from progressive water

utilities onto a common platform to deliberate on the issues facing the sector, share best practices, and develop the vision and implementation mechanism.

In parallel, a willingness-to-pay survey was conducted. Contrary to common perceptions, the survey indicated a positive response in customers' willingness to pay for enhanced service quality. As an outcome, the water tariffs were increased in Delhi in December 2004 after a gap of six years. Further tariff increases were proposed to be carefully phased in and accompanied by improved services. A performance-based memorandum of understanding to be signed between the government and the DWB was proposed wherein financing from the government would be linked to the DWB's performance improvement.

One of the key measures proposed was to undertake a pilot project in 2 of Delhi's 21 zones (covering 12 percent of the connections) for five years.³ A management contract was proposed wherein the operator would be paid a fixed management fee plus certain incentives (or imposed penalties) depending on performance. The assets, staff, revenues, and tariff setting would remain with the DWB, and all employee working conditions were to be safeguarded. Explicit provisions were made to better serve the interests of the poor. The main objectives of the management contract were to (1) harness technical and managerial expertise of the private sector to achieve efficiency gains, (2) use the project as a "showcase" to demonstrate that 24/7 (continuous) water supply is achievable, and (3) provide an "on-the-job training ground" in best water industry practices for the DWB staff members, so that the DWB may progressively introduce them in the other zones.

There was a positive response from the private players, and four professional operators were prequalified in July 2005. The private player chosen was expected to be in place from December 2005.

The Consequence

In July 2005, the consultation process was still incomplete when a local NGO, Parivartan (which means "change"), challenged the project. The NGO opposed the reforms on two grounds: the merits of the project and World Bank intervention. First, it alleged that the project would lead to higher tariffs, inaccessibility of services to the poor, and eventual privatization of the utility. Second, Parivartan insinuated that the World Bank was dictating terms to the DWB. Parivartan's spokesperson argued that "India exports managerial expertise to the rest of the world; ... it does not need hand-holding by the World Bank."⁴ The NGO accused the Bank of subverting the competitive process in selecting a lead consultant.⁵

Parivartan publicized its views through the print media, and there was widespread coverage in leading newspapers. In addition to targeting the media, Parivartan took concrete steps to influence civil society actors, policy makers, academicians, and others. Its rhetoric seemed radical and buttressed with slogans for example, "water is sacred," and "we should have self-governance."

When it came to the merits of the project, Parivartan's arguments did not "hold water" (see table CS6.1). Much of the information it was circulating in the public sphere was incorrect and could be easily rebutted, but no one came forward. The Bank justified its intervention in the selection of consultants by saying that the process was intended to ensure a fair and competitive bidding process and was in compliance with its procurement procedures.

There were lukewarm responses by the DWB and the government of Delhi. People asked valid questions, but most questions were left unanswered. To make matters worse, a public outcry had already arisen against power privatization, which lessened the advocates' cause. The protests left their mark. The project was put on hold in November 2005, and things have reverted to the status quo.

Some Lessons from the Experience

What went wrong? Why did efforts to reform the Delhi water sector not succeed? How do you introduce and sustain change in a society with a strong indigenous tradition and deep-rooted corruption? Certainly there is no easy answer. Moving from policy rhetoric to its acceptance is difficult. It may be tempting to blame the system or curse the politician. But little will be achieved

Table CS6.1. Concerns of Reform Opponents

Perceived Concerns and Risks	Do These Concerns "Hold Water"?
Water is sacred with a high service obligation.	Private sector participation (PSP) is a means to achieve the same result and does not go against the social commitment prerogative. It is not "privatizing" a public good but merely contracting professionals to operate and manage certain tasks.
Water is a human right.	Not all human rights are free; one has to bear the expenses for treatment and distribution of water.
Plugging leakages, will leave free water for the poor.	Water is free but the poor don't have access. Not plugging leakages to make water available to the poor is not sustainable.
PSP is a costly and risky proposition.	People are already incurring huge coping costs. Also, the cost with PSP is not that high if the alternative is to continue with the existing situation. In fact, PSP is sought for increasing efficiency and reducing costs.
Private players will not deliver water to the poor.	The private operator is obliged to abide by the terms of its contract; it is the utility's responsibility to build into the contract the obligation to serve low-income communities.
The World Bank is dictating terms.	Given the expertise of Indian bureaucrats and policy makers, it is hard to believe that the World Bank dictated terms. India's water sector may not need Bank financing, but it definitely needs technical expertise for providing competent water and sanitation service.
Perceived deficiencies may be met by other alternatives (for example, Gandhi's system of self-governance).	Alternatives exist, but their sustainability is doubtful. Before going ahead with a "self-governance" system, one needs to consider other factors such as the legal status, the people's capacity to manage, and who will take responsibility and be accountable.
India has the necessary managerial and technical expertise.	It is true that India has a huge reservoir of capable managers; however, the capacity of local players in the water sector is under doubt. Not a single city in India provides 24/7 service. The objective is to provide an on-the-job training ground and to develop local expertise by working in partnership with international companies.
I may lose my job. ...	Deployment of DWB employees, as well as continued service conditions, is to be an essential part of the PSP contract.

Source: Author.

by merely bemoaning the system, unless one accepts, analyzes, and deals with the underlying reality. Drawing on the lessons from the Delhi water sector experience, this section offers some insights to be kept in mind while embarking on similar reforms.

Manage Appearances: Focus on “Values,” Not “Economics”

The assumption that most human behavior can be understood through economic theory is wrong. There is a need to understand the basic value premises that underlie them. Given the realities of contemporary India, where there are huge patronage obligations and a thriving civil society, any reform measure must appeal to the ethos of the people. Values matter more than facts, and proactive framing of issues is essential. In terms of “economic value,” the Delhi water sector reforms had the potential to create significant value. The returns were envisaged as being positive. These included increased access to water, improved operating efficiency, a reduced fiscal deficit, and other boons. However, the opponents framed arguments that appealed to the social values of the people. They proved adept in wrapping their argument in the values of the average Indian, themes that people care about, such as self-governance, not working against the poor, and water being sacred. In the end, it was a debate of economic rationality versus social values and of technical benefits versus the perceived losses.

Thus, cost-benefit analysis is helpful while analyzing proposed options. But for opinion to be translated into effective influence, there is a need to package reforms differently for different stakeholders. When engaging with the policy elites, one may place more emphasis on financial sustainability, thus enhancing operational efficiency, and so on. However, for the politicians and the masses, reform needs to be redefined in accordance with the social values and grassroots concerns (for example, policies supporting the poor, reduced health risks, and reduced coping costs).

Ensure Buy-In at the Top: Balance Political Image with Rational Considerations

The implementation of reforms requires support from the highest echelons of the government. In the Delhi case, the lack of government commitment was evident. The reform proponents did manage to make a case to the chief minister and sought her endorsement of the need for reforms. However, the chief minister withdrew when the reforms met with resistance. It was shocking that there was hardly any response from the government in the face of opposition. The NGO appealed to the planning commission and the central government against the policy proposal. The concerns of politicians at the central level also weakened the political buy-in for reforms.

Thus, for any reform to be successful, there has to be ownership and commitment across all levels of government. To enhance credibility, the government needs to engage with the civil society and to create public space for the

people to participate. However, politicians face constraints in going ahead with reforms and must nurture political constituencies that may have vested interests in retaining the status quo. A reduced fiscal deficit may not be an adequate incentive for change. If one is to seek political buy-in, efforts should be made to convince politicians that the existing situation (namely, appalling water and sanitation service; coping costs faced by the poor; increased health risks; risk of water riots during the summer; and other factors) is detrimental for the government's image. Only when the government realizes that the existing situation is untenable will it go ahead with the reforms. Moreover, even though water is under the jurisdiction of the state, involvement of the central government and efforts to seek buy-in of the local councilors will help increase credibility and ownership for the project.

Reshape the Environment: Mobilize Stakeholders Effectively

Making things happen is an “art,” not a “science.” One needs to focus not only on what is to be done on the ground, but also on “how to manage the environment.” In the Delhi water sector reforms, a small group of people comprising activists, DWB employees, political opponents, and well-intentioned but misled consumers was able to derail the entire reform agenda. It is obvious that the DWB employees union was opposed to the reforms. Misinformation may have been one of the reasons. However, given a culture in which the jobs of employees are safeguarded, employees will view any intervention as a threat to their authority and interference in rent seeking. There were also political opponents, ideological critics of the Bank, and other vested interest groups who were opposed to the reforms. Then there were the neutral stakeholders: the media, consumers, academicians, and others. It is possible that they were not fully aware of the reform process and had no preconceived notions, but the NGO was successful in misleading them with incorrect information.

This misinformation reflects the need for a guiding coalition to garner political support. Consultation is important, but it is unrealistic to assume everyone's buy-in can be obtained. It is essential to identify who wins and who loses—which stakeholders support, are neutral to, or may potentially block the reforms and their degree of influence—and then to build a constituency for reforms (see table CS6.2). The objective should be to increase the influence of those who are sympathetic toward one's goals, to win over neutral stakeholders either by persuading them on the substantive side or by identifying shared interests and using suitable framing to appeal to their interests, and to address the concerns of potential opponents. Compensating the losers, especially those who may, for example, be benefiting from rent seeking, may be contentious and have a high price. However, while one is dealing with the losers, concerted efforts should at least be made to sit across the table with them, to make them “own the problem” (Lal 2006), and to deliberate on the various options.

Table CS6.2. Stakeholder Mapping: Who Wins, Who Loses

Stakeholder	Payoffs: Who Wins, Who Loses		Position on Reform	Influence	Resources for Influencing Outcome
	Wins	Losses			
Politicians: Government of Delhi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive political image with improved services Reduced fiscal deficit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May lose popularity with tariff increase May perceive loss of power over the utility 	Initial support	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is ultimately responsible for giving the go-ahead Has approval vital for reforms to be implemented
Government of India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive political image with improved access and quality of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May lose popularity with increase in tariffs 	No clearly defined position	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because the same party is in power at the state and national levels, has the power to give the go-ahead or to ask the state government to withdraw
Local government: municipal councilors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive political image with improved access and quality of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May lose popularity with increase in tariffs 	No clearly defined position	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serves as mouthpiece for their constituency Supports vital for participatory mechanism
DWB: top management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial sustainability Enhanced operational efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May invoke wrath of employees against the reforms 	Support but limited to a few	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is main advocate or champion of reforms Has ability to influence policy makers and to impose the decision with government approval
DWB: employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance incentives in proposed setup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May view as threat to authority and competence May view as interfering with current income from rent seeking 	Opposed	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has key stakeholders affected by reforms and may stop implementation Serves as credible channels for reform dissemination
Consumers: including the poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access Improved quality of services Low coping costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May see increase in tariffs May be viewed by the poor as exclusion from the reform because of lack of awareness 	Mixed: no clear public opinion	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be highly influential if politicians fear that the measure is unpopular with existing users

(continued)

Table CS6.2. Stakeholder Mapping: Who Wins, Who Loses (continued)

Stakeholder	Payoffs: Who Wins, Who Loses		Position on Reform	Influence	Resources for Influencing Outcome
	Wins	Loses			
NGOs or citizens forum (opposed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for seeking publicity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have vested interests in maintaining status quo • May be viewed by misinformed NGOs as threat to society 	Strongly opposed	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has capacity to sway public opinion and to legitimize the opposition to reform • Has capacity to derail the reform process through public debate
Other opinion leaders: NGOs, media, professional associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved water access and quality • Improved services to poor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May fear increase in tariffs • May feel excluded from the reform because of lack of awareness 	Diverse interests: no clear opinion	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has technical capacity to question the reform • Has respectable channel for information dissemination • Has ability to sway public opinion • Is vital for participatory mechanism
Private players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for contracts to earn revenues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May face political risk and uncertainty 	Support	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has technical and managerial support • Has ability to make good technical argument
International donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of reform • Ways to set precedent • Disbursal of loan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May face reputation risk 	Strong support	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has technical expertise and financial conditionality • Lends credibility • Has shared interest and linkages with decision makers with similar backgrounds

Show “Visible” Results: Finesse “Tariff Shocks” with “Quick Wins”

Building trust takes time. It is a relationship that evolves from promise and performance (Peterson 1996). Moreover, a policy issue is influenced not only by its own development process but also by other issues in the environment (Moore 1995). In the Delhi case, the timing chosen by the proponents to consider the issue was not right. The government had yet to commit on DWB financial sustainability, including the debt write-off, the cost reduction program, and the gradual moves toward O&M cost recovery. There was already a public outcry against power privatization when water sector reforms were being promulgated. Then there was the hike in water sector tariffs without a commensurate increase in service quality. The upward revision of tariffs may have been unavoidable during the initial stages of the project. However, it was difficult to convince the public in the absence of immediate benefits of the need for the increased tariff burden. There was a lack of credibility because of the absence of any benefits on the ground commensurate to the hike in tariffs.

Thus, the timing and sequencing of reforms can be critical in building credibility. One needs to answer the question whether the reform stands alone or is one of a series of unpopular actions “so that it might become the straw that breaks the camel’s back” (Grindle and Thomas 1991). Moreover, no seminars and no glossy publications can replace visible improvements. Any tariff hike needs to be preceded or accompanied with improved performance in some relevant aspect of service delivery—or at least expectations of overnight results need to be managed well. In the case where it is not feasible to demonstrate quick wins, sometimes waiting for the right time to consider an issue may help.

Focus on Awareness Building

People are apprehensive about change for good reasons. The need for reforms is not always evident (Peterson 1996). With assistance from World Bank, the DWB did a fairly good job in conducting a series of stakeholder workshops. However, they underestimated the power of the vested interests. Although the opponents circulated detailed information regarding failed private sector participation (PSP) initiatives in the water sector and weak credentials of the private players, the reform proponents did not have readily available evidence demonstrating PSP success in improving reliability and sustainability of services while ensuring affordability.⁶ Adequate information in the public domain about the need for reforms, distribution of successful case studies demonstrating the impact of PSP, and effective use of media could have helped build strong public opinion for reforms and curtail opposition.

That said, awareness is not something that can be built overnight, nor is it the responsibility of a single reform project. It must be an ongoing process. Also, there is a need to build the capacity of the utilities to be responsive to the public’s concerns. The government and donors should ensure adequate funds

are earmarked for this “soft” aspect that may not have an immediate visible impact, but will bear fruit in the near future.

Downplay the Role of International Financial Institutions

Reforms are sensitive. Even a hint of impropriety may kill a project. Moreover, the perception of who sets the reform agenda (Heymann 1987)—that is, whether it is homegrown or donor driven—is critical. Given the caliber of Indian bureaucrats, and Delhi’s being a fiscal surplus state, it is an incorrect perception that the World Bank actually dictated terms. However, in a society like that of India, with a history of British colonial rule, the local populace views any international intervention as a threat to sovereignty. World Bank intervention was a good target for the critics to use to suggest that reforms were a threat to local authority and competence. If nothing else, the Bank’s presence led to scrutiny of highly political and visible elements. Given the perception, it is better to play it safe and downplay the role and visibility of international financial institutions (IFIs) in the reform process. Moreover, given the political and emotive nature of the water sector, increased involvement of local players as in the Delhi case may play a critical role in instilling confidence about reforms among the people.

Give a Menu of Options, Not a Recipe for Reform

Any IFI advice should be supportive of a wide range of policy decisions. Efforts should be made to convince stakeholders of the desired option but, at the same time, to be pragmatic and willing to step back, if required. The proposed management contract was the least intrusive of several options for private participation and a result of much internal thinking on the ground. However, faced with resistance, the best way forward is to sit across the table and deliberate on all available options. It is possible that the alternatives offered will not be equally effective, but it is equally important to bridge the gap. The objective should be to “get something going” (Peterson 1998).

Last, one needs to learn from failures. The environment is difficult. Individuals are complex. Cultures are far too deep to submit to any dry hypothesis. Getting things done is not easy. There is a lot of frustration, and success is rare. There is a need to reflect on past failures, respect other people’s efforts, and learn from what has been done rather than just dismiss it. This study will have served its purpose if it contributes to that end.

Notes

1. This case study is based on a longer paper, “Political Economy of Reforms in Urban Water Sector in India—Lessons from Delhi Experience,” which the author wrote as part of her master’s thesis at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, in March 2007 under the guidance of Professors Matthew Andrews and Henry Lee. The author is grateful to Alain Locussol for his comments on an earlier draft. The views expressed in this chapter are entirely those of the author.

2. Section 55(2), DWB Act, 1998, states that the DWB is empowered to “recover all the costs of operation, maintenance, repayment of debt, and a return not less than 3% on net fixed assets.”
3. The other components of the reforms included rehabilitation of water supply and sewerage systems to address priority bottlenecks, organizational strengthening of the DWB to improve internal efficiency (for example, effective use of information technology and enhanced performance orientation), and studies for targeted interventions for the poor.
4. Letter from Parivartan to Paul Wolfowitz, World Bank, August 20, 2005; http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTINDIA/Resources/Parivartan_lettertoPDW.pdf.
5. The award of the contract to the consultant took place in 2001.
6. Since 2005, the Bank has documented in detail the PSP experience worldwide to provide documentation to governments willing to reform inefficient water systems and sewerage sectors.

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Mobilizing Middle Managers While Keeping Opponents at Bay: Implementing the Philippine Procurement Law

Cecilia Cabañero-Verzosa

Introduction

When a law is passed, a new set of communication challenges emerge. In the case of procurement reform in the Philippines, communication played a key role in getting the law passed that enabled it. During implementation, the communication challenge centers on sustaining coalitions that supported the passage of a law while bringing on board the middle managers, who are often most resistant to change; keeping the issue front and center for a critical mass of citizens; and neutralizing opposition. Even when reformers are convinced of the value of communication, weak government capacity for implementing communication hinders achievement of lofty communication goals. How can reform leaders who are responsible for implementing the law use communication effectively? Questions that must be asked include the following:

- Which audiences need to be targeted? In what sequence?
- How does a government leverage its staff resources and mobilize cross-agency networks of support?
- How do reformers keep procurement reform alive in the public's mind?
- How can government create partnerships with civil society so government can become more accountable to its citizens?

Getting the Law Passed: Strategic Communication Catalyzes Support

Reformers who are convinced about the value of strategic communication to getting reforms understood and supported so that these reforms result in adoption of legislation or so that some visible sign of formal acceptance by various constituencies may unwittingly undermine the successful use of communication in the policy analysis and policy formulation phase by not giving communication a continuing role during the policy implementation phase. There are many reasons for this unfortunate turn of events. New challenges emerge that make sustained use of communication difficult. But once recognized, reformers can take timely action to hurdle these barriers.

The Argument to Support Procurement Reform

The Philippine government spends an average of 3 percent of its gross domestic product or 15 percent of its annual budget (an equivalent of 121 billion pesos) on public procurement of goods and services, infrastructure, and equipment. Approximately 30 percent (or an equivalent of 30 billion pesos) is lost to leakages because of corruption, inefficiency, ignorance, and disorganization (Government of the Philippines 2006). This situation triggered a group of reformers in government to push for bold legislation that became law in January 2003: the General Procurement Reform Act (RA 9184). It took three years and three changes in the Philippine presidency to get this law passed (Verzosa-Cabañero and Garcia, forthcoming).

The General Procurement Reform Act consolidated more than 60 laws pertaining to public procurement, covering all national agencies, government-owned and government-controlled corporations, all government entities and instrumentalities, and all Local Government Units (LGUs) (Campos and Syquia 2006). The law institutionalizes transparency measures in the competitive bidding process. Transparency measures included wide public dissemination of bid invitations and awards through advertisements in newspapers, publications of general circulation, and a procurement Web site. Common supplies are to be procured through a government electronic procurement system (G-EPS), which was to become the primary source of information on all government procurement transactions. Finally, civil society representatives were to be invited to be observers in the bidding process conducted by the Bids and Awards Committees of various government entities.

How Strategic Communication Catalyzed Support for the Passage of the Law

Strategic communication was the glue that cemented synergistic actions taken by coalitions to support the procurement reform bill as legislation was debated in the executive branch and the legislature for three years. Communication activities targeted legislators, thus increasing their awareness of the proposed

bill, engaging them in public dialogue about its merits, and persuading them to vote for its passage.

A multimedia campaign motivated the general public to support procurement reform over the three years that the bill made its way through government, increasing understanding of the urgency of the problem of poor procurement practices that resulted in the loss of taxpayer money that otherwise could be spent on better health, education, and basic services. Targeted communication activities reached special elites: influential officials in the legislature and in the executive branch. A creative and low-cost intervention, in the form of screen savers for computer monitors, was provided free to the legislative staff of the Senate and the Lower House, and was carried a persuasive message to gain their vote for the passage of the procurement reform bill. A core of champions from the executive branch and the legislature was mobilized as spokespersons for procurement reform during TV and radio interviews and public speaking engagements.

The successful media strategy had four major components: (1) the use of AM radio for “live” interaction by people with their elected officials in the legislature, (2) a TV documentary on the local cable news channel to target policy makers, (3) the print media for urban opinion makers, and (4) a nationwide promotional campaign that created a “brand” for procurement reform with the tag line “Stop corruption: move forward with procurement reform.”

Implementing the Law: New Communication Challenges

Implementing the law brings new communication challenges. Reformers are caught in a quandary as to where they need to focus scarce resources. Should priority be given to internal audiences, mainly middle managers who must now embrace new procurement procedures, or should reformers anticipate continued opposition to reform from external audiences? Can reformers attempt to do both? Or should they address differing audience needs in some phased manner?

The First Three Years

After the law was passed, government reformers turned their attention inward. They focused on orienting procurement officers and staff members of units of various government-owned and government-controlled agencies on the implementing rules and regulations that will guide procurement practices, and they changed the way government conducts its business in procuring goods and services. Training activities took center stage, which was hand in hand with the development of the G-EPS; the creation of a procurement Web site; and the presentations to business groups, civil society, and media regarding the implementation of the new procurement law. In two years, 83 percent of all LGUs nationwide had attended an orientation session on the new law and its implementing rules and regulations. The Department of Budget and Management created the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB), which was responsible for implementing the procurement law nationwide. As shown in

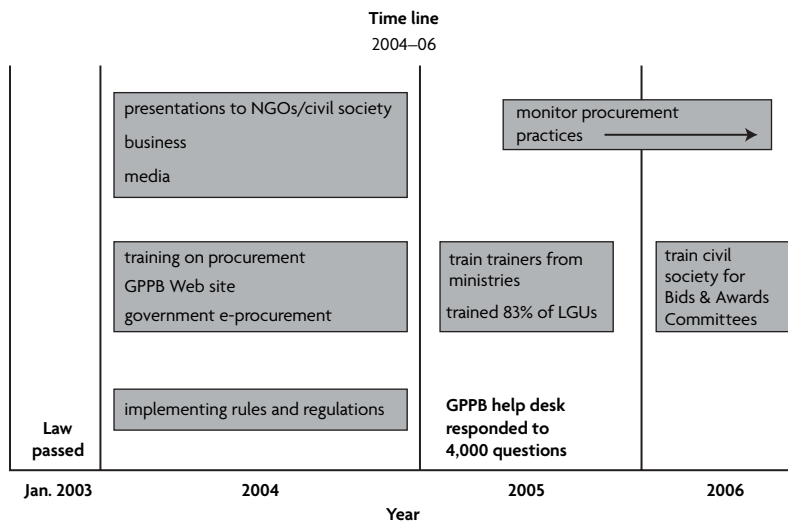
figure CS7.1, by 2005 the GPPB had trained trainers from various ministries to carry out the mammoth task of training procurement officers nationally so that the new implementing rules and regulations can be put into effect in all government procurement.

But Do People Know?

In August 2007, a communication strategy development workshop was conducted with the GPPB executive director and GPPB staff, the various allies from government agencies (Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman, and others), the faith-based organizations (such as the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines), and the business sector (Philippine Contractors Association, National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections [NAMFREL], and others). The group recognized the need to develop a comprehensive communication strategy that will identify critical audiences to address, new practices to promote, and persuasive messages that resonate with these audiences and credible channels of communication to reach various audiences. The overall communication objective was to increase understanding of new procurement processes and the role of various groups to ensure that procurement reform succeeds in reducing graft and corruption.

During the workshop, reformers and their partners were restless. Procurement reform was not easy to implement. The task was gargantuan, and there was little information shared systematically with coalitions that supported passage of the procurement law. The GPPB was overwhelmed with the task of developing the implementing rules and regulations and orienting all procurement officers about the new ways of doing government procurement work. There was also the unanswered question: What did people know about procurement law and its intended impact on their lives?

Figure CS7.1. Time Line 2004–06



Source: Alvarez, Vales, and Cabañero-Verzosa 2008.

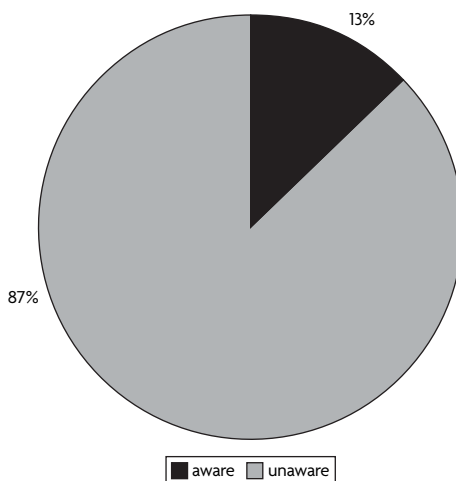
A national survey was conducted in November 2006 by the Social Weather Stations research group. The key result was not surprising but troubling because it highlighted the need for government to step up its communication efforts and to reach out to the general public and its coalition of supporters before a sense of *ningas cogon* took hold and made people lose interest in supporting procurement reform.¹

Only 13 percent of the national sample of respondents ($N = 1,200$) were aware of the new procurement reform law as shown in figure CS7.2 (Social Weather Stations 2006). This was not a surprising statistic because government efforts in the first three years after the passage of the law focused internally, thereby training procurement officers about the new law and its implementing rules and regulations.

The low levels of awareness about the passage of the procurement law was mitigated by the positive finding that, among the nationwide sample of respondents, 76 percent of the respondents believed that having such a procurement law would help reduce corruption. There was a strong belief in the rationale for procurement reform. Figure CS7.3 shows that 51 percent of respondents said that the new procurement law (which provides standard rules in public bidding for government projects and guarantees that all contractors are given equal opportunity to win a government contract) will “probably help” in reducing corruption, and another 25 percent of respondents declared this new law will “definitely help” in curbing corruption in government contracts.

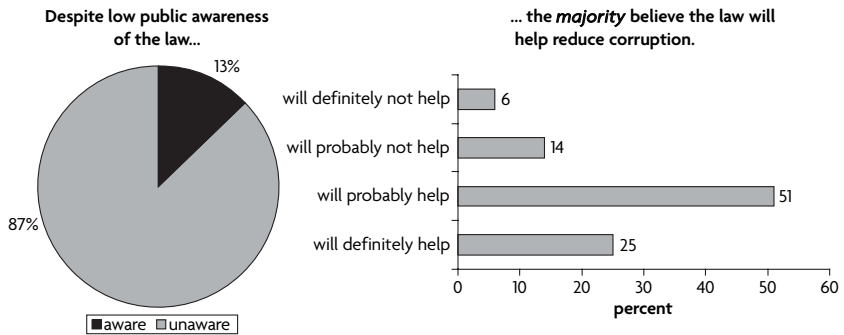
Furthermore, there was strong public support for the specific provisions of the law, as shown in figure CS7.4. About three-quarters of respondents stated that specific provisions—such as public bidding, publishing the notice of bidding, inviting nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as observers, and using the electronic Web site to publish winning bids—are definitely needed.

Figure CS7.2. Public Awareness of the Procurement Law: A Surprising Statistic?



Sources: Alvarez, Vales, and Cabañero-Verzosa. 2006. Survey data based on report prepared by the Social Weather Stations 2008. Fourth Quarter 2006 Social Weather Survey, GPPB Survey Module, December.

Figure CS7.3. Attitudes toward the Law



Question 105:

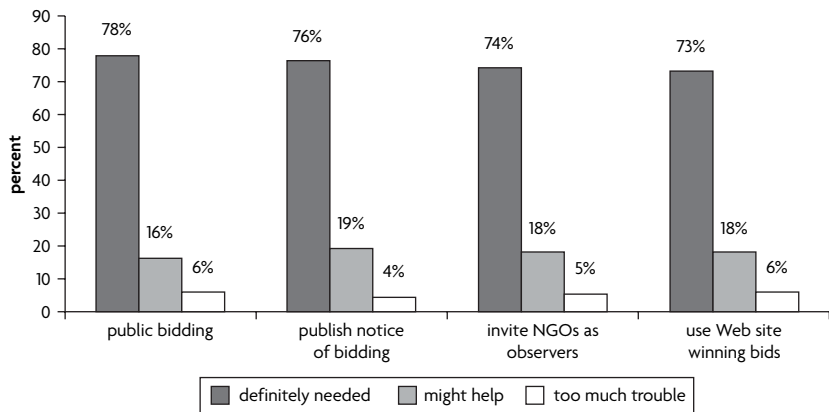
We have a law that provides for the standard rules in public bidding for government projects to guarantee that all contractors are given equal opportunity to join and win a government contract. This law is called the Government Procurement Reform Act, or RA9184. Have you heard or read something about it?

Question 106:

Do you think this law with help reduce corruption in government contracts?

Sources: Alvarez, Vales, and Cabañero-Verzosa. 2006. Survey data based on report prepared by the Social Weather Stations 2008. Fourth Quarter 2006. Social Weather Survey, GPPB Survey Module, December.

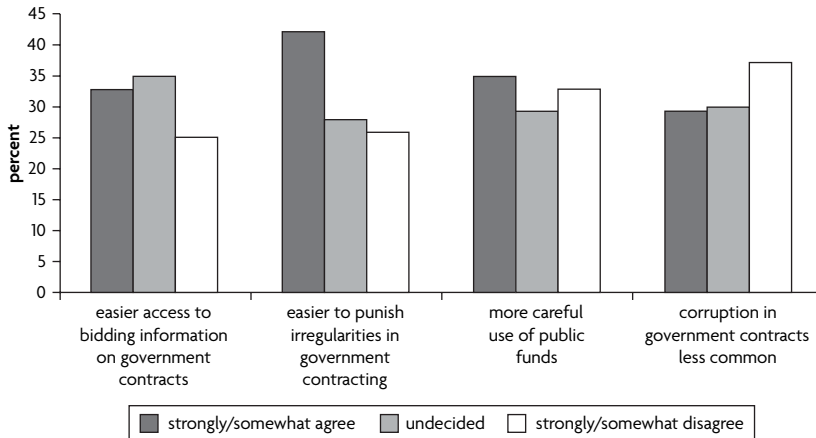
Figure CS7.4. Support for Provisions of the Procurement Law



Sources: Alvarez, Vales, and Cabañero-Verzosa. 2006. Survey data based on report prepared by the Social Weather Stations 2008. Fourth Quarter 2006. Social Weather Survey, GPPB Survey Module, December.

People were asked to compare their knowledge and experience of government procurement five years before the survey with their more recent knowledge and experience. People supported government’s efforts at reforming procurement processes (see figure CS7.5), reporting that there is easier access to bidding information on government contracts and that it is easier to punish irregularities in government contracting. However, a large group of respondents were “undecided” on these issues, and about a third of respondents disagreed with the statement that there has been more careful use of public funds and that corruption in government contracts has become less common. This finding implies that there is public support for the government’s efforts at procurement reform, and the government’s efforts at increasing transparency in procurement processes

Figure CS7.5. Attitudes toward Corruption in Government Contracts



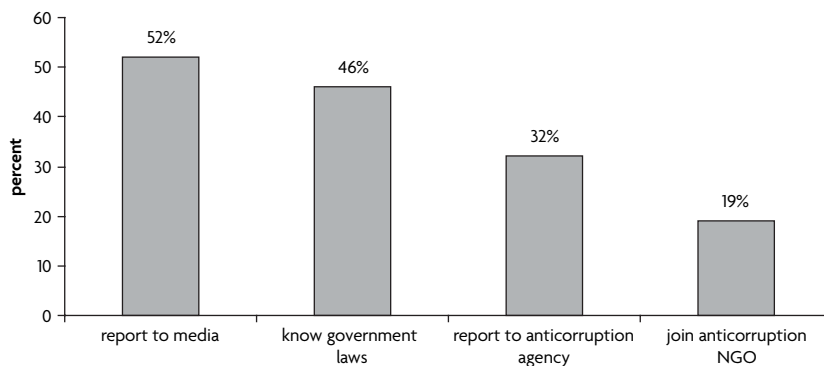
Sources: Alvarez, Vales, and Cabañero-Verzosa. 2006. Survey data based on report prepared by the Social Weather Stations 2008. Fourth Quarter 2006 Social Weather Survey, GPPB Survey Module, December.

has become more evident to the public. What is more difficult for people to judge is whether procurement reform has resulted in reducing corruption in government contracts or has resulted in more careful use of public funds.

When asked what ordinary citizens could do to help reduce corruption in government contracts, 52 percent of respondents stated they would report wrongdoing to the media, 46 percent believed they could be of help if they were aware of government laws, 32 percent noted they would report incidents to a government anticorruption agency, and 19 percent stated they were willing to join an anticorruption NGO (see figure CS7.6). This wellspring of good intentions can be tapped by a comprehensive communication program to align efforts of citizens with actions taken by reformers in government, the private sector, and the media and among civil society organizations.

The results of the public opinion survey provided the GPPB with critical information about attitudes, perceptions, and motivations of people. But to implement a comprehensive communication strategy, other program elements needed to be put in place so that the communication program not only will provide messages that resonate with various publics but also will trigger action among various constituencies.

Well-meaning government reformers may be overwhelmed by various demands during implementation, resulting in little systematic attention given to using communication strategically to implement the law. This problem is exacerbated by three factors that make it difficult to use communication effectively. First, it is difficult to find appropriate communication expertise. Second, financing communication activities during implementation of the law becomes even more difficult because donors expect government agencies now to take over financing of communication. Third, while reformers focus their energies on developing new guidelines to make the law operational and on training government middle managers who are responsible for procurement processes

Figure CS7.6. Willingness to Take Action

Sources: Alvarez, Vales, and Cabañero-Verzosa. 2006. Survey data based on report prepared by the Social Weather Stations 2008. Fourth Quarter 2006 Social Weather Survey, GPPB Survey Module, December.

at national and local government unit levels, vested interests resurface, thereby threatening to emasculate the law.

Searching for Relevant Communication Expertise

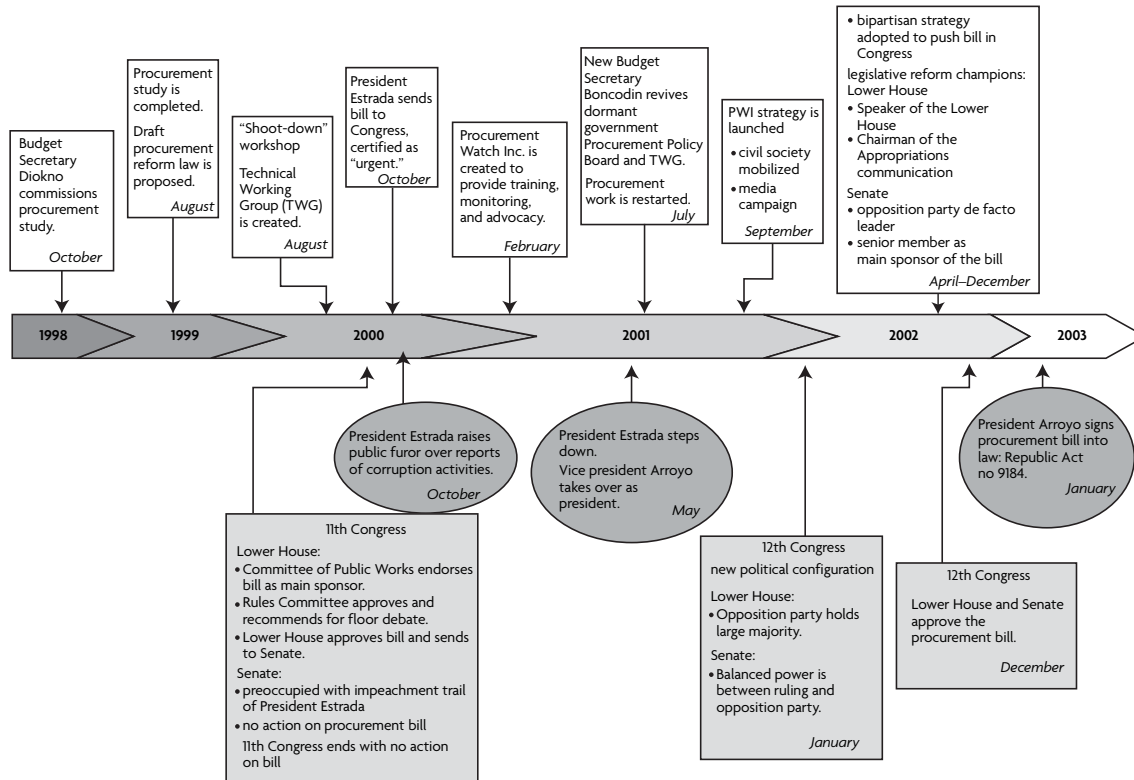
Although the Philippines boasts of good communication expertise, it has been difficult to find communication experts with the right blend of skills for procurement reform. A large group of talented communication experts works in the private sector: in commercial marketing, advertising, and public affairs. There is a group of experts whose main work has been political communication. Although these experts are savvy on the political context for reform, political campaigns are targeted at helping get political candidates elected to a public office. These political communication campaigns run for shorter periods than that required of an issue as complex as procurement reform. Political communication focuses on positioning an individual or political party in the public mind by developing messages that resonate with voters.

A number of communication specialists worked in the nongovernmental sector. Their communication efforts were aimed at promoting behavior change regarding specific issues like HIV/AIDS, nutrition, and education. What the procurement reform needed was a set of skills that were difficult to find in a single individual or group.

A communication program to support implementation of the procurement reform law needs communication expertise that reflects expertise in various tasks—the client-driven orientation of commercial marketers, the strong sense of the political landscape and sources of opposition or support on issues and messages faced by political campaigners, and the patient attention to determinants of behavior change that often go beyond the message those tasks delve into knowledge, perceptions, and enabling environments of behavior change interventions that communication experts in nonprofit organizations give to their communication programs (figure CS7.7).

The communication expert's task is to facilitate the process of developing a comprehensive communication strategy that targets both internal audiences

Figure CS7.7. Procurement Reform in the Philippines: Getting the Law Passed



Source: Authors.

(those working in the public sector, including middle managers, bureaucrats, policy makers, and national- and local-level politicians) and external audiences (civil society, media, opponents of reform within various ministries and at the national and local government levels). There was a need to recognize that the behavior change goals are difficult to achieve because these new practices go against entrenched behaviors that institutions have allowed to flourish through misdirected and counterproductive incentives. These new practices are not supported by prevailing social norms and require the creation and acceptance of new social norms. Thus, adoption of new behavior depends on whether the institutional structures and incentives and the emerging new social norms provide a strong enough reason for people to adopt new practices. The communication program for procurement reform also needed to borrow the same vigilance and discipline that commercial marketers exhibit when they constantly monitor not only the effectiveness of their own messages but also the messages' impact, as well as the competition's marketing efforts that attempt to encroach on their product's market share. In the public sector, "competitive forces" are more difficult to recognize. Often, resistance to change by those responsible for implementation of the law is the hidden "competition" to successful reform. Coupled with this resistance among implementing units are the more insidious efforts of opponents of reform to find creative and often indirect ways to stonewall reform efforts.

Mobilizing Resources for Communication

Donor support was difficult to obtain during the fight to get the law passed. Donors were reluctant to finance communication activities that focused on the legislature. They worried that financial support could easily be misinterpreted as dabbling in partisan politics. Nevertheless, various donors lent a hand with procurement reform as allowed by their institutional mandates. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) financed research that reviewed government procurement laws and its implementation over a number of years. The Asian Development Bank and the World Bank provided funds to build capacity of a new civil society organization (CSO), Procurement Watch, that played a central role in orchestrating the efforts of CSOs in support of the passage of the procurement reform bill (Campos and Syquia 2006).

When the Procurement Reform Law was passed, donors continued to monitor progress of implementation in various ways. In partnership with the government, the Procurement Policy Board, the World Bank, and the partners in the donor community, including the Asian Development Bank, USAID, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Australian Aid Agency, and the European Commission, jointly prepared a series of Country Procurement Assessment Reports. In 2002, the report highlighted the risks in the prevailing public procurement system, which led to the passage of the omnibus procurement reform law. By 2004 and 2005, the Country Procurement Assessment Report (CPAR) documented

progress in improving the public procurement system, mainly in increased use of national competitive bidding thresholds and prior reviews. By 2006, a CPAR mission began to show concern about the pace and scope of implementation. The mission revisited key issues: improvement of monitoring tools to measure to reform impact at the national and local government levels, to strengthen the communication strategy to support reform implementation, and to ensure active participation of civil society and to the private sector (Government of the Philippines 2006).

Vested Interests Resurface

In the case of the Philippines, an example of how these vested interests have made their voices heard by legislative and executive officials is evident in the proposal made by a foreign company to have the government invest in a national broadband network for government offices. This proposal was reportedly not being processed in accordance with national procurement rules. A newspaper article published in October 2007 reported that former secretary of the Department of Budget and Management Benjamin E. Diokno made an impassioned plea during a Senate meeting to urge senators to protect the procurement law, which he described as “world class,” from being emasculated by vested interests (*Business world* 2007).

Creating Public Value: A Vital Role for Strategic Communication

Implementation of the law is carried out by government institutions. If one is to develop a communication strategy to support implementation of the procurement law, it is worth revisiting Moore’s description of an organizational strategy for public sector organizations. The communication strategy must be in synch with the organizational strategy.

According to this approach adopted by the faculty of the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, an organizational strategy does three things: (1) it describes the overall mission of the organization in terms of its public value, (2) it identifies the organization’s sources of support and legitimacy (that is, its authorizing environment), and (3) it explains how the public institution will be organized so it can achieve its objectives (Moore 1995: 71). Communication plays a role in each of these elements.

Substantive Value

The public and critical stakeholders must recognize the value of an organization’s mission. The organization must provide services that overseers, clients, and beneficiaries deem worthwhile and accessible to them “at low cost in terms of money and authority” (Moore 1995: 71).

Procurement reform, carried out by various government offices at both national and local levels, must be seen by the public, by policy makers, and by stakeholder groups as providing them with substantive value.

Communication enables government institutions to explain to their publics the value of procurement reform. When government fails to communicate that value, procurement reform will be considered a nuisance and a barrier to getting the business of government done.

Legitimacy and Political Sustainability

The public sector organization must be able to mobilize resources and to gain political support for its mandate. Communication enables the organization to build coalitions of support among policy makers, senior government officials, and donor agencies. This support translates into budgets and resources that are given to the government agency to sustain its operations. Support can also come in the form of nongovernmental actions to promote reform such as policy analysis, research, or dialogue with various stakeholders.

Administrative Feasibility

Given the authority and legitimacy to carry out its mission, which has been vetted by critical stakeholders as being of public value, the third leg of an organizational strategy will be its capacity to organize its staff and other financial resources in ways that enable it to deliver results central to its mission.

In the case of the Philippine procurement law, the issue of administrative feasibility centers on the ability of government institutions responsible for changing procurement practices and monitoring its implementation to put in place the organizational processes, incentives, and resources that will enable middle managers to comply with new procurement processes. Institutional interagency collaboration will be needed to comply with the provisions of the new law effectively.

In summary, strategic communication needs to address these issues simultaneously so that public value is achieved. Understanding, acceptance, and support of the public value of the procurement law will promote its sustained and effective implementation.

Seeing Characteristics of an Effective Communication Strategy

A communication strategy provides a roadmap for reformers during the implementation of reform (Verzosa-Cabañero 2002: 139–46). What elements will make a communication strategy effective? How does a reformer deploy these elements to achieve public value (by addressing the strategic triangle mentioned earlier)?

First, articulate a management objective that defines the key goal that will drive all communication activities. During the policy formulation process, there was a clear overarching goal: to get an omnibus procurement reform bill passed. During the implementation phase, there are two distinct management goals that can be teased out from a broad management objective of ensuring full compliance with the new procurement law. One is to sustain the support

of those constituencies who helped get the law passed. The other is to broaden the coalitions of support for the implementation of the law. This approach will mean reaching out to those within the government bureaucracy who will adopt new business procedures and will work with modified institutional structures to implement the new procurement policies fully. At the same time, reformers will also need to communicate with those outside the immediate circle of supporters of procurement reform across various strata of society including national and local government executives, politicians, legislators, the private sector, civil society, and media.

Second, identify internal and external audiences for communication activities. Internal audiences refer to those who have the responsibility to implement the law by nature of their position in the bureaucracy. Internal audiences will also include those who have become a part of the constituency for procurement reform by virtue of their active involvement in supporting the passage of the law. External audiences include those who are outside the government institutional machinery responsible for implementing the law, such as the private sector, civil society, media, and church groups. External audiences also include groups that have been disinterested parties, perhaps are knowledgeable about procurement reform issues but that have not been involved in communicating, advocating, or taking citizen action to promote passage of the law. This distinction is useful for communication purposes. Those who are active constituencies for procurement reform will need messages different from those who were not engaged in the process of getting the bill passed and who will not have a direct responsibility for implementing the law. People who are unaware of the issues that prompted procurement reform will need a different communication effort from those who not only are knowledgeable about the rationale for the new procurement law, but also are motivated to take individual action to demonstrate support for its effective implementation. Mapping audiences along a behavior change continuum, shown in table CS7.1, enables reformers to describe different communication efforts appropriate to the communication needs of these groups (Garcia and Cabañero-Verzosa 2005).

Third, describe for each target audience the desired individual behavior that leads to effective implementation of the law. For example, the new procurement law mandates the inclusion of members of civil society as observers in the Bids and Awards Committees for all government procurement at the national and local government levels. For civil society members, therefore, the desired behavior would be to volunteer as observers to the committees.

Once a desired behavior or behaviors that are critical to the successful implementation of the law have been identified, the next task is to assess current behavior, beliefs, and attitudes that underpin current practices. These perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs can be directly addressed by communication activities. Desired behaviors will also be influenced by a set of beliefs about the positive and negative consequences of engaging in the new set of behaviors, by perceptions about social norms that are consistent with the desired behavior,

Table CS7.1. Stages of Behavior Change and Levels of Participation and Communication

Stage	Unaware	Aware	Understand	Adopt	Sustain
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignorant, uninformed • Resistant to change • Unsafe or risky practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed, knowledgeable • Aware of benefits of behavior change • Aware of need to learn new skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciates benefits of behavior change • Motivated to adopt new behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decides to take action • Tries new behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent practice of new behavior
Communication strategies	Awareness and sensitization:	Information and education:	Motivation:	Trial and adoption:	Maintenance and monitoring:
Macro-level: Policy/sectoral reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public and stakeholder awareness. • Create public information campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build understanding. • Establish two-way communication. • Address concerns and perceived problems. • Encourage public communication. • Create outreach program. • Further national dialogue. • Foster media relations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build consensus; maintain dialogue. • Build communication capacity and training sessions. • Further public relations. • Create advocacy campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build ownership. • Build social partnerships. • Create constituencies for reform. • Encourage public involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build commitment. • Support constituencies for reform. • Encourage media analysis.
Micro-level: Project intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness. • Create sensitization and advocacy campaigns. • Conduct media training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch multimedia campaigns to increase knowledge. • Build new skills. • Promote benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue multimedia campaigns. • Seek peer group counseling. • Use community mobilization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage continued use by emphasizing benefits. • Model new behavior by early adopters. • Seek social support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reiterate benefits of new behavior. • Reinforce ability to sustain behavior. • Seek social support.
Participation strategies	Information sharing:	Consultation:	Cooperation:	Collaboration:	Empowerment:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of information materials • Public meetings • Presentations, seminars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings • Field visits and interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory assessments/evaluations • Beneficiary assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint committees with stakeholder representatives • Stakeholders given principal responsibility for implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of stakeholder organizations • Management by stakeholders

Source: Garcia and Cabañero-Verzosa 2005.

or by a person's beliefs of self-efficacy with regard to adoption of specific behaviors. Reformers can communicate messages that enable audiences to acquire new information and positive attitudes that will increase the probability of people adopting new practices aligned with the new procurement law.

Fourth, identify a message to take away that will resonate with specific audiences. A take-away message is driven by the audience's conclusion about the benefits of adopting new attitudes and practices. Supporting data will need to be provided by reformers seeking to persuade audiences to support implementation of the law. In the case of civil society members who volunteer to be observers to the Bids and Awards Committees, a take-away message will consist of why their volunteering leads to public or individual value.

Fifth, identify channels of communication that are credible to these various audiences and can reach them as audiences increase awareness about procurement reform and become motivated to take positive action.

Finally, determine ways of measuring effectiveness of communication activities. Are audiences changing beliefs, attitudes, and practices in ways that support effective implementation of the procurement law?

When these communication management decisions are aligned, communication is able to support the management objective. Public value is created by simultaneously addressing the communication needs of the audiences affected by each of the elements in the strategic triangle described above. Legitimacy and political sustainability calls for communication with policy makers, political leaders, and heads of agencies at national and local levels. Administrative feasibility means addressing communication needs of middle managers, the government bureaucrats who will implement details of the reform within their institutions. Substantive value means communication must be able to build and sustain coalitions of support and constituencies to support implementation of the procurement law across a wide spectrum of society—from policy makers to government bureaucrats, to leaders of civil society, to communities ready to embrace new social norms.

These decisions guide development of a comprehensive communication strategy. However, reform efforts are often hobbled by weak capacity and inadequate financial resources precisely because these reforms are new ideas that the bureaucracy has not yet institutionalized—with organizational structures, budgetary allocations, or staff capacity.

Given these organizational conditions, where does the reformer begin? What will be politically feasible and administratively doable? How can reformers demonstrate public value to broaden support from stakeholders? How can middle managers be persuaded to change entrenched beliefs and practices so reforms can be effective? Three key approaches are proposed.

Develop a Multistage Communication Implementation Plan

Although reformers need a comprehensive communication strategy that provides a “big picture” roadmap for reform implementation, the implementation

plan must be consistent with the organization's capacity and cognizant of vested interests that need to be managed.

An overriding goal for communication is to keep opponents at bay while building a network of supporters. Douglas (1993) states that the political lesson for reformers is this: "Once the programme begins to be implemented, don't stop until you have completed it. The fire of opponents is much less accurate if they have to shoot at a rapidly moving target." Douglas notes further that "the key to credibility is consistency of policy and communications" (227). Recognizing the implementation capacity of government institutions, he warns reformers that "speed, momentum, the avoidance of ad hoc decisions, and an unwavering consistency in serving medium-term objectives are the crucial ingredients in establishing the government's credibility" (228).

Leverage Government Capacity for Communication

Despite its weak internal institutional capacity for communication program development and implementation, government reformers have access to various types of communication assistance, sometimes available but underused. What is critical for government reformers are the following skills: to discern their communication needs, to articulate a clear purpose for using communication, to identify the resources they need—staff, funds, research-based information—and finally to manage communication planning and to supervise implementation of communication activities that will ensure that only activities to support the management objectives set out are undertaken.

Government reformers need to develop partnerships with various groups who can assist in the planning and implementation of communication activities. These partnerships may include research organizations, academics, NGOs that provide technical support on communication, think tanks, and private sector companies.

Create "Authority" Structures across Institutions and Groups

Because government reformers need to persuade external institutions and individuals to carry out the various tasks involved in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating communication activities, reformers need to develop a collaborative mechanism to engage multiple players in reform implementation. The model for collaboration will need to be flexible so institutions can adapt to changing situations and can calibrate their respective capacities to respond to emerging needs. Collaborative mechanisms need to provide managerial discretion to institutional partners, so all parties are able to pursue simultaneously activities that are within their mandates and from which they derive value from the institution's perspective, as well as pursue joint interests. The collaboration will need to provide opportunities for incremental learning that is widely shared among partner agencies so that the group builds on each other's experience, thus avoiding repeating mistakes without benefit of introspection and reflection on various experiences.

Brinkerhoff and Crosby note that “no single agency can manage the policy-implementation effort; ... it requires the concerted actions of multiple agencies and groups. ... [A]uthority and responsibility are dispersed among the actors involved, which means that the traditional command-and-control management is rarely applicable” (2002: 23).

Conclusion

These are “live” issues in the case of the Philippine General Procurement Reform Act, where the opportunity exists to capture the hearts and minds of a broad coalition of policy makers, middle managers and government bureaucrats, and members of civil society. In a rapidly changing political landscape, reformers must simultaneously consolidate their gains in harnessing political will among their legislators and the executive branch during the advocacy efforts to pass the procurement law while addressing the public will and people’s expectations that the law will reduce opportunities for corruption.

The GPPB has faced a number of communication challenges: searching for appropriate communication expertise; securing financing for a communication program during policy implementation, as distinct from financial support provided for communication activities that secured the passage of the law; and preparing a comprehensive communication plan while implementing a shorter-term set of communication activities that mobilized middle managers for action while preparing a crisis communication plan that will foil efforts of vested interests and of organized, vocal opponents. All these challenges need to be addressed by a coalition of actors, guided by common interests and constrained by their individual, more narrow mandates.

The main challenge is how to continue to move forward, even in bursts of activities guided by a comprehensive communication strategy. Three primary lessons can be learned from the Philippine procurement reform experience to date.

First, recognize that new communication challenges surface when implementing reform. Middle managers, who are often most resistant to change, become central to changing procurement practices. Vested interests and organized opposition resurface to challenge reform implementers to advocate continuously why reform was needed in the first place and why implementation must proceed. Reformers must continue to sustain the coalitions that supported the passage of the law throughout the implementation process. They provide the inspiration for moving forward and can be tapped for their expertise; and their passion for the reform goals makes them charismatic leaders during reform implementation. Expand outreach to civil society because their participation is critical to creating new social norms. In the case of the Philippines, the new procurement law included a provision that enabled civil society members to become observers in the deliberations of the Bids and Awards Committees in bidding processes at the national and local government levels.

Second, secure financing for communication during implementation of the law. Communication is an interactive engagement with people at various stages of implementation. A comprehensive communication strategy will provide donors with an appreciation of the “big picture” communication objectives and will help donor agency representatives to make a case for financing communication activities that contribute to the overall communication goals.

Third, while recognizing weak government capacity to implement communication, reformers must continuously explore options for collaboration on communication program planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. A collaborative mechanism that provides individuals and institutions with an ability to meet their own interests while pursuing joint gains has a higher probability of being sustainable than an implementation arrangement built on traditional command-and-control structures.

Reforms are about change. Change takes place not only in institutional structures and patterns of behavior but also in the hearts and minds of people. Reforms succeed when reformers are able to orchestrate the advocacy needed to secure political will, with the implementation mechanisms that unlock the power of the people who are meant to benefit from reforms, to fully demand accountability from the government.

Note

1. *Ningas cogon* literally means a wild grass fire, which blazes wildly but dissipates rapidly. Here it refers to reform efforts that die out quickly before their goals can be achieved.

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“We Didn’t Know People Like Me Could Ask Questions Like This”: A Dialogue in Bangladesh

David Prosser

We didn’t know people like me could ask questions like this.
—Woman, 32, Bheramera, Kustia

The concept is deceptively simple. Take a group of ordinary people, drawn from all sections of the community, and place them in a room, face to face with those running or aspiring to run their country. Put a seasoned journalist in charge of proceedings, and let the people ask questions on virtually any topic of their choice. Then broadcast the event on national television and radio.

This is *Bangladesh Sanglap*—Dialogue on Bangladesh—a major governance project launched by the BBC World Service Trust¹ and the BBC Bengali Service in 2005, with support from the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID).

In a country with a poor governance record (for five of the past seven years Bangladesh has sat at the bottom of the corruption league table),² the project was founded on a belief that the mass media could provide a forum where people come to demand—expect even—better governance from those in charge.

Bangladesh boasts some impressive development gains over the past 10 years. With economic growth rates of 6 percent, every year approximately 1 percent of its population of 140 million is lifted out of absolute poverty.³ Infant and child mortality has fallen, and primary school enrollment has shown remarkable progress. But by the summer of 2005, with political enmity spilling over to violence on the streets, many worried that these significant advances seemed in danger of unraveling.

Parliament had ceased to function. The main opposition party, the Awami League, had refused to accept the 2001 election results. Their boycott, coupled with the speaker's management of parliamentary business, was preventing the development of formal accountability systems.

The BBC World Service Trust's audience research was showing that people saw the "culture of blame" as the single biggest impediment to meaningful political dialogue. People's interest in politics was strong. They wanted better access to politicians, and there was a general feeling that the poor had no access at all. When politicians did appear in the broadcast media, they were quick to apportion blame, rather than debate constructively with their political opponents. Moreover, research showed that politicians tended to speak in a language that few understood.

The BBC enjoys a special relationship with the people of Bangladesh. The Bengali Service has been broadcasting for more than 65 years. During the dark days of 1971, the BBC's shortwave broadcasts provided one of the only sources of impartial news on the liberation struggle that led to the birth of the new nation.

"Audiences are at the heart of everything we do": this is one of the core values of the BBC. It was this concept that led it to develop *Bangladesh Sanglap*, initially billed as a "national conversation" about the country's future. The goal was to "encourage and facilitate a change in the country's political culture, promoting a culture of responsiveness and accountability among political representatives and providing access to information on, and discussion of, governance issues." The BBC World Service Trust planned to do this by "creating a forum which allowed people to access and interact with policy and decision makers on important issues of the day."

Originally intended as radio programs, the project secured an early major TV partner, the Bangladesh satellite station Channel I, thus significantly increasing the reach of the project. In the days leading up to the first broadcast, Channel I received several calls from the authorities questioning the program's intentions. The channel was able to deflect these enquiries, responding that *Bangladesh Sanglap* would be a BBC program on Channel I; the output would be entirely controlled by the BBC.

Broadcast of *Bangladesh Sanglap* began in November 2005 with eight issue-based discussions from Dhaka, Sylhet, and Chittagong. The launch was backed up by a national opinion poll conducted by the BBC World Service Trust—"The Pulse of Bangladesh," the first of its kind—that revealed that trust in government officials was lower than that in religious leaders, intellectuals, and the army. To the surprise of many in the development community—but not the BBC's local journalists—nongovernmental organization (NGO) workers came even lower down on the list, trusted by only 11 percent of the population, squeezing in just above the police. Unemployment, food prices, and transport were considered the biggest problems facing the country, ranking well above corruption in the list of people's daily concerns.

Unprecedented attention surrounded the first debate on justice. Despite the ongoing parliamentary boycott, frequent strikes, and blockades, the law minister from the Bangladesh Nationalist Party government sat on the panel alongside his Awami League opposition counterpart. The program was broadcast live on radio and two days later on television. More than 3,000 people attended the first series of debates in Dhaka, Sylhet, and Chittagong on justice, corruption, education, health, local government, trade, security, and the institutions of state.

The research suggested that people believed they had been given a platform to challenge governments in ways never before experienced. Of those surveyed, 92 percent believed that the programs helped raise the “voice of the people,” especially those from deprived backgrounds, and 78 percent thought the programs helped to ensure transparency and accountability.

The genie was out of the bottle.

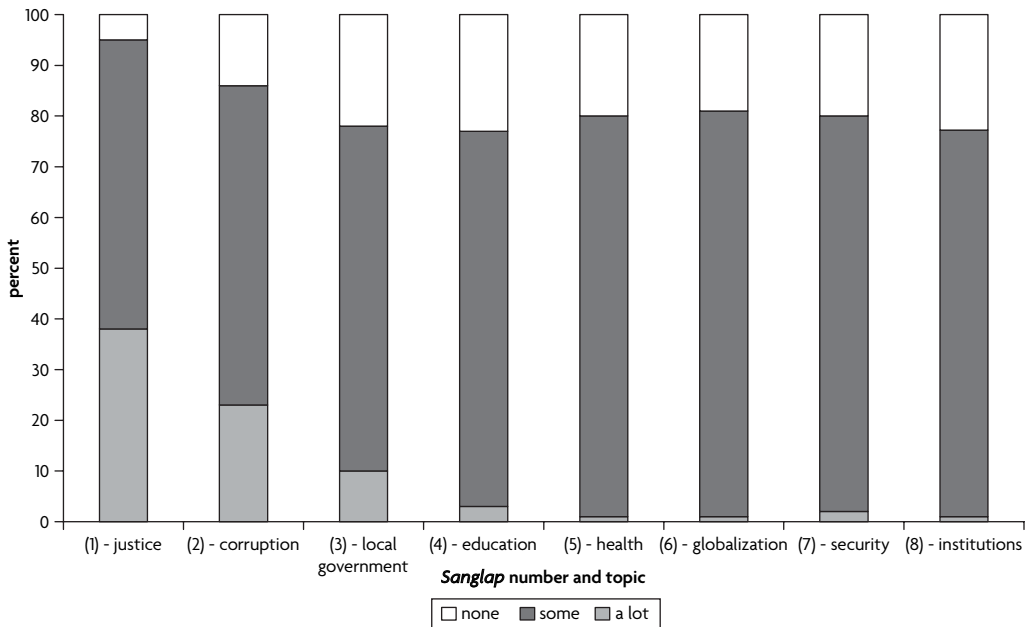
Mahfuz Anam, the respected editor of the *Daily Star* newspaper, summed up the mood in a filmed interview: “For a country where the politicians really don’t think themselves accountable to the public, I think the *Sanglap* experience was a tremendous move forward in the attempt to hold public leaders accountable. Politicians at the moment because of the *Sanglap* experience feel less certain of being able to hoodwink the public.”

Throughout that first series, the BBC World Service Trust “tracked” audiences and measured the amount of “blame game” that they felt panelists had engaged in. This tracking generated interesting results: more in the first program, less in the second, then a marked and sustained reduction for the final six (see figure CS8.1). Tracking suggested that by the time of the third *Sanglap* a combination of a strong presenter, supported by a live audience, was demanding—and receiving—answers.

A noticeable change was taking place in the way public debates were conducted. Politicians found themselves in an unfamiliar environment, one that afforded new opportunities for connecting with the voters, but where personal attacks (or a point-blank refusal to answer questions) were no longer going to wash. The audience—some of whom had traveled great distances to make their point—didn’t want old-style politics. And it didn’t look good on TV.

Because of the BBC’s international reach, it was able to follow up this first series with a debate in English on the BBC’s international news channel, BBC World, titled *Can Democracy Deliver?* It reminded those same political leaders that in this globalized, interconnected world, there was an international community taking an interest in the future of their country. Newspaper editorials at the time dwelt on how a global audience would have viewed the performance of their politicians.

With the national elections planned for January 2007 approaching, the BBC World Service Trust secured support from DFID for a second series of

Figure CS8.1. Improved Quality of Discourse: Decrease in the Blame Game—Tracker Survey (*Sanglap* 1)

Source: Bangladesh *Sanglap* Tracker Survey 2005.

Bangladesh Sanglap. Sabir Mustafa, the head of the BBC Bengali Service and editor of *Bangladesh Sanglap*, noted at the time:

“Bangladesh’s political scene is entering a critical phase with the demand for electoral reforms getting louder as the date for fresh elections draws closer. At present, political leaders are talking at each other, but from their own “high platforms.” The ordinary public become mere bystanders in this debate. Other issues which affect the country’s future, whether it is militant violence, Bangladesh’s relations with India, the price of essential goods, or safety at work do not receive the attention many people want and need.

To provide maximum flexibility for the discussion topics, the BBC adopted an “Any Questions?” style format, one well developed in the United Kingdom and in which the audience is able to pose questions on any topical issue.

The program went back on the air in September 2006. This time, along with the capital of Dhaka, debates took place in the regional towns of Mymensingh, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Bogra, and Chittagong. The broadcast audience and press reporting of the debates steadily grew. The program continued to attract high-caliber panelists, not just from the two opposing parties, but business leaders and civil society figures as well.

Meanwhile, issues outside the hall came to a head in January 2007 when violent protests led to the declaration of a state of emergency. A new (unelected) caretaker government, headed by former World Bank official Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, was appointed with the backing of the military.

What would have been a one-sided election was postponed. More than 150 politicians and business people have since been arrested in a major crackdown on corruption. A free and fair election has been promised by the end of 2008, with the reconstitution of the Election Commission, the planned introduction of voter ID cards, and the attempts to promote internal democracy in the main political parties.

The program's flexible format has meant that it can respond to each week's often dramatic political events. It remains relevant whatever the prevailing conditions. Before the (canceled) election, the audience vented their frustration at the behavior of the two main parties. During the state of emergency, they have been able to seek answers on the election timetable or to raise concerns over the caretaker government's policies, such as its unsuccessful attempts to send the two warring party leaders into exile.

The impact of the *Sanglap* cannot be assessed in isolation from other press reporting or media discussion, but on several occasions the strong feeling expressed by the audience (rather than journalists or pundits) appears to have been decisive in prompting officials to alter course. Two examples follow:

At a Dhaka *Sanglap* in March 2007, panelists and audience members condemned as "inhumane" the heavy-handed cleanup campaign that saw the eviction of street hawkers from the city's streets without any thought as to how they would make a living. "I am talking about my village people who work as day laborers," said one audience member. "They earn a scant amount of money by being a hawker. But after this eviction, their families are living a life almost without food." Following the program, the cleanup was put on hold, with no further reports of evictions. The authorities have established 25 new markets in which the hawkers can operate.

On another occasion, new emergency restrictions limiting a defendant's right to bail were criticized at a *Sanglap* as a "violation of human rights." The strong feeling was echoed in the press. Within days, the order was amended, and 482 people were released from jail.

Four Levels of Impact

The BBC World Service Trust's governance strategy is centered around three components of good governance in which it believes the media can have a direct impact: transparency, accountability, and participation. Put simply, in the case of *Bangladesh Sanglap* this approach means finding clear answers, holding elected officials to account, and gaining a sense of participation—not just for those able to attend an event, but also by proxy for the broadcast audience.

As with all its projects, the BBC World Service Trust seeks to achieve an impact at four levels: individuals (in this case voters), practitioners (the journalists and production staff from our partner broadcaster, Channel I), organizations (other media houses), and systems (government and politics).

At the time of writing, around 60 editions of *Bangladesh Sanglap* have been broadcast. Governance reforms take time, and the full impact of the project will not be known for some time. But as the BBC embarks on the third year of *Bangladesh Sanglap*, some results point in an encouraging direction.

Individuals Who Demand and Grow to Expect Better Governance

Thirteen focus groups with different population groups around the country looked at how the audience defined and experienced the elements of governance—in this case, participation, accountability, and transparency. The BBC World Service Trust was also interested in assessing whether the audiences thought the *Sanglap* contributed to the process of governance, and whether they had noted any changes in the rules, norms, and mechanisms Bangladeshi society used to govern itself.

These audience members reported some changes that they had perceived, including initiation of a culture of discussion, enhanced public demand and media pressure compelling politicians to face each other, and commitments being kept on record. They also expressed the desire for other changes, such as a reduction in the tendency to avoid questions, more constructive discussions and working toward solutions to problems or trying to reach consensus, and priority being placed on national or people's interests rather than one's own or party interests.

The *Sanglaps* were directly credited for several advancements in political transparency:

- Establishing a culture of discussion between politicians and the electorate, thus enhancing accountability. A young female radio listener in Sylhet noted: “We can ask questions directly of politicians ... [which was] not possible before this.”
- Creating a mass awareness of political issues, the rights of the public, and the commitments by political leaders. The *Sanglaps* “talk about issues that are relevant ... trying to identify wrongful activities. ... I believe in this program,” said a male listener in rural Chittagong.
- Providing a neutral platform for public opinion.
- Establishing the people's right to transparency. A young male viewer in Dhaka said: “They have transparency ... even if [a politician] wants to avoid questions, the audience, facilitator, and other panelists create pressure to answer accurately.”

Media Practitioners Who Are Better Able to Produce High-Quality Debates and Programming on Governance Issues

There has been a noticeable increase in production values as the skills of the project's television partner have increased. This increase is now being augmented with the development of a formal competency framework with assessments and certification, alongside training.

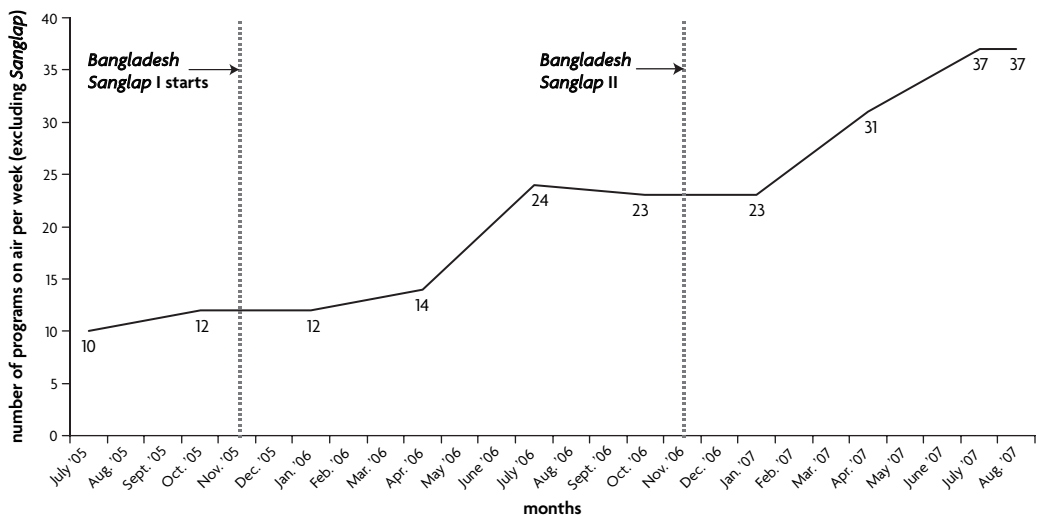
Media Houses That Increasingly Recognize the Commercial Viability of, and Are Becoming More Confident in, Producing Their Own Programs That Reflect Audience Views and Concerns on Governance Matters and That Provide Information and Promote a Culture of Responsiveness and Accountability

The popularity of *Bangladesh Sanglap* was not lost on the rest of country's media, which responded by dramatically increasing the number of their own political discussion programs (see figure CS8.2), some even copying the *Sanglap* set. Some commentators began to refer to this new phenomenon as a kind of "alternative parliament." Some ministers (though by no means all) seemed prepared to subject themselves to the kind of public scrutiny that parliament was unable to provide.

The media's newfound role in promoting accountability, however, was directly threatened following student unrest in August 2007, which led to the imposition of a temporary curfew and restrictions on television channels. For a month, the government forced all political talk shows off-air, although the BBC's *Bangladesh Sanglap* continued to be recorded and broadcast on radio and online. The government allowed talk shows to return to TV in September 2007.

Throughout the life of the project, the BBC has always made it clear to its television broadcast partner that the credibility of *Bangladesh Sanglap* required that legitimate discussion and debate should be broadcast uncensored. There is anecdotal evidence, however, that non-BBC programs are wary of allowing criticism of the government or military and are prone to self-censorship.

Figure CS8.2. Political Discussion Programs on Air in Bangladesh, July 2005–October 2007



Source: *Bangladesh Sanglap* television monitoring reports 2005–07.

BRAC (Building Resources Across Communities) noted in its report *The State of Governance 2006* that “the appearance of a flourishing [domestic] media conceals a number of serious constraints on its ability to address governance failures, including ownership and partisan alignment, weak internal governance and self-regulation, a reliance on government advertising, superficial news coverage and the lack of analytically-based programmes” (http://www.cgs-bu.com/research_files/full_report.pdf).

In conclusion, research suggests that the BBC’s *Bangladesh Sanglap* differs in three distinct ways from other talk shows:

1. Panelists and audience attest that they feel freer to speak. “We are under an emergency now,” one politician noted. “There are things that I will not be able to talk about in front of a microphone in a public meeting, but I was able to say it in the *Sanglap*.”
2. Live audiences rather than a lone studio presenter drive the questioning. The participatory nature of the program seems to be particularly valued; the broadcast audience at home see the audience in the venue as representing them and asking the tough questions. The panelists—and indeed the government—have an opportunity to test the political temperature around certain issues. Mahfuz Anam, editor of the *Daily Star*, noted: “There were several reservations with the *Sanglap* process when it started: Would it work? But the people, particularly the audience, rose to the occasion. When they got a chance, they not only asked tough questions [but also] asked them so directly, they asked them so openly, you can see it from their body language; they see it as their right to ask.”
3. The show travels throughout the country. One producer commented to an independent research company: “They go outside Dhaka, which is very positive. Going closer to the people helps create public opinion outside Dhaka. From our channels we cannot do that, we have limitations.”

Although there are many challengers, for the time being the BBC’s *Bangladesh Sanglap* remains the “gold standard” of the genre and, through its commitment to editorial impartiality and high production values, maintains the standard by which other programs can be judged.

Political Leaders Become More Responsive and Accepting of the Media’s Legitimate Role in Questioning Public Authorities

Mahfuz Anam has commented: “I think the *Sanglap* process has made the politicians realize that they have to be more respectful. Before they used to say one thing today and another thing tomorrow and get away with it, but now in the *Sanglaps* we have seen people say that is what you said a few months ago; now you have done things differently; how do you account for it? Politicians realize they have to live with it, and as time changes, they will have to submit to the higher power of public will.”

A Replicable Model

The *Bangladesh Sanglap* model is certainly replicable elsewhere. But although the format appears simple, its execution requires careful attention. Five key elements can be identified:

1. Understand that the platform must be neutral. The BBC's reputation for impartiality made it perhaps the only media organization that could have launched an initiative of this type at the outset. Even so, senior politicians raised their eyebrows at such a bold, and in some ways threatening, enterprise. The BBC has had to pay scrupulous attention to maintaining balance on the panels and in the audience.
2. Know that lively debate is not enough. It must be constructive. In a country where some supporters of the two main parties have few qualms about resorting to physical violence, the BBC has taken care to create a forum that tackles the important issues of the day, without inflaming an already tense public-order situation. There is a delicate role to be played by the moderator. Good humor and good manners play their part.
3. Use authentic language. *Bangladesh Sanglap* is a development project that uses the power of media to promote better governance. But we all know that the language used by the development community can occasionally lapse into jargon, which leaves the beneficiaries of projects dumbfounded. This is why it is so important that Bangla-speaking journalists and producers skilled at communicating with mass audiences are in charge of the output on a day-to-day basis.
4. Invest in audience recruitment. This is a participatory program that requires an engaged audience of people who are interested in current affairs and who are prepared to ask questions or raise their hands to make a spontaneous contribution to the debate. The people of Bangladesh are enthusiastic contributors in this respect, but a balanced audience doesn't just turn up. Well-to-do male urbanites are generally the first to phone the audience hot line. So the BBC World Service Trust employs an outreach team that fans out in advance of a *Sanglap* and talks to NGOs, colleges, businesses, and trades unions. As a result, an impressive 51 percent of the audience at the sessions is women. It is often a very young audience, too, with many in their twenties, but this number reflects the population profile: Bangladesh is in every respect a very young country.
5. Invest in audience research. The BBC World Service Trust makes considerable investment in audience research. This investment is not just because it has to account for the public money that funds the project, but because it provides insights that inform the choice of debate topics and the future development of the program.

The BBC World Service Trust discovered, for example, that on certain topics the audience wanted facts presented where facts can be discerned. As a result,

the next series envisages a number of *Bangladesh Sanglap* specials—with documentary-style investigations on governance themes informing special themed discussions. The first have now taken place on the environment and climate change.

But perhaps the biggest surprise from the research is that the broadcast audience primarily views the purpose of the program as providing information. In Dhaka, with its myriad newspapers and satellite TV stations—not to mention millions of mobile phones—it is easy to forget that Bangladesh is still a relatively information-poor society: one-third of rural dwellers have no access to media at all. The *Sanglaps* appear to open a window on the political process, and it has been encouraging to hear that viewers and listeners around the country feel that the live audience in the venue represents their interests and asks the kind of questions that they want asked.

Rural Exposure

Satellite television penetration tends to follow electrification in rural areas. The BBC World Service Trust targeted “media dark” communities in a pilot project involving village-level mass screenings using video vans. Almost 200,000 people attended 120 shows nationwide. The average audience size was more than 1,500—far in excess of the 1,000 expected.⁴

The turnout demonstrated an appetite for this type of programming beyond the main towns and cities. In discussion groups afterwards, many people stated that seeing and hearing the panelists would influence the way they intended to vote. As for developing a culture of accountability, the program helped build an expectation that politicians should expose themselves to public scrutiny. Here are some of the comments that were heard:

“We didn’t know the views of the political parties. Now we know what the four-party alliance or the fourteen-party alliance is saying. When we go to vote, we will remember these.” Female, 29, Ishwardi, Pabna

“Our voters are not aware; that’s why our electoral process doesn’t work soundly. If they are aware through the *Sanglaps*, then the electoral process will work well and the people will elect qualified candidates.” Male, 26, Varamara, Kushtia

“Like the electoral debate in the U.S., *Bangladesh Sanglap* seems to be working in the same way people in the U.S. choose their candidate after watching the debate. In Bangladesh, we can also select candidates by watching *Bangladesh Sanglap*.” Male, 27, Varamara, Kushtia

“We didn’t know that people like me could ask questions like this.” Female, 32, Bheramera, Kustia

“I enjoyed it very much. People resort to violence in elections. If they see this type of program, they will stop this.” Male, 50, Satkania, Chittagong

“We can understand a politician has made a mistake when he tries to escape a question. So this is a way to know the politicians.” Male, 28, Sadar Thana, Pabna

“Village people can realize the true situation of the country. They also come to know about the reason behind price hike or strikes.” Male, 39, Sadar Thana, Pabna

“It’s a contemporary initiative. We did not know many things about the present political situation of the country. Now we know it.” Male, 18, Banskhali, Chittagong

In November 2007, the project went one step further when, as part of the BBC’s most ambitious project yet in Bangladesh, it recorded four *Sanglaps* from rural locations in the south, west, and north of the country. The project joined with other BBC colleagues as part of a month-long season dedicated to highlighting the threat of climate change, chartering a boat to tour the main rivers of Bangladesh, with *Sanglap* recorded on the riverbanks. This project gave rural people most directly affected by environmental issues such as rising sea level and salinity, river erosion, and (in the west) water scarcity the opportunity, often for the first time, to question political leaders in a nationally broadcast forum. Midway through the trip, Cyclone Sidr hit southern Bangladesh with the loss of 3,300 lives (<http://www.redcross.org.uk/news.asp?id=76727>). Programs scheduled for the north and west of the country were hastily reorganized, as the boat headed back south. Nine days after the cyclone, its survivors were able to question directly those involved in the relief operation on national television and radio.

Abul Kalam from Mongla asked why the relief effort was not reaching everyone: “A large number of people are standing in the long queue at the relief centers and waiting for relief from morning to evening. But many of them are returning home at the end of the day without getting any relief.” Others alleged that aid was being distributed unfairly to the supporters of certain political parties.

Panellist Khushi Kabir, coordinator of an NGO called Nijera Kori (“We do it ourselves”) noted: “The audience are people who have lost their homes, their means of livelihoods, their cattle, and members of their family. I think it is extremely important that people get the chance to say what they want, what they need, and explain about how they are trying to survive ... and what exactly is required.”

Notes

1. The BBC World Service Trust is the international development arm of the BBC. It uses the creative power of media to reduce poverty and to promote human rights by inspiring people to build better lives. In the past year, the BBC World Service Trust worked in more than 53 countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America; reached audiences worldwide totaling 119 million people, broadcast in 28 languages; and produced 1,043 hours of governance, education, and health programming.
2. Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index.
3. Some estimates place the population of Bangladesh as high as 160 million.

4. Women's attendance at video van screenings was a considerable challenge. Although the overall numbers of women from the pilot were higher than anticipated, the percentage was low, at 17 percent. Measures were put in place to boost female participation, including a separate viewing area. Discussions that took place after the screenings suggested that men were discouraging women from attending. However, this attitude may be rectified by future screenings in the same area as this revealing exchange from a discussion group in Banskhal, Chittagong, suggests:

Moderator: Why haven't you come with your females?

Md. Salim: We did not understand that this one is a very nice program.

Md. Rashid: The rules of this locality are females who can't go out without the permission of their husbands.

Moderator: OK. But now you know that it's a nice program. Then what will you do for the next time?

Md. Rashid: We are happy with this program. So we will come with females for the next time.

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Public Consultation through Deliberation in China: The First Chinese Deliberative Poll

James S. Fishkin, Baogang He, and Alice Siu

Introduction

Throughout the world, policy makers who wish to consult the public appear to face a persistent dilemma.¹ On the one hand, if they consult mass opinion directly, they will get views that are largely uninformed. Most citizens, most of the time, in most political systems, know little about the details of policy options or public policy. Even in systems with active electoral competition, each citizen can easily conclude that his or her individual opinion is unlikely to make much difference. Anthony Downs coined a term for this phenomenon: “rational ignorance” (Downs 1957). On the other hand, if policy makers do not attempt to consult the mass public directly, but leave it to policy elites and organized interests to speak *for* the people, those elites may have different interests. They may be out of touch with mass concerns. We seem to face a choice forced upon us between politically equal but relatively incompetent masses and politically unequal but relatively more competent elites.

The dilemma is actually worse in that most efforts to consult the public directly encounter difficulties over the issue of *which* members of the public are consulted: how are they selected? If one just invites the public to open town hall meetings, the appearance of mass participation may belie practices in which organized interests actually dominate. Organization is an unequally distributed resource, and open forums can be captured through efforts at mobilization. Moreover, if one conducts scientific polling through random sampling, then it is possible to get the views of a representative sample of the entire population. However, the views solicited will be uninformed or even

“non-attitudes.” (If, for example, the public has not thought about a question at all, they may somewhat randomly pick an answer rather than admit that they “don’t know.”)

The research program “Deliberative Polling”—explored in detail in Chapter 18—is intended to respond to this dilemma. It achieves both political equality and deliberation at the same time. By employing random sampling of the mass public, it counts everyone’s views equally, but by providing good conditions to motivate ordinary citizens to become informed, it overcomes the problem of rational ignorance. Of course, everything depends on what we mean by “good conditions,” and questions about the success or failure of this initiative turn on the empirical evidence about what actually happens when citizens deliberate.

Thus far, Deliberative Polling has been conducted mostly in established Western democracies ranging from the United States, Britain, and Canada to Denmark and Australia. One Deliberative Poll (DP) has been conducted in Bulgaria, and another took place in Hungary. (For an overview, see <http://cdd.stanford.edu>.) The range of countries and policy contexts in which these DPs have been conducted has been expanding, but there is one notable omission. There has not yet been a case in which a government, rather than a private organization or television network, has conducted the DP itself and then gone on to implement its conclusions in actual policy. In the context of electric utilities regulation, a number of companies in Texas and elsewhere have conducted DPs about how to provide electricity, and those recommendations have been implemented. But those DPs were conducted by profit-seeking private companies, not by the government.²

The DP described here, which took place in the town of Zeguo, Wenling City, Zhejiang Province, China, in 2005, is the first that was, to our knowledge, conducted by a government itself and then actually implemented as public policy. We believe it is the first case in modern times of fully representative and deliberative participatory budgeting. It harkens back to a form of democracy quite different from modern Western-style party competition—ancient Athens. In Athens, deliberative microcosms chosen by lot would make important public decisions as part of the official operations of the government. But this solution to the dilemma of public consultation was lost in the dustbin of history. Random sampling was revived by opinion polling in the twentieth century. (What is a random sample, at bottom, but a lottery?) With opinion polls, however, the people randomly selected do not deliberate and become more informed. Hence, we think that the experiment described here is notable in the context of the long history of democratic reforms in that it shows how governments—without party competition or the conventional institutions of representative democracy as practiced in the West—can nevertheless realize, to a high degree, two fundamental democratic values at the same time: political equality and deliberation. If the effort is successful, then local democratic

efforts can achieve responsiveness to informed and thoughtful public opinion. There is a way out of the dilemma, a path suggestive of ancient Athens, but one that has now surfaced in China. Indeed, the Chinese case shows an advance over all previous efforts of public consultation precisely because this consultation produced actual and direct policy impact.

Background

In recent years, consultative and deliberative institutions have been developing in China, and an increasing number of public hearings have provided people with opportunities to express their opinions on a wide range of issues. In the middle and latter 1990s, some villages developed meetings in which major decisions on village affairs were discussed, debated, and deliberated on by village representatives. This local public hearing system has spread into urban residential communities. In the Shangcheng district of Hangzhou City, for example, a consensus conference or consultation meeting is held regularly once a month. Such a practice has also developed at the national level. In 1996, the first national law on administrative punishment—a law that regulates the imposition of fines—introduced an article on holding public hearings before punishments are imposed. Article 23 of the Law on Price passed by China's National Congress in December 1997 specified that the price of public goods must be decided through public hearings. The Law on the Legislature, passed in 2000, followed Article 23 and required public hearings as an integral part of the decision making on all legal regulations and laws in China. More than 50 cities have now held legislative public hearings. However, public hearings, despite offering some measure of public consultation, have inherent problems: they are vague in their procedural requirements, are easily subject to manipulation, have greatly unequal participation, offer insufficient time for deliberation, and lack scientific guarantees of representativeness or any means of producing clearly defined conclusions.³

Wenling City, in particular, is well known for inaugurating deliberative meetings. It is a county-level city with a vibrant private economy. In some townships in Wenling, private tax contributions constitute more than 70 percent of the local budget. In 2004, it was awarded the national prize for Innovations and Excellence in Local Chinese Governance. From 1996 to 2000, more than 1,190 deliberative and consultative meetings were held at the village level; 190 at the township level; and 150 in governmental organizations, schools, and business sectors. Such meetings are called *kentan*, meaning “sincere heart-to-heart discussion” (He 2003).

Wenling has achieved a great deal in developing such deliberative institutions, but these efforts are far from representative because they are based on self-selected participation. And other deficiencies remain. Deliberation takes place in a political system in which there are inherent dangers of elite manipulation

of the public dialogue and mobilization of the participants chosen by officials. The design of Deliberative Polling, with random sampling and balanced briefing materials, addresses all of these difficulties in a transparent way.

The Deliberative Polling project in Zeguo allowed a scientific sample of average citizens to deliberate about which infrastructure projects would be funded in the coming year. It is the first example of what we hope will be a broader research program applying Deliberative Polling in a Chinese context. A DP could be evaluated in various ways. It is many things at once—a social science investigation, a public policy consultation, and a public discussion in its own right. In this case, we think that some reasonable desiderata are that (1) the sample is representative, (2) there are significant changes in opinions, (3) the sample becomes more informed, and (4) the views of this representative and informed sample should be viewed as a credible input to policy making.

Origin, Preparation, and Sampling

Background on Zeguo

Zeguo has an area of 63.12 square kilometers; the central area is 6.5 square kilometers. It has jurisdiction over 97 villages. The permanent local population is 119,200, and the floating (migrant) population is 120,000. Zeguo's industry has been developing rapidly. Currently, the four major industries are shoe making, water pump, air compressor, and new building materials manufacturing. In 2004, the total value of its industrial and agricultural output was 13.40 billion yuan (\$1.7 billion), with 13.18 billion yuan (\$1.6 billion) alone from these four industries, which paid annual taxes of 321 million yuan (\$40 million) in 2004, an increase of 33.7 percent compared to the previous year. The average annual net income of farmers is 8,255 yuan (\$1,000). Zeguo was recently listed as 145th of the top 20,000 national towns according to a multiple development index. It also placed 30th of the top 100 towns with multiple strengths in Zhejiang Province.

It should be noted that outsiders did not impose the DP experiment on Zeguo. The authors of this study provided only technical advice.⁴ It was the natural product of the political process in Zeguo, where the local government needed deliberative and consultative meetings to reduce conflicts of interest, reduce any perception of corruption in selecting priorities for budgetary projects, and to provide a channel for citizens and interest groups to express their concerns. We believe these factors are replicable in other townships and cities in China with similar concerns.

Preparation and Sampling

A working committee and an expert committee that were formed in December 2004 undertook the launch of Deliberative Polling in Zeguo. The working committee included Deputy Party Secretary Dai Kangnian of Wenling, Officer

Chen Yiming, Party Secretary Jiang Zhaohua of Zeguo, and Deputy Party Secretary Wang Xiaoyu of Zeguo, who took care of the logistics and acted as the sample's liaison. The working committee organized the expert committee, which carried out a preliminary study of the development projects and wrote feasibility reports for all of the projects. Briefing information about each project was prepared by the working committee and provided to the participants in March 2005. Professors James Fishkin and Baogang He helped local officials prepare the questionnaires and briefing materials, ensured these materials were balanced and accessible, and made sure they contained arguments for and against each project. Fishkin and He tested and revised the questionnaire through a number of interviews in March 2005.

Of the entire Zeguo population, 275 people were randomly selected to participate in this DP. Random sampling of the population is designed to create a diverse and representative microcosm including not only those citizens who are already active in politics, but also those who are disengaged. Of the 275 people drawn in the initial sample, 269 completed the initial questionnaire. A total of 257 participants showed up on the day of deliberations, and 235 completed the experiment (completed a questionnaire both before and after deliberation).⁵ There are not many statistically significant differences between the participants and the entire sample from which they were drawn (see table CS9.1), and any differences tend to be small. Given the high response rate of the initial sample and the high attendance rate from those who completed the questionnaire, the wide breadth of representation should not be surprising.

In one day, participants discussed how to spend the annual budget, examined their preferences among the projects, considered advantages and disadvantages of each project, and, at the end of the day, responded to the same questionnaire as they had taken at the beginning that asked them to rank their project priorities. Some of the projects considered included new bridges, roads, a new school, and city gardens. In total, the projects would cost 136 million yuan (\$17 million). Because of a change in government policy in 2005, only an estimated 40 million yuan (\$5 million) could be expended on urban planning and environmental and infrastructure construction. Thus, the local government had to prioritize their menu of projects. The Zeguo leadership adopted the Deliberative Polling technique to decide this difficult budget issue. In light of budget constraints, the participants were asked to examine carefully 30 projects, to discuss their merits, and to identify key questions that they wished to ask of competing experts in plenary sessions. As in other DPs, the proceedings alternated small group discussions and plenary sessions in which the questions from the small groups were answered from competing perspectives. At the end of the day, respondents completed a questionnaire about the 30 projects, as well as information relevant to them.

This process provided a before-and-after comparison for the same sample. In March, the participants had completed a survey before they were given any

Table CS91. Demographics of Sample

Question Number	Entire Sample (%)	Participants (%)	Nonparticipants (%)
1. Gender			
Male	70.1	66.2	80.0
Female	29.9	33.8	19.2
2. Marital status			
Married	94.0	92.9	92.0
Single	6.0	5.7	8.0
3. Education			
Illiterate	10.3	11.6	0.0
Primary school	30.2	32.4	11.1
Secondary school	35.1	35.2	33.3
High school	12.4	9.7	33.3
College for professional training	4.5	4.6	3.7
University	0.8	0.5	3.7
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0
4. Occupation			
Farmer	60.0	62.8	21.7
Worker	3.9	3.7	4.3
Entrepreneur (business owner)	21.0	16.5	52.2
Merchant	8.3	7.4	73.0
Teacher	2.0	1.6	4.3
Public servant	1.5	1.6	4.3
Other	3.4	3.7	0.0

Source: Authors.

Note: Participants were randomly selected individuals who participated in the event, and nonparticipants were randomly selected individuals who did not participate in the event. Average age was 45.2 years for the entire sample, 46.0 years for participants, and 37.8 years for nonparticipants. There was no significant difference between participants who completed before and after surveys and participants who completed only before surveys, p -value = .394.

information and before they had an opportunity to deliberate. On the day of deliberation (in April), the participants were given both information and a chance to deliberate. Afterward, they completed the same questionnaire again.

To facilitate deliberation, the 257 participants were divided randomly into 16 discussion groups; each group had its own trained moderator. The 16 moderators were teachers selected from Zeguo Number Two High School and were trained by Fishkin and He in March and April.

Results of Deliberative Polling: Policy Evaluation

The process of Deliberative Polling is intended to represent what the public would think if it had a chance to become more informed. The participants rated 30 projects on a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is unimportant and 10 is very

important. After deliberation, these rankings changed significantly in many key cases. Among the highest-rated projects, support increased significantly for three sewage treatment plants (projects ranked 1, 4, and 5; see table CS9.2), for producing a plan for the overall city design (ranked 2), for one of the principal roads (the Wenchang Main Avenue, ranked 3), and for the Citizens' Park (ranked 6). Overall, the top 10 projects showed considerable concern for environmental issues (sewage), lifestyle (parks), and the economic development

Table CS9.2. Policy Changes

Rank	Project	Before Mean	After Mean
1	Treatment of sewage (early stages)	8.916	9.713 ^a
2	Urban and countryside environmental projects	8.642	9.239 ^a
3	Wenchang Main Avenue	8.253	9.238 ^a
4	Danyan environmental project (sewage disposal)	7.531	9.145 ^a
5	Muyu environmental project (sewage disposal)	7.269	8.866 ^a
6	Citizens' Park (first stage)	6.963	7.440 ^a
7	Urban environmental construction	7.551	7.314
8	Danyan Hill Park	7.612	7.231
9	Muyu Hill Park	7.212	7.042
10	Auxiliary environmental construction for Muyu industrial zone, Lianshu industrial zone, Shichan industrial zone	6.667	6.895
11	Bridge	7.423	6.531 ^a
12	Demonstrative Street	6.746	6.491
13	Xicheng Road (first stage)	6.259	6.296
14	Shuangchen Road	6.973	6.118 ^a
15	Zeguo Main Avenue (second stage)	5.827	5.972
16	Guojianling hillside reconstruction	5.604	5.953
17	Reconstruction of Donghe Road	7.140	5.828 ^a
18	Old Street reconstruction	6.369	5.577
19	Muchang Main Road (first stage)	5.530	5.543 ^a
20	Donghe Main Avenue	5.633	5.327
21	Chengqu Road rebuilding	5.680	5.196
22	Air compressor industrial zone	5.629	5.062
23	Dongcheng Road	5.433	5.100
24	Fuxin Road	5.781	5.052 ^a
25	Wenchang Park (first stage)	5.927	5.046 ^a
26	Tengquao Road	5.023	4.733
27	Dongcheng Road (second stage)	5.606	4.586 ^a
28	Shuangchen Road (second stage)	6.000	4.656 ^a
29	Zeguo Main Avenue (third stage)	4.667	4.591
30	Wenchang Park (second stage)	5.184	3.500 ^a

Source: Authors.

Note: Means are from participants who completed before-and-after surveys.

a. Statistically significant changes.

that would be stimulated by the Wenchang Main Avenue project. Support for a number of other projects, including a number of roads and one park, went down significantly.

The two factors that participants cited as most important in evaluating the projects were “protecting the environment,” reaching a mean of 9.64 on a 0 to 10 scale (where 0 is unimportant and 10 is very important), and economic development, reaching a mean of 9.08 on the same 10-point scale.

Knowledge

In addition to their opinions on policy choices, the participants were asked questions about Zeguo and its economic situation to assess their knowledge of general issues (table CS9.3). The four knowledge questions showed an average increase of 6.7 percent between the two times participants took the survey. The questions assessed knowledge of local policy by asking about the percentage of revenue increase, size of the floating population, major products produced in the town, and number of current parks in the township. One of the questions, which asked which product was *not* produced in Zeguo, seems to have confused respondents. If that question is excluded, the average increase in knowledge is 8.9 percent.

Evaluation of the Process

Jiang Zhaohua, Zeguo’s party secretary, expressed great enthusiasm for the process and the results as compared with all previous deliberative meetings. The methods are sophisticated and dealt with the most difficult issue of all, budgeting. He also admitted that “although I gave up some final decision-making

Table CS9.3. Information Gains

Question	Before Deliberation (% Correct)	After Deliberation (% Correct)	Amount of Change
43. By how much did Zeguo township's revenue increase from 2003 to 2004? ^a	20.8	29.0	+8.2
44. What is the figure for the floating population in Zeguo township? ^a	39.4	47.2	+7.8
45. Which of the below is not a major product of Zeguo township?	43.1	43.5	+0.4
46. At the moment, how many parks does Zeguo have? ^a	22.3	32.7	+10.4

Source: Authors.

Note: In analyzing knowledge questions, “don’t know” responses and missing data are coded as 0.

a. Statistically significant changes.

power, we gain more power back because the process has increased the legitimacy for the choice of priority projects and has created public transparency in the public policy decision-making process. Public policy is, therefore, more easily implemented” (personal communication, 2005).

Ye Qiquan, the mayor of Zeguo, who was opposed to the Deliberative Polling experiment in the beginning, realized its benefits. He identified three major changes among the participants: from little to more complete understanding of the 30 projects, from passive to active citizenship in the sense that the citizens started to think about how to save money to do more projects, and from a partisan to a community perspective.

The participants greatly appreciated the process of participating in the daylong deliberations. When asked a series of questions on a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 indicated it was “generally a waste of time” and 10 indicated that it was “extremely valuable,” the participants gave the small group discussions an average rating of 8.46. The large group sessions with experts gave an average rating of 8.82, and the entire day of deliberations had an average rating of 8.66. They also thought the process considered their views very equally. On a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is very equal and 5 is very unequal, the average answer for whether the “small group moderator provide[d] everyone with an equal opportunity for discussion” was 1.47. The average for whether the group members were, in fact, equal in the discussion was 1.3. On whether their small group moderator attempted to influence the process with his or her own views, the participants’ responses averaged 3.73, where 4 meant that the moderator made no attempt at all to influence participants’ views.

Discussion

Indigenous Aspects of the Experiment

The Chinese experiment combined Chinese indigenous deliberative methods with Deliberative Polling as developed by Fishkin and his colleagues. Local Chinese indigenous deliberative methods are characterized as follows. First, the experiment drew on the traditional heart-to-heart talk form, even to the extent that the deliberative experiment was given a title with local flavor—a “democratic heart-to-heart talk.” Second, the high level of participation was extremely impressive. Officials called for wide participation through official channels such as newspapers and notice boards, and they provided a free bus pass, a free lunch, and a token remuneration of 50 yuan (\$6) for each participant to attract more people to attend.⁶ Third, reflecting Chinese political culture, those who were randomly selected felt that they ought to participate in the deliberations to represent their villages. Fourth, even the schedule of the deliberations reflected elements of a Chinese lifestyle in that the deliberations had a short morning session so that the participants could have their lunch at the traditional time of 11:30.

Progress and Improvement

Deliberative Polling represents an advance over the methods of previous public consultations in Wenling in the following ways. First, in the past, wide representation was thought to occur at town meetings if a variety of local elites, such as people's deputies, village committee members, and village representatives, were present. All were elected by local villagers and residents, and there would appear to have been a degree of electoral representation. The participants in these previous deliberative meetings, however, were either selected by governmental officials or were self-appointed with strong partisan interests. The representative nature of the participants was questionable and, additionally, might be viewed as subject to official manipulation. Deliberative Polling adopts random selection, overcoming perceptions of manipulation and enabling representation for the whole community to occur on a scientific basis. In addition, random sampling insulates the process from possibilities of capture by mobilized groups.

Party Secretary Jiang Zhaohua commented that "the random selection method has a wide popular basis and is much more representative than the method we used before." Because the sampling was random, roughly 9 percent of the sample was illiterate. In the past, people who are illiterate would not have been selected. They would have been automatically disqualified because, in the official opinion, "they even don't know how to speak." In Deliberative Polling, the illiterate participants were given the same opportunity to express their views. One even criticized certain local policies harshly in a plenary session. Indeed, as Jiang Zhaohua acknowledged, an open democratic process enables illiterate participants to be as cultivated as modern citizens.

Second, past deliberative meetings did not provide sufficient information. Zegu's 2005 DP had a team of 12 experts working on the briefing materials. Fishkin and He helped them revise the briefing materials so that they were well balanced and accessible, and so that they clearly expressed pros and cons for each project. The experiment revealed that the availability of information (or lack thereof) plays a role in changing people's opinions. The briefing documents improved the participant's knowledge of the 30 projects and assisted them in making informed choices.

Third, in the past officials often used anecdotal evidence to laud the achievements of deliberative meetings, but they lacked a scientific basis. This DP required participants to complete the same questionnaire twice: once before the deliberations and once afterward. Comparing the results generates a set of statistical figures about the impact of deliberation on the participants' preferences. This scientific method was felt by local officials to be valuable in making public policy. Jiang Zhaohua admitted that his personal choice of projects was based on what he thought "the people" wanted, but that the people from whom he gleaned this impression were, in fact, close to local government. These projects were not at the top of the list of the DP results. In contrast, the

top 12 projects selected by the DP were strongly supported by empirical evidence reflecting the representative and informed views of the community.

Fourth, township consultative meetings in the past would bring together 100–200 people for two hours, leaving little time for adequate discussion and deliberation. This trade-off between the higher number of the participants and the lower quality of deliberation is well addressed by Deliberative Polling. Alternating small meetings and plenary sessions allows the benefits of small group interaction to be spread over a large number of participants. At the same time, it allows for the information thought essential in the group meetings to be shared across the entire sample.

Fifth, previously, officials chaired deliberative meetings. During the DP experiment, schoolteachers were selected as moderators. They were trained and advised to ensure an equal opportunity for discussion by each participant and to prevent domination of the discussions by a few. The experiment was intended to create a counterfactual environment in which the participants could interact in an atmosphere of significant equality and come to conclusions on the basis of good information. In the small groups, the participants had sufficient time to focus on the pros and cons of each project and to identify key concerns or questions that they then brought to the plenary sessions where they were posed to competing experts. Each participant was asked to fill out the questionnaire privately without being subject to social pressure. Of course, it is not possible to completely insulate the process from all the inequalities of life. The participants knew who many of their fellow citizens were. Some were more educated, more prosperous, or more forceful in the discussions. But the job of the moderator was to facilitate, as far as possible, an atmosphere of substantial equality and mutual respect for all points of view. The participant ratings suggest that the moderators were generally successful.

Sixth, the empowerment of citizens was substantial and unique. In the public hearings on the adjustment of the price for transportation, for example, ordinary citizens are essentially powerless in the face of the agency for public transportation, which has vested interests. Citizens can express their voice and deliberate on the proposed prices, but, in the end, the agency raises prices as it sees fit. In the Zeguo experiment, by contrast, most officials were sitting outside the classrooms, and they were not allowed to speak to influence the choices of the citizens participating. Ultimately, Zeguo's People's Congress endorsed the final choices of the sample of citizens as an official policy. Citizens were empowered through an open and transparent democratic mechanism. Moreover, the experiment contributed to a construction of social capital and mutual trust between the local government and citizens.

Deliberative Participatory Budgeting

Budgeting has traditionally been the privilege of Chinese leaders who consult only with experts. To alter this Chinese tradition of a bureaucratically dominated

budgeting process, the Zeguo experiment introduced what we might call “deliberative participatory budgeting.”

The concept of deliberative participatory budgeting has been well developed in other parts of the world, for example, in the city of Porto Alegre in Brazil (Nylen 2002). These efforts, however, are not nearly as sophisticated as the Deliberative Polling method. In other deliberative participatory budgeting processes, the participants are either self-selected or mobilized by organized interests. The Zeguo experiment can be viewed as an effort at deliberative participatory budgeting that satisfies the two fundamental criteria of political equality (through random sampling and equal consideration of opinions) and deliberation (through a balanced and informative process of discussion). Because local government has actually implemented its results, it offers a unique first case, and one that has prospects for replication in a Chinese context.

Conclusion

The uniqueness of the Zeguo experiment is evidenced in the close linkage between the results of a sample of citizens deliberating and the policy-making process. The results were presented to Zeguo’s People’s Congress on April 30, 2005, for further debate and deliberation. In the final analysis, a majority of the people’s deputies voted for the DP’s top 12 projects. The Zeguo town government has now implemented this decision. The Zeguo experiment represents a systematic public decision-making mechanism that consists of expert feasibility studies, public participation through Deliberative Polling, government consultation, and a final decision made by Zeguo’s People’s Congress.

In light of the four desiderata mentioned at the outset, we believe this initial Chinese effort was successful. First, a highly representative sample was recruited for participation. Second, many of the opinion changes were statistically significant and showed a coherent movement, especially in favor of environmental concerns. Third, the participants became significantly more informed. Fourth, the results were obviously regarded as a credible basis for policy making given the fact that the local People’s Congress implemented them.

We believe this initial experiment offers real prospects for further democratic consultation in China. The procedures are clearly defined, easily learned, and capable of being implemented. Hence, the process could be spread to other municipalities and to cities beyond the township level. Some large cities in China, such as Hangzhou, have developed a public policy evaluation process involving more than 10,000 questionnaires sent to urban residents. Such methods have a high cost even though the quality of evaluation is low; urban residents do not have sufficient information about many of the government departments they are required to evaluate. Deliberative Polling can overcome both these problems. A DP on the scale of the one conducted in Zeguo (about 250 participants) would be large enough to produce statistically significant

results and could also represent the population's informed opinions. Compared to the large-scale surveys now being conducted, it would be reasonable in cost. Indeed, it becomes more cost-effective for larger populations, as there is no need for larger samples to represent larger populations.

Deliberative Polling techniques applied directly to public policy options seem to have a broad appeal as a form of democratic consultation (and it does not require party competition, threatening the one-party state). Ogden (2002: 257) has noted the importance of consultative and deliberative institutions for Chinese democratization, as have many contributors to this volume. Deliberative Polling offers a promising contribution to such democratization. In spreading Deliberative Polling techniques, however, there are several obstacles to be overcome. First, the cost is an issue for some venues. Zeguo spent around 100,000 yuan (\$12,000), and it is capable of affording this price. But for poor areas, such an amount of money will be a heavy burden on local people. In addition, the workload is heavy. Given the cost and workload, it is likely that Deliberative Polling techniques will be used only to deal with the most important issues, such as budgeting for infrastructure, environmental issues, and welfare.

Further, local practitioners tend to use simplified and informal methods, and a tendency to seek shortcuts can become a real problem. For example, at the beginning of the Zeguo Deliberative Polling experiment, some local officials wanted to muddle through, skipping over some procedures, and cutting short the deliberation time. They were surprised to learn that Fishkin and He insisted on a careful and conscientious approach to each detail in every step of the process.

Ultimately, local practitioners need to be trained to apply new methods. At the same time, however, it is expected that local practitioners will find ways to localize Deliberative Polling techniques. It is imaginable that local practitioners will discover which elements of the procedure are indispensable and which can be omitted if permitted. Over time, they may adapt some procedures of Deliberative Polling to meet their local needs.

Also, an unequal power structure is a great hindrance to the spread of deliberative democracy. One way to deal with this hindrance is to focus on a set of procedures and methods. Deliberative Polling methods carry with them some deep democratic values. Each element of the Deliberative Polling project is designed to ensure equality and fairness while reducing arbitrary intervention and influence. The process ensures the transparency of decision making, rebutting suspicions of corruption. In addition, the neutrality of moderators ensures an equal opportunity for each participant. The random selection method implies a statistical equality for everyone in the community; villagers were surprised to learn of this very fair and corruption-free process. They commented on "how serious and fair the selection process is this time!" Moreover, those who were randomly selected felt it to be an honor to participate in the event and possibly have an influence on budget decisions.

Deliberative Polling does not change the political structure, of course, but it points to a method of achieving core democratic values (political equality and deliberation) without any need for Western-style party competition. And if the process spreads, it may have further effects on political culture, effects that could facilitate additional democratic reforms over the long term. In short, the practice of deliberative methods and procedures may contribute to a culture in which people are accustomed to representative and informed public consultation. They may, one hopes, become accustomed to the notion that their voice matters.

Currently, the Beijing leadership fears the negative effects of competitive elections, and there are many restrictions imposed on direct town elections (let alone national general elections). In this context, Deliberative Polling techniques offer a strategy of substantive democratization conceived as a reform of the public hearing system. Deliberative Polling fits with what the central government calls the “scientific, democratic, and legal” decision making or capacity of ruling: the use of random sampling and the quantitative study of opinion change are scientific, the public consultation process and the citizen’s choices are democratic, and the results of Deliberative Polling submitted to the local People’s Congress, as in Zeguo, provide a basis for legality.

By setting an example for deliberative participatory budgeting at the local level, the Zeguo experiment offers a replicable path to realizing both political equality and deliberation in actual decisions at the local level. The experiment offers a precedent both for other efforts in participatory budgeting and for other efforts to achieve fundamental democratic values in substantive policy making without any need to realize party competition.

Of course, from the standpoint of a fully developed democratic system, party competition would be highly desirable. However, democratic reform at the local level in China can be usefully promoted, in both its culture and practice, through the application and revival of this ancient form of democracy: deliberative decision making by a microcosm chosen through lottery.⁷

Notes

1. The authors thank Professor Robert C. Luskin for his extraordinarily useful advice on the questionnaire and on many other aspects of this project.
2. See <http://cdd.stanford.edu> for the section on renewable energy and <http://www.ida.org.au/>. In Australia, a Deliberative Polling partner, Issues Deliberation Australia, has conducted DPs that provided important input to constitutional reform efforts, but these projects were conducted by a nonprofit organization and not by the government itself once again.
3. In July 2005, our organization organized a workshop on the public hearing system in Beijing. Approximately 60 people attended to discuss the prospects of improving the public hearing system in China through Deliberative Polling.
4. The project originated at the International Conference on Deliberative Democracy and Chinese Participatory and Deliberative Institutions in Hangzhou, November 18–21, 2004, which was organized by Baogang He and Chen Shengyong. During this

conference, James Fishkin and Baogang He went to Wenling to make detailed arrangements for the DP.

5. Some of the 257 were not included in the analysis because in some cases, one member of a household sent another family member or friend to participate instead. We were not able to catch all such cases at registration; hence, a few had to be dropped from the sample after the event.
6. One departure from Deliberative Polling as it has been practiced elsewhere is that although the Chinese randomly selected households, they allowed the households to select which adult member of the household would participate in the DP. This selection resulted in a significant underrepresentation of women, only 29.9 percent of the participant sample. We are recommending to our collaborators in Zeguo that next time they follow the process we have used elsewhere: random selection of households and random selection of the adult member of the household.
7. Since 2005, two DPs have been conducted in Zeguo Township. In the most recent DP, on February 20, 2008, the government released the township's entire 2008 proposed budget to the DP participants. For one entire day, 175 randomly selected participants from Zeguo Township deliberated the importance of various funding items and whether to increase, maintain, or decrease them. In addition, more than 60 representatives from the local People's Congress observed the event. A week later, the results for this DP were presented to the local People's Congress, where the proposed budget was revised in response to the DP results. Further information on this DP will be posted on the Center for Deliberative Democracy Web site (<http://cdd.stanford.edu>).

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Appendix



Approaches and Techniques

Introduction

This chapter summarizes approaches and techniques that are for governance reform and were raised during presentations and discussion during the May 2006 dialogue that became the basis for this book. The chapter is divided into six sections following the structure employed in both the dialogue and the book:

1. How do we use political analysis to guide communication strategy in governance reform?
2. How do we secure political will—demonstrated by broad leadership support for change? What are the best methods for reaching out to political leaders, policy makers, and legislators?
3. How do we gain the support of public sector middle managers who are often the strongest opponents of change and who foster among them a stronger culture of public service?
4. How do we build broad coalitions of pro-change influentials? What do we do about powerful vested interests?
5. How do we help reformers transform indifferent, or even hostile, public opinion into support for reform objectives?
6. How do we instigate citizen demand for good governance and accountability so we can sustain governance reform?

Approaches refer to broadly stated themes or orientations that can be used to focus aims and guide practice. These are general ways of addressing an issue or problem. Techniques refer to specific practices including planning, research, and communication practices. Each comprises particular methods for accomplishing a desired objective.

Session One: How Do We Use Political Analysis to Guide Communication Strategy in Governance Reform?

The first session was tasked to discuss the use of political analysis in guiding communication strategies in the area of governance reform. The session featured theoretical approaches to analyzing stakeholder participation, dialogic communication, and the public sphere, as well as practical findings from projects in a developing-country context. Analysis and discussion addressing this topic clustered around the following themes:

- Political analyses require in-depth understanding of country and community contexts to tease out factors holding back reform.
- Being a multidimensional endeavor, political analyses should include civil society, government, and private sector actors from various institutional levels and should be ongoing endeavors throughout project cycles. These analyses should cover institutional arrangements, rules of the game, and power relations.
- Political analyses should aid in the crafting of communication strategies that build constituencies of reform. These constituencies should be selected according to their potential for becoming reform proponents and demanders for accountability, answerability, and good governance.
- Interactions between horizontal (dialogic) and vertical (monologic) dimensions can be instructive for sequencing reform initiatives.
- Political analyses can be carried out in different gradations of specificity—from in-depth individual narratives to macro country-level indicators.

Approaches

Enhance stakeholder empowerment through dialogic participation. Dialogic participation's primary objective is the empowerment of grassroots stakeholders in engaging the policy-making process. This approach can be implemented by using a subset of the following techniques: multistakeholder analysis, journalistic interviews, assessment of participatory culture, narrative formats to tell reform stories, and training programs geared toward engaging authorities.

This approach can be implemented through the techniques of carrying out political analysis for engaging citizen voice and training local stakeholders to engage authorities effectively.

Build support through monologic persuasion. This essentially top-down approach toward reform is viewed as necessary in building support for a change initiative crafted by technical experts. Monologic persuasion requires that social psychological mechanisms of opinion, attitude, and behavior change be harnessed toward the diffusion and adoption of a reform initiative. In this vein, political analysis assists the reformer in charting paths of influence through which a reform will wend its way within and among segments of a target population.

This approach can be implemented through a combination of techniques such as multilevel stakeholder analysis and narrative formats used to tell reform stories.

Legitimate authority for change. The principle underpinning this approach promotes the view that authority gains legitimacy when citizens believe that their voices are heard by elites and count in the decision-making processes of governance. Political analysis guides this approach by mapping out relationships among various groups, especially between government and civil society, and by identifying communicative interactions among stakeholders that lead to broad-based support for reform.

This approach is associated with the techniques of multilevel stakeholder analysis, communication report cards, and training programs geared toward engaging authorities.

Conduct journalistic appraisals of interest groups. This approach demands that reform agents take seriously the views of individual stakeholders from various interest groups. In particular, individuals from various interest groups need to be treated as key informants in the reform process. Political analysis should guide selection of groups and individuals to be interviewed, and information gathered from these interviews should guide all stages of the reform effort.

This approach can be implemented by using interviews that incorporate a combination of closed-and open-ended questions, with emphasis on the latter. It would be helpful to select interviewees on the basis of an initial multilevel stakeholder analysis.

Assess the place of participation in cultures. Grassroots participation may be desired as a comprehensive component of a reform initiative or may be limited to particular stages of the change process. The cultures of societies and communities vary widely with regard to the open participation of particular population segments in policy decision-making forums. Sensitivity to these differences will help reformers in terms of sequencing which groups should be involved at what stages, as well as the ways in which participation can help or hinder the reform process. Taking stock of trade-offs between participation and efficiency is an essential element of this approach.

This approach can be implemented by using the following techniques: multilevel stakeholder analysis, communication report cards, journalistic interviews, and training of local stakeholders to effectively engage authorities.

Techniques

Carry out political analysis for engaging citizen voice. The type of political analysis needed in support of this approach revolves around mapping political and social relationships among various levels of governance and assessing the participatory capacity of local communities, particularly in terms of engaging local and national elites in policy-making processes.

This can be accomplished through a phased process, including analyzing sociopolitical environments, mapping policy and stakeholder networks, and making communication-based assessments.

Perform multilevel stakeholder analysis. Mapping out various stakeholder groups and key individuals involves drawing linkages among them to improve understanding and generating insights regarding the political, social, and cultural landscape in which reform processes play out. Particular care needs to be taken in assessing relative power relationships among groups and individuals because these assessments provide opportunities and constraints to reform agents in moving a reform agenda forward.

Map the public sphere. The public sphere is a complex set of interlocking processes involving citizen conversation, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), newspapers, magazines, radio, television, unions, public opinion organizations, and more, as well as political representatives who must both listen and provide information. All these elements must play their role if the public sphere is to serve effective and transparent governance. Mapping these players can improve understanding of the flows of information and opinion.

Conduct journalistic interviews. Key informants from various stakeholder groups will be asked open-ended questions regarding proposed reforms and issues related to reform objectives. These interviewees will come from a broad sample of interest groups and will be asked to represent their own point of view, as well as that of the larger groups to which they belong.

Use narrative communication formats. Situating reform efforts in the larger cultural environments requires modes of communication that can capture the depth and breadth of human experience. For this, reform narratives should be created and presented through theater and film productions as well as short story formats.

Train local stakeholders to engage authorities effectively. It is imperative that individuals and organizations on the ground be equipped to engage people of authority at the local, state, and national levels. Training programs should include modules in leadership, negotiation, and understanding governance structures.

Session Two: How Do We Secure Political Will—Demonstrated by Broad Leadership Support for Change? What Are the Best Methods for Reaching Out to Political Leaders, Policy Makers, and Legislators?

Session Two focused on securing political will demonstrated by broad leadership support for change. More specifically, the session's goal was to draw out the best methods for reaching out to political leaders, policy makers, and legislators in the reform process. The importance of cultivating broader support from mass publics was also discussed.

The following points were raised during the plenary discussion following the presentations: First, although self-interest of leaders and other informal decision makers plays a large part in cultivating political will, a place at the table should be reserved for altruism and the desire to do good for its own sake. Second, political will can be sustained by way of accountability mechanisms that anchor performance evaluation on specific reform targets. Third, a distinction must be made between political will exercised within the rules of the game (such as liberal democracy) and political will employed in the pursuit of totalitarian designs. Fourth, participatory dialogic approaches are oftentimes imagined to bring about warm and friendly outcomes, but theories of dialogue do not presume like purposes among interlocutors. Contention arising from such encounters could lead to fragmentation and dissipation of political will. Fifth, reformers should find ways in which diasporas, who perceive the home country from a distance, can provide information regarding the country's standing in the world. Reformers can use this information and invoke international norms in support of reforms. Last, political will should be seen as an outcome of, and not a mere input to, coalitions.

Approaches

Open up spaces for reform. Spaces for reform are found in the intersection of three factors: the acceptance of the reform by interest group leaders, the ability of middle managers to carry out the reform's prescriptions, and the wielding of sufficient authority by these managers to bring about change. When these three factors overlap, then the likelihood of a successful reform effort increases.

Techniques associated with this approach include generating broad acceptance among leaders of reform objectives, ensuring that middle managers have the ability to carry out reform, and ensuring that organizational structures provide authority to reformers.

Establish interpersonal linkages among reform-minded leaders. This approach prescribes that reform-minded leaders be linked to each other through "connectors," people whose social networks span what may be disparate communities of practice. According to a belief that these leaders will be willing to risk political and social capital if they know they will not be alone in supporting change, it is imperative to establish linkages among them throughout the reform process to sustain leadership support. It is possible that the connector role will be played by various individuals at different stages of the reform effort.

This approach can be implemented through the techniques of gaining the support of reform champions and connectors and ensuring that organizational structures provide authority to reformers.

Harness public will to generate political will. Clearly, differentiating public will from political will is essential in harnessing the former in support of the latter. Cultivating public will through agenda-building processes and raising issue salience will enable political will to emerge. Driving policy change requires

having sensitivity to the issue attention cycle and securing political support for preferred policy solutions. Through these interlinked processes, the desires of constituencies (public will) will create a reform-oriented environment that will place pressure on leaders to support reforms.

This approach can be implemented by the techniques of harnessing the dynamics of agenda building and framing processes, securing consistent and intensive media coverage, and gaining the support of reform champions and connectors.

Recognize leaders as stakeholders. The idea that leaders are stakeholders stems from the belief that self-interest is the primary driver in political life. In this view, leaders will be convinced about lending their support to reform efforts if cast in terms of their own self-interests. Key to this approach is mapping out incentives and disincentives among leadership groups and identifying common themes as well as discontinuities. Persuasive messages can be crafted to obtain leadership support if one is armed with this knowledge.

Techniques associated with this approach include harnessing agenda building and framing processes, securing consistent and intensive media coverage, and generating broad acceptance among leaders of reform objectives.

Techniques

Map agenda-building dynamics. Understanding the ways in which issues earn their places on policy agendas equips the reformer with the capacity to bring resources to bear in support of this objective. The two principles underpinning this technique are scarcity of space on the policy agenda and the need to refresh perceptions of the policy in order to hold the attention of various stakeholders. Implied by these two principles is that a reform initiative must supplant other initiatives and must be redefined when necessary to maintain stakeholder interest.

Frame the problem in terms of the sought-after reform. Once a problem has been framed (defined) in terms supportive of the reform effort, evidence ranging from anecdotes to statistical data and analysis should subsequently be presented in support of this frame. Suggested policy solutions should likewise address the problem on the basis of the frame adopted.

Convince media practitioners and journalists to support reform objectives. They should also provide media-friendly messages to secure consistent and intensive media coverage. Members of the public rank issues on the policy agenda on the basis in large part of the issue agenda of the news media; that is, what the news media present as the most important issues of the day will drive audience perceptions and opinions on relative issue importance. It is essential, therefore, to convince media practitioners of the rightness of the cause and to communicate the reform's arguments in media-friendly terms (for example, celebrity endorser, personal examples, sound bites). According to some communication scholars, to gain traction in the public mind, reformers should

attempt to maintain media coverage of the issue as an important news item for at least five to seven weeks.

Persuade leaders to adopt reform objectives as their own. Acceptance of a reform initiative is requisite to understanding the objectives and technicalities of the initiative. It is necessary, therefore, for leaders to gain in-depth understanding of these issues. They should also be asked to share their concerns about the reform. If possible, these concerns should be incorporated in revision of goals and objectives. To facilitate the scaling up of the process, leaders should be considered members of communities of practice, who may very well share interests with others who are in similar positions of influence.

Change work routines to enable middle managers to carry out reform policies. Although middle managers generally wish to stay in the good graces of senior managers who champion reform, it is possible that the prescriptions of an endorsed reform initiative do not fall within the limits of middle managers' abilities. For example, new procedures may take too much time or may put the middle manager in a tough position among subordinates and clients. It is imperative, therefore, that reform agents and senior managers consult with middle managers—who are usually the implementers on the ground—about whether reform components are feasible and practical.

Rearrange organizational structures to provide reform-minded politicians the requisite authority to carry out reform policies. In addition to being within the limits of organizational capacities, a reform initiative must fit the organizational structure, particularly in terms of whether individuals tasked to carry out reform components are vested with the requisite authority to implement change initiatives. Deficiencies in authority need to be addressed prior to reform implementation.

Identify and enlist support of reform champions and connectors. To raise awareness among leadership circles, support from high-level champions in elected posts, as well as the bureaucracy, needs to be secured. These people should lend their prestige and visibility to the reform initiative throughout the project cycle. "Connectors" who will provide interpersonal linkages among reform-minded champions should also be identified and brought in as partners in the reform initiative. High visibility and peer support are necessary in both generating excitement and sustaining commitments in reform efforts.

Session Three: How Do We Gain the Support of Public Sector Middle Managers, Who Are Often the Strongest Opponents of Change, and Foster among Them a Stronger Culture of Public Service?

The third session addressed the challenge of gaining the support of public sector middle managers, who are often the strongest opponents of change, and of fostering among them a stronger culture of public service. The session

featured theoretical frameworks, as well as practical solutions to dealing with the issue of generating the support of middle managers for reform.

The first speaker presented the concept of appreciative inquiry. This approach calls for seeing the change process from the perspective of middle managers as a first step toward tackling this issue. The speaker emphasized the need to frame issues positively, then to build on the achievements of the organization to spur forward movement, and to create a space for middle managers to participate actively in the change process. That participation will empower middle managers by encouraging them to not only support reform, but also own it. The second speaker talked about a case in which the lack of knowledge of strategic communication and the lack of strong leadership support prevented middle managers from being effective change agents. He urged that middle managers be trained in strategic communication and given leadership support to enable them to take risks, make mistakes, and develop innovative solutions. The third speaker talked about another experience in public sector reform and presented a demand-driven approach to empowering middle managers in reform and engendering support for reform among them. He emphasized the importance of the commitment by senior management, the empowerment of middle managers to effect change, and the broad-based consensus for change among both internal and external stakeholders as techniques to help tackle this challenge.

Much of the plenary discussion focused on the tension between the monologic and dialogic communication approaches. Participants agreed that context matters, and that different contexts require different communication approaches, whether used in isolation, in tandem, or sequentially. There was consensus that the discussion is not so much about the efficacy of the monologic or dialogic approach under different circumstances, but about how best to use the available approaches to garner support of middle managers for reform. Reform is ultimately about change. Providing middle managers with space to be effective in the change process not only generates their support and ownership of change, but also helps foster among them a stronger culture of public service.

Approaches

Work appreciatively (appreciative inquiry). The concept of appreciative inquiry, or of working appreciatively, is an example of a dialogic approach to achieving reform by consensus. It is based on a commitment to be inclusive and is guided by three principles: (1) an appreciation of the expertise brought by all stakeholders, (2) a focus on the positive and what already works in an organization, and (3) a collective development of a vision for the future.

This approach represents a fundamental departure from the traditional approaches to change agencies, which focus on the problems, thus leading to a blame discourse. Instead, appreciative inquiry shifts the attention to what works well. Appreciative inquiry has the potential to enable a dynamic culture

change within an organization by empowering middle managers to own the change process and to become the agents of change.

Techniques that can support this approach include principles of inclusion and appreciation for multiple expertise; framing the dialogue positively to create forward movement; creation of space for visioning, experimentation, and innovation; a sense of teamwork and collective responsibility; and creating momentum for reform.

Adopt shock therapy or frank talk. Shock therapy, or frank talk, is an example of a monologic approach that involves senior management making a decision and communicating that decision to the lower ranks in a top-down fashion. Despite its negative reputation, the monologic approach is legitimate and more appropriate than the dialogic approach in cases in which the reform objective has already been predetermined, or in which the capacity of the middle management is low. Specifically with respect to addressing the challenge of building middle management support for reform, the use of monologic communication may work more effectively in situations in which the civil service is known to be dysfunctional or corrupt. A strong message from the leadership that sends the message that it is serious about reform can be an effective instrument for generating support for change among middle managers.

The techniques that can be used to implement this approach include strong leadership commitment to reform and clear roles and responsibilities within organizations.

Combine monologic and dialogic approaches. There are situations in which the use of a combination of monologic and dialogic approaches would be most suitable for generating the support of middle managers for change. Several variations of the combination approach include (1) the use of the monologic approach to set the broad parameters, followed by dialogue; (2) the employment of monologue as an input to the dialogue; and (3) the application of the two at different stages of the reform process.

The first two variations are about sequencing. In using monologue followed by dialogue, senior management can set the broad parameters for change but can allow the real dialogue to emerge at the middle management level. The approach of using monologue as an input to dialogue would be appropriate if the capacity of middle managers and other stakeholders is initially too low to produce a meaningful dialogue immediately. In this case, the more capable stakeholders can guide the discussion in a monologic manner until the capacity of middle managers can be sufficiently raised, paving the way for the dialogic approach to take over. The third variation is the use of the monologic and dialogic approaches at different stages of the reform process. In the Philippines procurement reform project, for example, both the monologic and dialogic approaches were adopted at various times depending on which approach was deemed more appropriate.

The techniques that can be used to implement this approach include the following: guiding the debate when the capacity is low; using the principle of

inclusion and appreciation for “multiple expertise”; using strong leadership commitment to reform; defining clear roles and responsibilities within organizations, thereby building capacity of middle managers; and creating momentum for reform.

Techniques

Involve stakeholders, and appreciate “multiple expertise” in implementing reform. This technique is about involving all relevant stakeholders in the reform process. At its core are the acknowledgment of and appreciation for the wisdom that everyone brings to the table. The technique also calls for listening deeply to concerns of all stakeholders, both internal and external, and embracing the opportunity to learn from the critics. Consulting and involving middle managers in the reform process can help position the approach in such a way as to fully engage middle managers as the agents of change and to empower them in the process, thus creating a sense of ownership and buy-in among them.

Frame the dialogue positively to create forward movement. This technique emphasizes that discussions about change be focused on areas of excellence in an organization (that is, what already works well as opposed to what does not). If it frames the dialogue affirmatively, the technique leads stakeholders to identify what they take pride in and build on it as they try to move forward in making improvements within their organization.

Framing the dialogue develops the positive core to accentuate middle managers’ achievements, wisdom, social capital, and competencies. It results in stretching their imaginations and expanding on their capacity to achieve tangible results.

Create opportunities for visioning, experimentation, and innovation. A technique for securing buy-in and ownership of middle managers for reform is to create space and opportunities for them to develop their own vision of the organization’s future, instead of merely executing what upper management says. By giving middle managers the responsibility to develop their own vision for the future, the collective envisioning exercise enables them to have a clear understanding of the direction in which to move their organization. This technique tackles the challenge of inadequate ownership of reform by middle managers attributable to reform being supply-driven as opposed to demand-driven.

In addition, creating space also means allowing middle managers to take risks, make mistakes, and develop new approaches based on lessons learned from those mistakes. It is all part of building an enabling environment, in which experimentation and innovation are the norm. Then open dialogue and feedback can lead to constant improvements in the overall change process.

Foster a sense of teamwork and collective responsibility. Instilling in middle managers a sense of teamwork—a sense of “all of us are in this together”—working in cooperation as opposed to isolation creates ownership of reform

and positive dynamics in general. The concept of collective responsibility is a powerful tool to energize and mobilize a group of people.

Signal leadership commitment to reform to demonstrate political will. Strong leadership commitment is necessary for middle managers to not only know that the reform has real support and hence that their efforts at change would be fully backed, but also to get guidance from the leadership. Leadership could show its commitment to reform by sending a strong message, clearly articulating its recognition of the need to change and its will to effect that change. It was suggested that, for middle managers, it would also be useful to have a change champion, as well as access to power brokers.

Define clear roles and responsibilities within organizations. Middle managers need to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, as well as those of other partners involved in the reform effort. Toward this end, middle managers should be involved in the crafting of their own terms of reference and be given information about who is responsible for which aspect of the reform. Once the roles and responsibilities of each individual are clearly spelled out, it is imperative that the middle manager be given sufficient power and authority to implement change. It was suggested that the establishment of a change institution that coordinates change efforts may also be helpful in guiding reform.

Train middle managers in cross-level, horizontal interactions and strategic communication, and develop a holistic capacity-building framework. One of the major constraints faced in generating support for change among middle managers is their lack of capacity to be active and effective change agents. The first area in which middle managers need training is in the concept of interacting with other middle managers. In many countries, because of the government's organizational structure or cultural traditions, middle managers neither talk to each other nor believe that they are allowed to do so. It would be useful to teach and encourage cross-level, horizontal interactions among middle managers, which could lead to further mobilization, as well as information diffusion, awareness raising, innovation, and partnerships.

Other suggestions for capacity building included training middle managers in strategic communication to interact more effectively with the public and developing a capacity-building framework that is multisectoral in nature, in contrast to the traditional ad hoc, stand-alone programs.

Use a set of recommendations to guide dialogue with middle managers when their capacity is low. Low capacity levels of middle managers can hamper their effective engagement in dialogue about change. Sometimes discussions must be guided from the more capable stakeholders to ensure that the resulting decisions are derived from the meaningful and informed exchange of ideas.

This is a technique that uses both the monologic and dialogic approaches. In one example discussed at the dialogue, a panel of experts produced "options papers," outlining various options that the stakeholders could choose from, as a starting point for guiding the stakeholders in discussions about reform.

These options papers helped raise awareness and understanding of the less-informed stakeholders, thus enabling them to participate more effectively in conversations.

Use educational and awareness-raising materials to create momentum for reform. Once momentum starts to build, it is difficult to stop and even more difficult to reverse. In one reform initiative that involved passage of a bill, support for reform among middle managers gained momentum, helped by a clever and gradual use of educational awareness-raising materials. The mix of materials used included screensavers, video-based tutorials, and workshops, which all helped mobilize middle managers around a new bill. Legislators, seeing the support of middle managers, felt pressured to support the bill themselves. Creating momentum for reform is a powerful enabler for generating and sustaining middle manager support that is necessary to carry out reform.

Session Four: How Do We Build Broad Coalitions of Pro-Change Influentials? What Do We Do about Powerful Vested Interests?

The fourth session explored the issues of how to build broad coalitions of pro-change influentials and what to do about powerful vested interests. The session presented practical recommendations that are based on experiences from around the world in dealing with the challenge of building coalitions for reform and tackling vested interests. The first speaker presented stakeholder mapping as the primary technique for understanding the local context and developing strategies for building coalitions. The second speaker described one country's experience in implementing water sector reform, attributing the success of the reform to its being consensus based and stakeholder driven, as all relevant stakeholders coalesced around the water crisis to support the reform and participate in it. The third speaker called for a partnership paradigm for building coalitions, thereby urging broader and deeper engagement with civil society.

Two of the reform experiences discussed during the session attest to the power of momentum created through coalition building. In both cases, the supporters of reform either mobilized into a coalition, thus creating a momentum toward change that was hard to reverse, or had built an environment in which it was not politically feasible to oppose the reform. In the end, the groups of change agents built an environment in which maintaining the status quo was not an option.

Approaches

Focus on influentials. The influentials, similar to opinion leaders, command a level of respect and authority in their field of expertise and are able to sway opinion of others. Because reform is about changing the status quo, overcoming resistance to and promoting support for change would be better facilitated with the support of influentials for that change.

The techniques that can be used to implement this approach include performing research, stakeholder mapping, framing and branding issues, and raising awareness of key stakeholders on issues.

Focus on networks and connectors. This network-based approach seeks to identify a connector, also known as a broker or resource linker, who, as a session participant explained, “sits at the center of relationships and basically manages constituencies whose engagement is necessary for effective reform.” The connector is an individual in networks who crosses organizational boundaries. This connector role can be played by various individuals at different stages of the reform effort.

This approach to building coalitions assumes that networks and coalitions already exist and that there are connectors within these networks who wield influence, bring people together, and can effect change. It recognizes the power of the networks and the often invisible connectors within them.

The techniques that can be used to implement this approach include the following: performing research, performing network analysis, consulting directly with the affected parties, creating an enabling environment through empowering structures and transparency within coalitions, and training technicians in government to work in networks rather than in isolation.

Use broad-based coalitions to get on the policy agenda. Coalitions are powerful when the issues they advocate reach the top of the policy-making agenda through the consensus of affected stakeholders. For example, the success of the coalition-building experience in one reform initiative discussed can be attributed to the broad-based consensus on the need for reform that pro-change agents were able to generate. From the beginning, the focus of the discussion was on how, not if, to implement the reform.

The techniques that can be used to implement this approach are performing research; framing, branding, and advocacy of issues; raising awareness of stakeholders on key issues; using inclusion and decentralization for ownership and sustainability; creating momentum for change through a sense of urgency and maintaining it; building capacity of all stakeholders to communicate; and using information and communication technology (ICT) appropriate to the local context.

Engage and partner with civil society in creative ways. Increasingly, civil society is seen to represent legitimate and credible voices in public debate and policy making. This approach takes into account that broader and deeper engagement and partnership with civil society are necessary to build effective coalitions for reform. Recognizing the need to talk about issues in new and creative ways is particularly important for engaging more broadly with civil society to build coalitions. In working with organizations, the focus should be not only on the process of engagement, but also on the outcomes to be achieved on the basis of partnerships with civil society.

As one identifies like-minded individuals for building coalitions, it would be useful not only to pick the easiest and most obvious individuals or groups to

mobilize, but also to be creative in searching for them, keeping in mind that coalitions are not necessarily issue-specific and may be found in unlikely places. It would also be useful to consider both the national and international NGOs. Although the legitimacy of international coalitions is sometimes questioned, they should not be disregarded simply because they are not indigenous. Often, vociferous international coalitions can play an important role in mobilizing groups around an issue.

Several techniques for pursuing this approach include performing research; framing, branding, and advocacy of issues; creating a new stakeholder group, if needed; creating an enabling environment through empowering structures and transparency within coalitions; creating momentum for change through a sense of urgency and maintaining it; building capacity of all stakeholders to communicate; and using ICT appropriate to the local context.

Techniques

Understand the local context through extensive research. Conducting research to understand the local context is the first and most important step in any attempts at change. It is critical to go into the reform process without an established set of prescriptions and to strive to understand what brings stakeholders together or pulls them apart in a particular setting.

In addressing the challenge of building coalitions and tackling vested interests, research identifies the stakeholders, assesses their positions, and determines the political feasibility of interventions. It provides the basis on which to develop a strategy for a thorough and effective engagement with all stakeholders. In terms of designing a strategy for tackling vested interests, it would be important to talk to the opposition to understand their perspective. Ultimately, the success of any effort at building a powerful coalition that mobilizes for change rests upon the quality of the research.

Conduct stakeholder mapping. Stakeholder mapping, according to one participant, is a “process of determining the type, degree, tools, and context of influences” among stakeholders. It is a research-based technique to find the sources of influence—or influentials—in a given society. Following a four-step sequence to (1) identify, (2) locate and profile, (3) engage, and (4) map stakeholders, the research defines stakeholder the perspectives on a topic, thus leading to the determination of areas of conflict, convergence, and neutrality among the interests held by various stakeholders. The findings of the research contribute to the development of a visual map of dynamics, showing the flows of influence among stakeholders and leading to the identification of the influentials.

Conduct network analysis. Network analysis is the main technique for identifying the connector, also known as broker or resource linker. This analysis uses interviews to determine who links individuals and groups in an organization or institution. Often, connectors are found in the most unlikely places. Mapping the system of networks with the connectors would be a useful exercise in starting the process of building coalitions for change.

The basis of network analysis is the understanding that networks and coalitions always exist, and they exist in forms that are not always obvious or intuitive. Sometimes they can be dangerous because they exist in opposition to one's cause. If one assesses the local environment for coalition building, therefore, it would be important to keep in mind that various types of coalitions exist, they form most often because of resource dependency and uncertainty. Hence, they are not necessarily issue specific. Weak ties as well as informal networks and relationships are also relevant to discussions about coalitions. It would be useful to consider the strength of these ties when conducting research.

Brand the reform initiative, and frame messages to reinforce the branding. Once the messengers have been identified through stakeholder mapping and network analysis, the message needs to be framed appropriately to reinforce the branding of any given reform initiative. The development of an advocacy strategy would build awareness and would promote support for the issue within society. A concrete agenda with measurable goals is needed to clarify the coalition's objectives and activities. In addition, the messenger needs to send a message that gives a clear vision of the reform that would help mobilize affected stakeholders, while being mindful that expectations must be met.

Consult directly with the affected parties. In building coalitions, it is important to cut out intermediaries and to consult directly with stakeholders to get their input and ideas. In one of the indigenous peoples programs discussed during the dialogue, it was found that, contrary to expectations, indigenous peoples wanted the private sector, not NGOs, on their decision-making committee.

Create a new stakeholder group if needed. When the search for existing groups with similar objectives or interests does not yield results, another option is to try to create a new stakeholder group. In coalition building, it may be prudent to frame the issue loosely to bring as many people together as possible to the initial discussion. This framing would be in contrast to identifying salient issues up front, which might narrow the pool of potential coalition members even before the first gathering. The ultimate objective would be to create a network of strategic relationships to push for change.

Conduct information campaigns and regular consultations to promote transparency and ownership. Holding regular consultations with coalition members and creating a platform for consensus building would provide a forum for agreeing on a common objective, defining a reform program, mobilizing support, building committed constituencies, and establishing partnerships. Building trust among coalition members through an enabling environment with an empowering structure is critical for creating sustainable ownership of reform. Using transparency through regular communication is an important technique within this effort.

As stakeholders can more easily coalesce and mobilize around issues if they are better informed, information campaigns can also address this issue.

In one example discussed, the more stakeholders were informed, the more they mobilized around reform and felt they had a stake and a role to play.

Create a multistakeholder policy-making group and an independent implementation body to ensure ownership and sustainability. Broad-based ownership of reform can be built through inclusion and decentralization. In one case study examined, the principle of inclusion was applied through the formation of a policy-making steering committee comprising all key stakeholders. In addition, a separate implementation unit independent of the ministry was established, thereby ensuring that even if the government changed, the reform process would continue. This independence also led to public confidence and trust that the process would be transparent and free of government manipulation or intervention.

Link the issue to change in legislation to create a sense of urgency and momentum for change. The attention span of individuals is often short lived. If one builds coalitions around change, therefore, it is critical to keep the issue alive by creating a sense of urgency and building on that momentum. Linking an issue to a change in legislation is one way to achieve this goal because there is a definite end toward which the coalition members can aspire.

Train technicians in government to work in networks rather than in isolation. Building coalitions within government can be challenging because many civil servants are technicians who are used to working in isolation rather than in networks. While coalition-building efforts should target technicians, they are more challenging to mobilize into coalitions because of their tendency to work in isolation. It would be useful, therefore, to train the technicians to communicate and to work in a team or network.

Use information and communication technology (ICT) appropriate to the local context. If ICT adoption is high in a country, ICT may be a useful tool to help push reform. In terms of mobilizing support for reform, ICT also could be particularly useful for the purposes of raising awareness and educating, as well as sharing case studies and success stories. An example of a successful application of ICT for coalition building is the development and use of screensavers and video tutorials to raise awareness and to build support among civil servants for a new procurement law in the Philippines.

However, ICT should be used with an understanding of its limitations, because it is still too premature for it to play the central role in pushing reform. The emergence of various modes of communication today provides challenges and opportunities for communicating with stakeholders.

Session Five: How Do We Help Reformers Transform Indifferent, or Even Hostile, Public Opinion into Support for Reform Objectives?

The fifth session addressed the issue of how we can help reformers transform indifferent, or even hostile, public opinion into support for reform

objectives. The speakers approached the issue of changing public opinion with the realization that stakeholders cannot be taken for granted and that the burden is on reformers to communicate intelligently and to keep the context and issues in perspective. The speakers made important contributions toward how the pro-reform message can be strengthened or communicated in a manner that stakeholders accept and understand more easily. Some speakers placed more emphasis on the content and structure of the pro-reform message, while others were more focused on what reformers' overall communication strategy should be and how to build and use communications infrastructure.

Approaches

Make the case. This approach calls for reformers to campaign actively for the proposed reform project to transform indifferent, or even hostile, public opinion into support for reform objectives. In other words, the campaign itself will be an argument in favor of implementing the reforms. Making the case thus implies that the reformers take an active stance in communicating their agenda and its importance to transform public opinion: that is, the reformers assume the burden of explaining the worthiness of the proposed project. It is also crucial, moreover, that the reformers arm themselves with the appropriate tools to help them win their battle against indifferent or hostile public opinion.

The techniques that can be used to implement this approach include the following: communicate the costs of not implementing and the benefits of implementing the reform project; provide citizens with easy access to information that explains the reform project; gather sufficient material resources to support the proreform campaign; record the ongoing arguments so they can be referenced in the future; communicate in language that is easily understandable; use appropriate communication tools that reach the right people; use narratives to argue in favor of reforms; use strategic frames to argue in favor of reforms; use trigger devices such as natural catastrophes, unanticipated human tragedies, technological repercussions, societal imbalance, and ecological change to argue in favor of reforms; use condensation symbols, such as catchphrases, exemplars, and metaphors; and use ICT to monitor reforms.

Build cultural empathy. This approach suggests that reformers empathize with and understand the perspectives of those being influenced by the reform project. Reformers using this approach try to understand the reasons people would support or oppose a proposed reform project and develop and communicate about the reform program in terms that resonate with the affected stakeholders. The use of locally influential people and local media to transmit messages that are culturally sensitive would be particularly useful.

The techniques that can be used to implement this approach include conducting opinion research, especially focus groups; using culturally relevant narratives to explain reforms; communicating in language that is easily understandable; issue framing; creating participatory reform groups (forums,

summits, schools, and the like) to increase awareness about reforms; using trigger devices to argue in favor of reforms; and adopting condensation symbols, such as catchphrases, exemplars, and metaphors.

Use dialogue to create a participatory environment. This approach calls for reformers to engage in dialogue with those affected by the proposed reform project. Instead of relying on one-way or monologic communication, this approach uses two-way communication that flows between the reformers and the affected stakeholder groups. Through engaging stakeholders in dialogue, reformers give stakeholders the space for engagement in the reform process instead of simply being recipients of information about reform. To create a participatory environment, reformers could get involved in public deliberation, dialogue, and communal engagement in civil society institutions. Dialogue can also be fostered through ICT.

The techniques that can be used to implement this approach include the following: create participatory reform groups (such as forums, summits, and schools) to increase awareness about reforms; provide citizens with easy access to information that explains the reform project; communicate in language that is easily understandable; use appropriate communication tools that reach the right people; respond to the citizens' demands and needs; and use ICT to build networks and mobilize people.

Techniques

Use the Strength of Personality (PS) scale. A research technique for identifying influentials who can mobilize public opinion around an issue is the Strength of Personality (PS) scale, developed in 1983 by the German scholar Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann of the Allensbach Institute. This scale evaluates the ability of an individual to influence others, based on the results of a questionnaire that asks respondents to give a self-assessment of their perceived personal influence. This technique can also be used for mobilizing networks and coalitions.

Create participatory reform groups (such as forums, summits, and schools) to increase awareness about reforms and build stakeholder ownership of reform. This technique creates participatory institutions or reform groups in which information regarding reform projects can be disseminated and discussed to build understanding of the goals of the reforms. These reform groups should ideally be moderated or supervised by individuals from within the community being targeted by the reform project so that the information regarding reform projects can be presented in culturally familiar terms.

Use strategic frames to argue in favor of or to explain reforms. As commonly acknowledged by communication scholars, a frame can be defined as a pattern or structure for understanding the world around us. Frames can be used strategically to present an issue in a manner that benefits a particular political platform. This technique suggests that reformers use strategic frames to communicate the proreform messages.

Reframe the issue rather than argue against hostility. This technique is useful for handling antireform public opinion. When people are hostile to a proposed reform initiative, the technique recommends that the proreform argument be reframed to curtail the hostility, rather than use the initial argument to talk against the negative opinion. Reframing the proreform argument requires taking into consideration the antireform argument.

Communicate the benefits and costs of implementing or of not implementing reform. This technique makes people aware of what they would lose if reform were not implemented; that is, they would continue to incur the material or monetary losses of which they may not even be aware, in order to increase proreform public opinion.

Communicate in language that is easily understandable and through the use of frames and narratives to generate support for reform. This technique recommends that the reformers speak in a language that is easily understandable by and resonates with the people affected by the reforms. Instead of technical jargon, the use of commonly used terms can be more useful in reaching out to the larger public.

Frames highlight terms and issues that are salient to audiences, representing key meanings in an information campaign. Similarly, the use of narratives can also be effective at reaching out to certain stakeholder groups. A narrative can be defined as a story about events, told in the sequence in which they occurred. Narratives are commonly used in many communities to transmit cultural histories, values, and norms and are thus useful in communicating more effectively with certain communities.

Use appropriate media to reach affected stakeholders. In communicating with the affected stakeholders, reformers should carefully choose the communication tools or media to reach them. For instance, depending on the local context, a particular medium might be more suitable for communicating messages than others. One example of this technique is the use of glass coasters to communicate the ban against drinking and driving in Singapore. Another is the use of the media that a given stakeholder group has traditionally relied on. The existing familiarity with this media will contribute to stakeholders' understanding of the new reform initiative.

Use ICT to build networks and mobilize people. This is a technique of using the power and reach of ICT to create networks of proreform campaigners, through electronic mail, cellular phones, instant messaging devices, and the Internet.

Session Six: How Do We Instigate Citizen Demand for Good Governance and Accountability in Order to Sustain Governance Reform?

The sixth session addressed the issue of how to instigate citizen demand for good governance and accountability in order to sustain governance reform. The session began with a presentation about a television program produced by

the British Broadcasting Corporation World Service Trust called *Bangladesh Sanglap* (Dialogue), which has let Bangladeshi citizens interact with politicians on television and publicly demand accountability. The second speaker talked about another innovation, a technique called Deliberative Polling®, and the third speaker talked about the importance of mobilizing people in groups so they can jointly demand better governance. Finally, the fourth speaker emphasized the need for understanding the local context, engaging in dialogue with all relevant stakeholders including the opposition, and developing a theory to explain and address challenges in implementing reform. Participants then engaged in an informal and lively discussion, sharing a number of anecdotes from their experiences around the world. This discussion further underscored the tensions between universals and particulars and between theory and practice, both of which were leitmotifs running through all of the discussions, with the challenge being the ability or possibility of striking the right balance.

Approaches

Use collective action or citizens' groups. This approach is based on forming citizens' groups to instigate demand for good governance and accountability in order to sustain governance reform. Adopting an approach of using collective action thus implies that citizens interact with the government as a group, instead of interacting at an individual level.

The techniques that can be used to implement this approach are the following: form citizens' organizations that function autonomously from the government, provide citizens with training to face the risks of demanding better governance, create physical spaces for argument and dialogue regarding and dissemination of information about governance, use ICT to build networks, provide citizens with easy access to information that explains the reform project, communicate in language that is easily understandable, and strengthen relationships with the media for advocacy and intervention.

Conduct deliberation. This approach engages citizens in deliberation to instigate their demand for good governance and accountability and to ensure sustainability of governance reform. The deliberative process leads citizens to express their views on specific policies related to governance. The deliberative approach is grounded in the rationale that when citizens are allowed to discuss governance issues, they become not only more informed about these issues, but also more aware that they have the ability to demand better governance.

The techniques that can be used to implement this approach include Deliberative Polls® for creating physical spaces for argument and dialogue regarding and dissemination of information about governance; organizing deliberative opinion polls; using media, such as television programs, for deliberation; and mediating deliberation so that (1) the competing demands can be resolved, (2) the demands are realistic, (3) the outcome is not violent, and (4) the deliberation is not dominated by privileged groups.

Engage in dialogue. This approach seeks to engage reformers in dialogue with those being influenced by the reform to generate public support for reform objectives. Instead of using one-way or monologic communication, which is sent by the reformers to stakeholders, this approach uses a two-way model in which information flows back and forth between the reformers and the various stakeholder groups. This approach allows affected stakeholders to voice their support or disapproval of the planned reforms.

The techniques that can be used to implement this approach include the following: provide citizens with easy access to information that explains the reform project, communicate in language that is easily understandable, use appropriate communication tools that reach the right people, respond to citizens' demands and needs, and gather sufficient material resources to support the pro-reform campaign.

Use subsidiarity or small governance units. This approach derives from the political philosophy that small governance units should exercise power. In other words, demand for governance should be instigated at the local level and within relatively small units of governance, which may vary from laundry functions to medical facilities.

The techniques that can be used to implement this approach include framing the governance issues in terms of the local setting, researching the local setting where governance reforms might be implemented, engaging in consultation with the marginalized members of society, communicating in language that is easily understandable, and providing citizens with training to face the risks of demanding better governance.

Techniques

Research the local setting and frame the issues accordingly. This technique recommends that proper research be carried out to understand the local setting where reforms will be implemented. It is based on the understanding that reform-related work, whether instigating citizen demand or actual implementation of reforms, can be carried out properly only when the local context has been understood thoroughly. In addition, instead of generalizing the governance issues under scrutiny, issues should also be framed accordingly, taking into account the local context and nuances.

Create physical spaces for argument, dialogue, and dissemination of information about governance. This technique suggests that citizens be allowed to congregate in physical spaces where they can receive information about governance and can engage in arguments and dialogue about issues related to governance. It is expected that such spaces will be useful for instigating demand for better governance.

Form citizens' organizations that function autonomously from the government. This technique recommends that citizens be organized into groups that are autonomous from the government and have the authority to scrutinize governance and demand better governance.

Mediate deliberation so that competing demands can be resolved, demands are realistic, outcomes are not violent, and deliberation is not dominated by privileged groups. This is a technique of ensuring that deliberations lead to constructive outcomes, and it is geared toward controlling certain possible problems that might arise in deliberative environments, such as a deliberative opinion poll or a television program.

Organize a Deliberative Poll®. This technique is a form of public consultation that uses randomly selected and representative groups of citizens to assess how public opinion would change if they became better informed and more engaged about an issue. In the process, the sample is first polled on a given issue. This poll is followed by participants deliberating on that issue and being provided with more information. At the end of the deliberations, the sample is polled again to assess the change in their opinions. Because the sample is highly representative, the conclusions the sample draws represent those that would be reached by the broader public if they became more informed.

This technique has certain salient features, many of which can be used when organizing a Deliberative Poll. First, the sample is extremely representative of the population from which it is drawn. Second, the Deliberative Poll leads to changes in public opinion on politics and policy. Third, questionnaires can demonstrate that the respondents gained information by participating in Deliberative Polling. Fourth, analysis can demonstrate that the change in public opinion is caused by the gain in information. Fifth, the change in public opinion, however, does not correlate with any sociodemographic factors, such as education and gender. Sixth, deliberation leads to stronger opinions, which is also called single-peaked preferences. Seventh, the predeliberation group opinions do not get reinforced toward the extremes. Eighth, the group's opinion is not unduly influenced by the more privileged—because of education or income, for example—members of the group.

Engage in consultation with the marginalized members of society. This technique recommends that the pro-reform advocates keep in touch with those who are marginalized from mainstream society, such as citizens who are illiterate. This approach will allow the reformers to be aware of the demands of the marginalized members as well.

Provide citizens training to face the risks of demanding better governance. When citizens demand better governance, they are subject to various physical and psychological risks, such as the threat of attacked by a corrupt politician. This technique recommends that the pro-reform advocates train citizens to empower them to deal with the risks they might face by demanding better governance.

Use media, such as television programs, for deliberation and dialogue. This is a technique of creating deliberative environments within existing media. For example, a television program such as *Bangladesh Sanglap* can be used as a forum in which citizens engage in dialogue with politicians and voice their demands regarding governance. Similarly, radio and newspapers can be

used to instigate citizen demand for better governance by allowing citizens to voice their concerns.

While one creates such deliberative forums, a few principles should be followed. First, these forums should maintain a neutral political platform so the debate can be constructive. Second, the participants have to be recruited carefully so that the group is somewhat representative of the larger population. Third, the population has to be researched regularly to determine the degree to which their participation in such debates or dialogues leads to a continued practice of demanding accountability, as well as to determine their perceptions as to whether the level of government accountability has increased or remained unchanged.

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ECO-AUDIT

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- 1,247 pounds of solid waste



The Grounding Path of Governance Reforms

Using Communication Approaches and Techniques to Support Reform Initiatives

Political Analysis

The analysis should address the **What**, the **Why**, and the **How** of reform.*

↓

What pathologies are you seeking to address with the reform?

↓

Explain **Why** these pathologies exist through a thorough understanding of the rules of the game.

↓

The heart of the **How** is coalition building and at the core of this is a good communication strategy.

*Source: Adapted from Ed Campos (personal communication)

Political Will

Manifestations

- Lone reform champion
- Lack of support from political and policy elites

Approaches

- Open up spaces for reform
- Establish interpersonal linkages
- Harness public will
- Recognize leaders as stakeholders

Techniques

- Frame problem effectively
- Persuade leaders to adopt reform
- Provide requisite authority
- Convince media to support reform
- Map agenda-building dynamics
- Enlist reform champions
- Change middle manager work routines

Middle Managers

Manifestations

- Resistance to change
- Lack of ability and authority to implement reform policies

Approaches

- Work appreciatively
- Shock therapy, or frank talk
- Combine monologic/ dialogic approaches

Techniques

- Signify political will of leadership
- Train middle managers in cross-level interactions
- Define clear roles and responsibilities
- Vision, experimentation, innovation
- Foster sense of teamwork
- Involve stakeholders
- Frame dialogues positively
- Use awareness-raising materials
- Guide dialogue with middle managers

Vested Interests

Manifestations

- Special interest groups opposed to reform
- Alliances among opponents of reform

Approaches

- Focus on influentials
- Focus on networks and connectors
- Use broad-based coalitions
- Partner with civil society

Techniques

- Stakeholder mapping
- Conduct network analysis, issue-framing, branding
- Train technicians to work in networks
- Use consultations to promote transparency and ownership
- Create urgency and momentum for change
- Create multistakeholder policymaking group
- Use ICT appropriate to the local context
- Consult directly with affected parties
- Create a new stakeholder group if needed

Hostile Public Opinion

Manifestations

- Difficult publics
- “Not in my backyard” (NIMBY) phenomenon

Approaches

- Make the case
- Employ cultural empathy
- Use dialogue to create participation

Techniques

- Create participatory reform groups
- Communicate reform benefits/costs
- Use easily understandable narratives
- Use frames to explain reforms
- Use appropriate media
- Use ICTs to mobilize people
- Reframe issues when needed
- Reframe issues rather than argue against hostility

Citizen Demand for Accountability

Manifestations

- Lack of awareness
- Lack of engagement
- Lack of citizen competence
- Inertia/indifference

Approaches

- Use citizens’ groups
- Engage in dialogue
- Encourage deliberation
- Use subsidiarity

Techniques

- Create physical spaces for dialogue
- Organize a Deliberative Poll®
- Engage marginalized members of society
- Provide citizens with training to face risks
- Use media for deliberation and dialogue
- Mediate deliberation to ensure fair representation
- Form citizens’ organizations

Evaluation Logic Models

CommGAP Evaluation Framework

Objectives of Reform Initiative

↓

Communication Challenges

↓

Communication Objectives

↓

Communication-Based Interventions

↓

Outcomes: What change has the intervention produced or contributed to?

↓

Impact: What is the contribution to overall reform objectives?

Although necessary and often first rate, technocratic solutions alone have been ineffective in delivering real change or lasting results in governance reforms. This is primarily because reform programs are delivered not in controlled environments, but under complex, diverse, sociopolitical and economic conditions. Real-world conditions.

In political societies, ownership of reform programs by the entire country cannot be assumed, public opinion will not necessarily be benign, and coalitions of support may be scarce or nonexistent, even when intended reforms really will benefit those who need them most.

While the development community has the technical tools to address governance challenges, experience shows that technical solutions are often insufficient. Difficulties arise when attempts are made to apply what are often excellent technical solutions. Human beings—either acting alone or in groups small and large—are not as amenable as are pure numbers, and they cannot be ignored. In the real world, reforms will not succeed, and they will certainly not be sustained, without the correct alignment of citizens, stakeholders, and voice.

Governance Reform under Real-World Conditions: Citizens, Stakeholders, and Voice is a contribution to efforts to improve governance systems around the world, particularly in developing countries. The contributors, who are academics and development practitioners, provide a range of theoretical frameworks and innovative approaches and techniques for dealing with the most important nontechnical or adaptive challenges that impede the success and sustainability of reform efforts.

The editors and contributors hope that this book will be a useful guide for governments, think tanks, civil society organizations, and development agencies working to improve the ways in which governance reforms are implemented around the world.

The Communication for Governance & Accountability Program (CommGAP) seeks to promote good and accountable governance through the use of innovative communication approaches and techniques that strengthen the constitutive elements of the public sphere: engaged citizenries, vibrant civil societies, plural and independent media systems, and open government institutions. Communication links these elements, forming a framework for national dialogue through which informed public opinion is shaped about key issues of public concern. CommGAP posits that sound analysis and understanding of the structural and process aspects of communication and their interrelationships make critical contributions to governance reform.

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