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Decision Making Procedures of Public Administrators: 
An Examination of Residential Management Corporations 
of the Chicago Housing Authority 

by 
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Public administrators attempting to determine, interpret, and implement public policy have moved toward a market-oriented approach to service delivery. This popular movement in public management, encapsulated in David Osborne and Ted Gaebler’s book Reinventing Government, promotes a method of public service which focuses on the cost-effectiveness of government services without regard to the process by which they are delivered. Through means revolving around economy and efficiency, public administrators have, for example, opted to privatize many public services. Unfortunately, driving public strategy by means of a cost-benefit analysis often ignores basic democratic values. Accountability, equity, and citizen participation are often non-factors in establishing public policy and implementing programs.

An alternative to the results-driven approach is a method which concentrates on the “process” of governance. Through the collaborative approach, it may be possible to wed market ideas with core democratic values. Consensus building has the potential of increasing bureaucratic responsibility by including concerned citizens and interested groups in the policy formulation process. Also, by opening the process to many diverse interests, economical and efficient government may be joined by equitable administration. Recent decisions by the Chicago Housing Authority provide an opportunity to compare and contrast these two approaches to policy formulation and service delivery.
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INTRODUCTION

How are decisions made by public administrators? Who is involved in the process? How is the common good defined? What value judgments/ethical considerations come into play in the decision-making process? What are some alternatives to the current paradigm of decision-making? These questions will be explored by examining a case study involving the Chicago Housing Authority's (CHA) implementation of the federally-funded Residential Management Corporation (RMC) program in Chicago's public housing developments.

The RMCs are part of the Department of Housing and Urban Developments program to increase the participation of public housing residents in decisions regarding everything from day-to-day living conditions to future public housing strategy (HUD, 1982). The RMC program, in Chicago, has fallen far short of intended goals. The program, as implemented by the CHA, has not provided adequate opportunity for residents, community leaders, and neighborhood organizations to participate in policy formulation or program implementation. This paper examines how the CHA came to choose the RMC program over other community sponsored programs. Its purpose is to assess the relative merits of the market-oriented and collaborative approaches to developing public policies and implementing programs.
The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) was founded in 1937 for the purpose of providing housing to the city's poor (Devereux, 1978). Previous attempts at housing the influx of poor had not gone well for the City of Chicago.1 With the increased appropriation of funding from the federal government in the late 1930's, Chicago was able to reorganize its public housing administration and refocus its efforts in providing quality, affordable, transitional housing to low and middle income residents.2

Like most grants, the money provided by the federal government came with conditions attached. Although the CHA had the power to plan and budget, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had final say in all major decisions (Devereux, 1978). The plans for new buildings, major renovation of older structures, and the inclusion of residents in administration and management, had to be approved in Washington, D.C.

The CHA's hands were tied from the outset. It needed funding from the federal coffers to increase its services. However, with the newly gained wealth, the CHA and the city lost most of its autonomy in decisions regarding public

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1 The Chicago Dwelling Association had attempted to coordinate housing for poor immigrants, former slaves, and, finally, farmers ruined by the depression. By 1936, the Federal government realized that localities could not continue to coordinate public housing, thus, reorganizing Social Insurance and Human Services. See Devereux, 1978.

2 The provision of public housing was originally intended to provide housing to low income families. This housing was to be transitional in the sense that qualified residents would only live in public housing long enough to be able to afford housing that was not subsidized. See Devereux, 1978.
housing. The site selection process for determining where a new public housing development would be located is a prime example of how the injection of federal influence constrained CHA autonomy.

Chicago has often been cited as a city "established not to work" (Commission on Civil Rights, 1982, 2). The city was established with a city council of 50 delegates from 50 different localities. With only the mayor being elected from the citizens at large, sectional and factional interests often prevailed in the council chambers. Prior to federal intervention, the politically weakest areas wound up with the public housing developments.3 In 1955 The Sun-Times, one of Chicago’s daily newspapers, finally called for justice not only in public housing site selection, but in public services as a whole:

Chicago needs a city government which can govern. Chicago needs a city government which will provide a just and workable balance between the local interests of its many neighborhoods and the general interests of the city as a whole. Chicago needs a city government which can plan, legislate, and administer public services for the common good of all of its two million citizens, rather than for the special interests of special groups. (1955, 4)

The introduction of Federal bureaucracy into the planning and implementation procedures of the CHA stripped the mayor’s office and the city council of much of their autonomy (Banfield & Meyerson, 1955). Site selection for public housing developments, by mandate of HUD, forced CHA

3 This explains why the city’s south and west sides are so heavily populated with public housing developments. See Devereux, 1978.
projects to be erected throughout the city. The factions that governed the city council continually battled with the mayor's office and the federal mandates the CHA had to follow. Traditionally white, affluent areas of the city continued to organize and exert political pressure on the city council to restrict development of public housing projects to the poor, traditionally black neighborhoods of the city (Devereux, 1978). Political debate and territorial battles lead to the decay of Chicago's public housing administration and services.

Completely absent from the battle raging over public housing in Chicago were the current residents and neighborhood voices. During the post-war period, decisions were made by HUD delegates, the city council, the mayor, and CHA administrators (Banfield & Meyerson, 1955). Although there had been calls for resident involvement and public participation, they were summarily dismissed by all government parties (Banfield & Meyerson, 1955).

After three decades of ward infighting, Mayor Richard J. Daley was called before a congressional hearing on civil rights violations in the operations of the CHA. Ironically, the mayor was introduced as "the most effective elected municipal official in America today" (Testimony before the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development, 1976, 56). In his opening comments, the Mayor laid all blame of mismanagement on HUD:

Because your inquiries involve programs which are administered by the Federal Government, without any

4 This is the explanation of why the city erected developments such as Cabrini Green within site of the most luxurious section of Chicago - the Gold Coast. See Welfield, 1976.
review by local government, these are matters which must be corrected by the Federal Government. But because of our concern that they be resolved with the best interests of our neighborhoods, the city of Chicago is eager to cooperate with the members of this committee, as well as with local and national administrations of HUD and FHA. (Testimony before the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development, 1976, 56)

Mayor Daley continued to outline several ideas for returning much of the decision-making control to Chicago government. Many of these suggestions, however, did not impress the committee. One afterthought, the proposal to include residents and neighborhood organizations in policy formulation, began a process that would result in the federally-funded, locally-implemented Residential Management Corporation program.

Residential Management Corporations

The concept of tenant-managed public housing places the on-site management responsibilities with a resident volunteer committee.5 The Resident Management Corporation (RMC), elected by the projects residents, is responsible for selecting the method by which the development will be managed. The RMC may choose to manage the project itself (self-management), select a non-profit organization to run the development, or bid for a private management firm to assume the on-sight operational responsibilities (HUD, 1979). Once the method has been selected, the resident group acts as a board of directors to assure efficient and effective

5 "On-site management" refers to the day-to-day activities of maintaining a public housing development. These include waste removal, tenant concerns, working with CHA and HUD representatives, etc. The CHA and HUD remain in control of the overall budgets and acts as advisors to the RMCs regarding bids, etc.
management.

Pilot programs in tenant management and participation, established in 1976, were developed and implemented in some of the worst public housing developments in the United States. These experimental programs were funded through grants jointly provided by HUD and the Ford Foundation. In the B.W. Cooper Housing Project of Baltimore, tenant management greatly improved the living conditions and resident satisfaction (see Appendix A). The findings, after three years, were found to be positive enough for HUD to budget for local housing authorities to voluntarily implement principles of tenant management (HUD, 1979). In Chicago, however, it would not be until the election of Harold Washington in May of 1983, that the residents of the CHA would be offered the opportunity to participate in a tenant-management program.

Mayor Washington entered office committed to the idea that Chicago’s neighborhoods needed support and cultivation. During his four and half year tenure, neighborhood organizations and residents of public housing gained unparalleled access to the mayor’s office and the CHA (Bennett, 1988). However, Washington’s administration, bowing to pressure from the city council, stopped short of institutionalizing citizen participation in city administration.6

Finally, in 1988, the Department of Housing and Urban

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6 Although Washington established task forces, invited non-government participants to sit on committee meetings, the city council would not spend the money needed to formalize neighborhood organizations. See Bennett.
Development, under the leadership of Jack Kemp, formalized the idea of residential management. A document entitled, "New Choices for Residents," outlined several different programs in which tenants and housing authorities could participate. One such program was the Residential Management Corporation (RMC). As stated previously, this program gave residents the "right to choose the management of their development from among self-management organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other public and private groups" (HUD, 1988, 4). In other words, the RMC program gave the residents the authority to formulate, implement, and oversee the management mechanism they preferred.

The same year that HUD began offering a choice to public housing residents, Richard J. Daley, Jr. was elected the new mayor of Chicago. Daley quickly appointed Vince Lane as Director of the CHA. Lane, who had no previous public sector experience, promised to meet "the needs of the customers" of the CHA. (Henkoff, 1989). He did so by offering the RMC option. However, this decision was made without sufficient input from the city council, CHA residents, other interested parties.

At the time Lane took control of the CHA, there were 200,000 "customers" spread out in 364 buildings (See Appendix B). Of the nearly quarter million residents, 97% were black, 75% were on welfare, and 80% were unmarried women with families (Henkoff, 1989). Lane was determined to bring residents of the CHA the same level of service that his customers expected from his real estate business.
Before Lane could move forward and allow residents to manage and possibly own CHA developments, he realized that the projects had to be made safer in order for residents to care about their quality of life. In 1989, Lane and the CHA began the "Clean Sweep" program, again without input from residents, neighborhood organizations, or other concerned interests. The "sweeps" moved through each CHA building cleaning public areas and inspecting units for needed repairs. If guns or drugs were found in apartments, the police escort was notified. This controversial tactic brought angry calls from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the National Rifle Association (NRA). Lane was not deterred by the accusations that the CHA had unconstitutionally searched and seized private property and violated residents rights to bear arms (Prud'Homme, 1991). Lane defended his "sweeps" by declaring:

Suburban Chicago politicians fear that the drug gangs will simply move to "normal" neighborhoods if the projects are swept "clean." But that would be great. Nationally, we'll never get a handle on violent crime until "normal" folks feel the fear that's felt in the ghetto. Only then will they scream for the kind of law enforcement, including things like house-by-house searches, that gives content to all the law-and-order rhetoric. (Kramer, 1992, 61)

The "swept" buildings, beginning with the eight-building, 1127-unit Rockwell Gardens, saw a 30% drop in violent crime in the first year (S. Canty, personal communication, October, 1993). The CHA has used Rockwell Gardens as a model for what public housing can be like. In the first year of renovation, the CHA spent 4.5 million
dollars. Previously the complex had received less than $1 million (S. Canty, personal communication, October, 1993). Along with an overhaul to the physical structure, the CHA instituted new, strict guidelines for the residents. Part of the new agreement was a ban on drugs and guns of any kind. Lane, again, pointed to the suburbs to defend this mandate. "If the suburbs can enforce aesthetic codes, the CHA should be able to "force" its residents to abide by some simple rules" (McCormick, 1992, 62).

The measurable change in safety procedures and in physical surroundings allowed residents of public housing in Chicago to begin the process of establishing better lives. No longer preoccupied with survival, tenants sought to expand the changes. One approach was a move toward tenant management and possible tenant ownership. The first developments to request aid in establishing an RMC were Rockwell Gardens and Lake Parc Place.

Currently, there are only ten RMC's in various stages of development within the CHA. The choice to self-manage is not one that is to be taken lightly. The training manual describes the process as taking,

about five years and covers four stages. In the first phase, floor captains are identified and a committee structure is established. Leaders undergo training and community needs are identified and action plans developed. In the second stage, a tenant-management election is held and a management board established. The board develops policies and hires staff. In the third stage, dual management is put into place - the CHA and the Resident Management Council work together to manage the property and develop regulations. In the fourth phase, the Resident Management Corporation assumes full management of the development. (CHA, 1991, 14)
Although this process may appear time consuming and may require vast resources, the Bush and Clinton Administrations have placed great stock in the program. Under Bush, HUD guaranteed 100 million dollars to continue this program into 1993, hoping the program would "increase management incentives, improve efficiency, and promote resident empowerment" (HUD, 1992, 4).

The CHA, after years of resistance to the idea, has begun allowing residents to explore management and ownership possibilities. The decision to move in this direction was made with very good intentions. However, the process by which the RMC's were established ignored resident wishes and community concerns. The following chapter will explore the market-based approach employed by Lane to begin privatizing public housing in Chicago. Chapter Three will identify and explain an alternative process of decision-making in the public sector. The final chapter will discuss the possible synthesis of a market-oriented process with a collaborative approach to developing public policy and program implementation.
CHAPTER 2
THE MARKET-BASED APPROACH TO PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

David Osborne and Ted Gaebler (1992) in the popular book, Reinventing Government, outlined a set of principles to guide the local public administrator. A large part of this book discusses how to make the public sector more market oriented. Vince Lane, upon entering office at the CHA, paraphrased the thesis of Reinventing Government when he demanded that the CHA meet "the needs of the customers."

Osborne and Gaebler do not break new ground with their book as much as they outline the direction public administration has been moving for nearly a decade. During the Reagan-Bush administrations, the favored route to provide public services was "deregulation, load shedding, privatization, devolution of function to the state and local governments, and public choice initiatives" (Lan & Rosenbloom, 1992, 535). The underlying logic was to move toward a market-based administrative approach.

Lane brought a dedication to the principles of Osborne and Gaebler (1992). Most important was the idea that the customers (residents) had to be satisfied. Also, privatization of management and ownership of CHA developments was considered to be the most appropriate direction (Henkoff, 1989).

The market-based approach implemented by Lane brought quick action to solve problems such as guns, drugs, and empty housing units. Projects were "swept", some developments were
rehabilitated, others were scrapped, business incentives were offered, and new management/ownership options were supplied to agreeing residents (McCormick, 1992). Four years after Lane's appointment, Osborne and Gaebler would use phrases such as, "catalytic government," "community-owned government," "customer driven government," "anticipatory government," "and market-oriented government" (Gaebler & Osborne, 1992). Significantly, Gaebler and Osborne fail to mention "democratic government."

Reinventing Government provided public administrators and the public with many successful vignettes of agencies and communities that have adopted an entrepreneurial approach to providing public services. There is, however, a large contingent of academics and public administrators that question the process by which government must be "reinvented."

Many questions have risen over the contradictory statements the school of "reinventing government" has made. The guiding principles of empowerment and change based on the market seem absolutely opposed. The concerns can be summed up as follows:

While entrepreneurship calls for autonomy, a personal vision of the future, secrecy, and risk-taking behavior, democratic administration demands accountability, citizen participation, open policymaking processes, and "stewardship" behavior. (Bellone & Goerl, 1992, 131)

The CHA, during the past four years, while continuing to operate with taxpayer money, has plotted a course without consulting residents, community leaders, or those who pay the
bills (E. Hollander, personal communication, December 28, 1993). Lane, by employing the tenets of market-based public service, has focused the attention of CHA management on economical and effective guidelines to move public housing forward. For example, by focusing on ends such as reduced crime and resident satisfaction, the CHA, under Lane, was forced to borrow an additional $150 million from HUD in 1990 (M. Davis, personal communication, December 29, 1993). H. George Frederickson expressed concern over this type of administration by asking:

Well managed for whom? Efficient for whom? Economical for whom? We have generally assumed in public administration a convenient oneness with the public. We have not focused our attention or concern to the issue of variations in social and economic conditions. It is of great convenience, both theoretically and practically, to assume that citizen A is the same as citizen B and that they both receive public services in equal measure. This assumption may be convenient, but it is obviously both illogical and empirically inaccurate. (Frederickson, 1990, 228)

The idea of basing a democratic government on a market-based approach, according Frederickson, is inherently flawed. The notions of social equity, the common good, and responsibility of the public administrator are conspicuously ignored in the process of "reinventing government."

The Concept of Social Equity

Woodrow Wilson argued that the "law should be administered with enlightenment, with equity (italics added), with speed, and without friction" (Hyde & Shafritz, eds., 1992, 12). It was not until 1968 that social equity emerged as
an important third pillar of public service. The theory of social equity, simply put, is altering social and economic conditions to make all citizens equal.

Until the late 1960's, public servants and administration theorists had been primarily concerned with providing services based on the rationality of effectiveness or economics. This construct was completely void of any semblance of equity or equality. The discussions begun in 1968 lead to a debate over the place of equity in public administration that would continue for over ten years.

John Rawls, in the early 1970's, put forth two principles that would guide the social equity discussion in the ensuing years. While this discussion may not have been embraced by the Chicago policymakers, Rawls articulated a theory that provided a new foundation from which to provide social critique. In A Theory of Justice, Rawls outlines the idea of social equity as, “first: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others,” and “second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone’s advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all” (Rawls, 1971, 60-61). Rawls believed the first principle applies to “basic liberties of citizens...(the right to vote and to be eligible for public offices).” The second principle applies to the “distribution of income and wealth and to the design of organizations” (Rawls, 1971, 61).

Finally, the principles of equity and equality have been
added to the ASPA Professional Standards and Ethics Workbook and Study Guide for Public Administrators (Hennigan & Mertins, 1981). The definition of social equity has also been broadened to include theory and practicality:

Social equity is a phrase that comprehends an array of value preferences, organizational design preferences, and management style preferences. Social equity emphasizes equality in government services. Social equity emphasizes responsibility for decisions and program implementation for public managers. Social equity emphasizes change in public management. Social equity emphasizes responsiveness to the needs of citizens rather than the needs of public organizations. Social equity emphasizes an approach to the study of and education for public administration that is interdisciplinary, applied, problem solving in character, and sound theoretically. (Frederickson, 1990, 234)

The Concept of The Common Good/The Public Interest

If social equity is missing from the market-oriented approach so too is the public interest. The classical liberal understanding of public interest has been defined by Bentham as:

The interest of the community is one of the most general expression that can occur in phraseology of morals: no wonder that the meaning of it is often lost. When it has a meaning, it is this. The community is a fictitious body, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its members. The interest of the community then is - what? The sum of the interests of the various members who compose it. (1876, 145)

Public management rooted in a market approach moves from an attempt to define what is in the best interest of the public to what is popular with those that carry influence. In an
entrepreneurial style of government, only the identified customers are considered. The CHA, for example, has decided to move ahead with RMC's and possible ownership options. These policies are enabling residents to take control of their lives and, in some cases, break the welfare cycle. Unfortunately, Lane and the CHA did not consult community leaders or neighborhood organizations in the rush to achieve results. The economy and efficiency of market-based public management disregards any debate about the common good.

Arriving at what is in the best interest of the public has plagued scholars and administrators since the time of Plato. Out of the debate, the idea that the public interest "serves the whole public rather than those of some sector of the public" (Benfield & Meyerson, 1955, 287) has come to be central to the discussion. E.E. Schattschneider has added that the common good may be described as "the aggregate of common interests, including the common interest in seeing that there is fair play among private interests (italics added)" (Schattschneider, 1952, 22).

The debate surrounding the definition of the common good in public sector management centers around two different positions. Theorists, such as Schattschneider, approach searching for the common good from a unitary or universal conception. Others such as Locke and Bentham, establish the public interest from the viewpoint of the individual. What follows is a brief discussion of the mechanics involved in determining the common good.
The Unitary Conception of Public Interest

The common good from a unitary or universal perspective views society as a "whole". Collective ends, such as freedom of speech, have precedence over individual ends. Establishing the common good becomes a process of identifying what is in the public interest and acting on that information. As described by Marcus G. Raskin in *The Common Good*, "The conscious person sustains the common good just as the common good organizes social life to encourage people to attain consciousness and the common good" (Raskin, 1986, 294).

The unitary conception of the common good has two contrasting approaches. The first, organismic, thinks of a political entity as having ends which supersede the ends of individuals within such an organism. The second, communalistic, views the public interest with ends which individual members within the body politic universally share or almost universally share (Banfield & Meyerson, 1955). For example, if viewed from the organismic conception, public housing helps maintain the viability of the city (organism) by providing a sense of association with the community for residents. The communalistic perception holds that basic shelter is considered a right by virtually the entire populace. As such, public housing is protected as part of the public interest.
The Individualistic Conception of the Common Good

Public interest reached through the individualistic construct defines the "whole" as the sum of ends "entertained by individuals." A decision is in the public interest if it is consistent with as large a part of the "whole" as possible (Bentham, 1876). There are three sub-types of the individualistic conception of the common good: utilitarian, quasi-utilitarian, and qualified individualistic.

Public interest, as defined in the utilitarian concept, is the "greatest happiness of the greatest number" (Banfield & Meyerson, 1955, 260). The needs of individuals are placed before the needs of the society in determining the common good. For the public administrator or the theorist, it is merely a matter of determining if a decision is in the public interest by weighing the gains and losses in utility.

A step further in the individualistic conception is the idea of a quasi-utilitarian approach to defining the public interest. In searching for the common good, the quasi-utilitarian concept places a greater value on the happiness of some members of the community (Banfield & Meyerson, 1955). Therefore, the public interest is identified by those individuals or groups which have the most influence in the political arena.

Finally, the qualified individualistic approach to the public interest defines the ends of the "whole" as those deemed "appropriate by decision-makers" (Banfield & Meyerson, 1955). In other words, public administrators who employ this
conception may exclude full classes of ends which may appear irrelevant. The common good, therefore, is dictated by one person or select group of persons.

Attempting to identify the common good can take several different directions. A unitary conception implies a cooperative choice process. A function of the public administrator must be to utilize an appropriate process to reach goals identified by the public. The individualistic approach, by contrast, places the public administrator in the position of referee to the antagonistic means and competing ends. Public managers, when identifying the public good, must remain dedicated to process. They must avoid the market-oriented strategy of focusing on ends that satisfy individuals and specific groups.

Bureaucratic Responsibility

Many of the principles summarized in Reinventing Government deal with removing barriers in service provision, including "empowerment" of clients, minimization of rules, elimination of line-item budgeting, and decentralization of institutions. One critic of Gaebler and Osborne argues that the deification of an entrepreneurial public administrator is a positive step. However, he states efforts to try new methods of public management, while admirable, must keep in mind "the fundamentals of American public institutions, i.e., our original, core values of republican, constitutional, and democratic governance" (Goodsell, 1993, 85).

Gaebler and Osborne, borrowing from French economist
J.B. Say, define an entrepreneur as an individual who "uses resources in new ways to maximize productivity and effectiveness" (Gaebler & Osborne, 1992, xix). By way of anecdote, Gaebler and Osborne cite examples of how city managers, public school district superintendents, and even officers in the military used a market-based vision to alter strategies, make decisions, and establish non-governmental, private entities to handle situations that may not pass public scrutiny.7

Managing in a proactive manner as Gaebler and Osborne advocate (1992) may lead to positive results. However, this behavior must be evaluated in terms of administrative responsibility. Bureaucratic responsibility is not just simply following policies and procedures. Public administrators must strive to uphold the democratic principles of "accountability, citizen participation, open policymaking processes, and concern for the long-term public good" (Bellone & Goerl, 1992, 131).

In his book, Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age, Benjamin Barber argues there are two types of democracy. The first, and one closely resembling market-based public administration, is "thin democracy". "Thin democracy" holds that a public entrepreneur is merely concerned with effectively and responsively generating "public revenue in order to provide public services" (Barber, 1985, 95). The role of the public administrator is one of an

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7 Gaebler and Osborne are dedicated to private community development banks which operate outside the bounds of democratic government for the sake of economy and efficiency. If appropriate results can not be gained through a public agency, then it is appropriate to establish a non-profit entity. See chapter five.
semi-autonomous agent who simply evaluates success after a
decision has been made and a program implemented. In this
scenario no proactive accountability exists.

In contrast to “thin democracy”, Barber describes a
model that holds administrators much more accountable. The
idea of “strong democracy” centers around the role of the
citizen in the “design and delivery of public goods and
service.” (Barber, 1985, 116). Where the entrepreneurial
administrator is primarily concerned with the effective and
efficient use of revenue, the “civic-regarding” entrepreneur
(Bellone & Goerl, 1992) maintains a participatory
relationship with the constituency. “Strong democracy”
demands the public administrator serve as a model and
educator of civic duty (Barber, 1985). It is hoped that by
cultivating a body politic that is interested in protecting
the political community “trust in government, the citizen’s
sense of efficacy, and a shared conception of the common
good” (Levine, 1984, 181) will be adopted.

Administrative responsibility must include a sense of
entrepreneurship – the idea of attempting new methods – but
public administrators must not forget that they are
accountable to the principles of a democratic government.
Some of the ideas put forth in Reinventing Government, such
as autonomy, mission-driven organizations, and privatization,
are ideas that need to be incorporated into public
administration. The ideas summarized by Gaebler and Osborne
do have a place in public administration. Their thesis,
however, is missing the elements of social equity, public
interest, and non-market-driven accountability. Also lacking in *Reinventing Government* is a formalized procedure to provide public administrators with guidelines on how to best implement the ten concepts. The next section will synthesize the idea of entrepreneurship with the three missing values in a collaborative, consensus based approach to public sector management.
'Consensus' means unanimous concurrence among the interests represented on a negotiated rulemaking committee established under (section 6), unless the committee agrees upon another specified definition. (House Bill No. 317, 1993, 2)

This basic definition, provided by the Montana Legislature, attempts to formalize discussion surrounding the principles of the collaborative approach to public management. Consensus building in policy formulation and program implementation is a response to the deeply entrenched adversarial role that pits government against citizen. Principles of collaboration can be found in such varied places as "Enlightenment philosophy, Jeffersonian democracy, and American Pragmatism" (Dukes, 1993, 52). However, during the latter part of this century litigation and arbitration seem to be the vehicles of choice in public dialogue.

The adversarial relationship between government and citizens has its roots in several factors which are summarized in three broad categories: "disintegration of community; alienation from the institutions and practices of governance; and inability to solve public problems and resolve public conflict" (Dukes, 1993, 46). Attempting to formulate public policy either in a courtroom or boardroom has not moved public administration any closer to efficient or effective management. Because litigation and arbitration lead to a winner and a loser, the idea of equity cannot be satisfied.
The CHA's decision to exclude virtually every interested party from the development of a policy regarding resident management or tenant ownership led to legal action. Both the NRA and the ACLU sued the CHA over constitutional infringements derived from the "Clean Sweep" program (S. Canty, personal communication, October, 1993). By attempting to find an efficient and economical solution, Lane was forced, by court order, to establish ACLU approved guidelines for project searches.

Often the only route citizens or groups have in delaying or halting actions by public agencies is the courtroom (Johnson, 1993, 56). Although there are very few studies available, the evidence gathered indicates that by excluding public participation, the cost of time in court and arbitration and legal fees outweigh the price of establishing a collaborative process (M. McKinney & E. Shore, personal communication, October 26, 1993).

An approach that attempts to incorporate the entrepreneurial spirit with the democratic values mentioned earlier would be one that worked to reunite the community through education, communication, and openness in governance. Consensus building attempts to bring individuals and groups together in a forum where winners and losers will not be declared; where communities can be rebuilt; where citizens work with public administrators as equals; and where problems of the general public can be solved for the public good (M. McKinney, personal communication, September 7, 1993).
Collaboration vs. Public Hearings

Part of the legislative reforms of the 1970's included mandates for public comment on public policy and programs. Many of the laws and professional principles guiding public administrators have become twisted from their intended application. Much of the legislation regarding public testimony dictates that the public must be involved at some point in the process (Burke, 1986). In many cases, the public is only consulted after considerable time and effort has gone into developing a program or policy. Once the resources have been expended, agencies and administrators often feel that they need only “satisfy minimum legal requirements for citizen participation” (Thomas, 1990, 435).

The idea of approaching the public after completion of a public project, at best insults the public and, at worst, leads to litigation or arbitration. As one example, the Bonneville Power Administration in Portland, Oregon attempted to mollify the public’s concerns after decisions had been made and work orders issued.

By first making decisions and then explaining them, we were essentially telling people that we knew what was good for them. Meanwhile, the people affected by our decisions were telling us in any way they could – lobbying to curtail BPA’s authority, taking BPA to court, or aiming rifles at BPA surveyors – that the father-knows-best approach to decision making was completely unacceptable. (Johnson, 1993, 56)

The BPA discovered the public does not wish to be treated like children. “We have entrusted them to not only make good decisions but to include us in their deliberations” (Knox,
Consensus building, as an alternative to the current adversarial relationship, attempts to remake the power balance between government and citizen. Although public hearings allow the public access to administrators and legislators, the government usually controls all of the factors from hearing site to analysis. The collaborative method attempts to equalize the power balance by employing a formalized structure. This provides guidelines for opening a dialogue which may lead to a resolution, determines the process by which agreement can be reached and implemented, and recognizes potential constraints. The framework of consensus building, as seen by Benjamin Barber,

seeks to create a public language that will help reformulate private interests in terms susceptible to public accommodation; and it aims at understanding individuals not as abstract persons but as citizens, so that commonality and equality rather than separateness are the defining traits of human society. (Barber, 1985, 164)

Beginning the Process of Consensus

Gaebler and Osborne faintly suggest that entrepreneurial administrators work to empower citizens through participatory techniques (1992, 14). They begin to identify the inherent problems in the relationship between government and citizens. However, Reinventing Government stops short of discussing how public managers should move toward a philosophy of openness in administration.

In order to remedy the schism between government and the
public, a foundation of mutual trust must be established. Upon entering into a process of collaboration, public managers and the concerned interests, must find a plateau where all parties are of equal footing. Private citizens and groups must attempt to put aside any misgivings about the public officials involved. Administrators and technical experts must understand that, although wary, the public at large may offer perspectives yet to be explored.

With other methods of public dialogue, the public is expected to act in an aggressive manner. Often hearings are scheduled where it is convenient for the panel hearing testimony. In attempting to establish consensus and a new relationship based on trust and respect, the public administrator must discard the passive role. John Burke urges administrators to "feel an obligation to democratic government as a whole, and to act effectively to achieve policy ends" (Burke, 1986, 227). By taking a proactive role in reaching out to individuals and communities, public managers can begin to break the antagonistic relationship that has defined public participation.

The process of building a new paradigm for public involvement based on citizenship requires public administrators to be concerned with the location of the formal meetings. Although it may be comfortable to gather the various individuals and group representatives in a

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8 A definition offered by Dan Kemmis in Community and the Politics of Place of the development of citizenship revolves around participation in a collaborative approach. He states, "as people learn to relate in this way to each other, they discover in their patterns of relationship a new competence, and unexpected capacity to get things done;...getting things done through the power of citizenship." (1990)
conference room at city hall, a less intimidating, neutral site may attract more participants. Dan Kemmis, Mayor of Missoula, Montana, believes that community groups and concerned individuals tend to be more responsive and cooperative in a comfortable surrounding. Talks between the Missoula city council, a non-profit organization, and Missoula business owners over a proposed greenhouse and laundromat, for instance, were held in the local Elks Club (Kemmis, 1990).

The identification of those who should participate in consensus building must be determined before collaboration can begin. According to one theory, "the degree of group involvement desirable in making a decision depends on the attributes of the core problem; some problems demand more involvement, others less." (Vroom & Yetton, 1973, 108). The collaborative approach seeks to involve those with a stake in the outcome. The range of interests that must be represented are those "individuals or organizations that have jurisdiction, those that are affected by the outcome, and individuals or groups that have the power to kill the process" (M. McKinney, personal communication, September 28, 1993).

Participants in the consensus process can represent private citizens, interest groups, corporations, government agencies, congressional staff, academics, labor unions, etc. The common bond between the members involved in collaboration is two-fold. First, they must have some sort of credibility, whether scientific or political, as representatives of a
particular viewpoint or interest (Ehrmann & Lesnick, 1988). Second, they must all be committed to the process. This means that the participants must understand that they "are responsible for coming up with the answer, rather than simply turning it over to a third party" (Kemmis, 1990, 145).

**Reaching and Implementing Agreements**

Once respect for participants and for the process has been attained, the next phase is resolution and implementation. A group may come together to discuss any number of issues facing the public. If, however, some effort is not giving to focusing the discussion of the topic, establishing parameters for success, and identifying an appropriate implementation schedule, the collaborative technique may stall or an ineffective product may result (M. McKinney, personal communication, October 5, 1993).

**Identification of the Issue**

The size of a public topic, as Vroom and Yetton suggest, calls for a like sized discussion group. Whether the final group is a dozen or over fifty, the initial task is for the group to distinguish the primary goal from the many related issues brought forth. A group in Missoula, Montana called Vision 2020 made the mistake of attempting to produce a document that would answer every concern put on the table. The completed text presented ideas to deal with topics ranging from public sewers to nude dancing (Vision 2020, 1993).
At the outset of the meeting process, no idea or topic related to the larger issue should be discarded. As the meeting(s) progress, the agreed upon facilitator, will begin to see a pattern in complaints or concerns. If, for example, the committee is brought together to discuss vandalism but the discussions keep coming around to the lack of police presence in the neighborhoods, the group needs to begin to focus energy in this direction.

**Parameters for Success**

Once a focal point has been developed by the consensus group, and before the search for a solution begins, an end point must be determined. The questions, what are we trying to achieve? and when do we know when we have reached it? must be discussed (M. McKinney, personal communication, September 28, 1993). Continuing with the vandalism/police presence example, if police patrols are beefed up or incidence of vandalism decrease, are those signs of success? If citizen patrol groups are established to aid in providing a presence on the streets, is that success for the group? Has the group reached its end point when vandalism decreases 10%, 20%, 50%? Or, should the end point come when vandalism decreases by 25% for six months?

It is also important to consider what to do if an agreement is not reached. Again, the committee must agree on a contingency procedure in case a solution is not found (M. McKinney, personal communication, October 19, 1993). Should the group seek the opinion of an objective expert? Should
the decision be put to a simple vote? Should a neutral arbitrator review the evidence and opinions and make a decision?

In order to honor the principles of the collaborative method, parameters of success and failure must be predetermined. It is hoped that by agreeing to provisions of success and failure before discussions start, the group will be focused on a definable endpoint. Also, if talks breakdown, by agreeing to ground-rules the chance of litigation may be lessened.

**Implementation Schedule**

Just as boundaries must be set establishing success and failure, collaborative groups must also consider how the policy, program, or agreement will be implemented. The course of implementation in the public system is derived from legislation or the courts. Although groups may agree on action plans that address some public concern, these groups lack legal legitimacy.

In order to move any agreement to an implementation phase, the ad hoc group must consider two possible routes. The first is to focus on developing an agreement that will be written into legislation (M. McKinney, personal communication, October 19, 1993). By working with staff from the local, state, or federal levels of government, an agreement may ultimately become law. An example of a solid, collaborative process that ignored political factors is the failed Lolo-Kootenai Accords. If the congressional
delegation from Montana had been included in the discussions between environmentalists and loggers, the Kootenai-Lolo Forest Management Act of 1991 may have succeeded (P. Trenk, personal communication, October 19, 1993). Without legislative legitimacy, the Accord was never implemented.

The second method of gaining legitimacy for an agreement is through the court system (M. McKinney, personal communication, October 19, 1993). Implementation by way of the legal system requires that participants understand that even after signing an agreement, it could take years before a judge signs the official document. In Montana, for example, agreements that deal with water rights and water distribution must pass through the Montana Water Court. Currently, the Water Court is approximately three years behind on ratifying agreements (Shore, 1993).

Constraints

For all the collaborative method has to offer, it is not a panacea for every public dispute or every public policy matter. It is important to note that, just as with every other method of management, there are factors that may hinder the adoption of this technique or the implementation of an agreement. A public manager or assembled group may be burdened by statutory restrictions, by the fluid nature of the collaborative process, or by a perceived time limitation.

Part of the collaborative process, as discussed earlier, is the idea of developing many ideas on how to resolve any given situation. However, when dealing with public issues,
it is important to understand legal constraints that may effect the eventual outcome of collaborative discussions. An ineffective collaborative process would be one that ignores the statutory limitations placed on public agencies and private citizens (M. McKinney, personal communication, October 19, 1993). For example, the group searching for a way to reduce vandalism would have to avoid suggestions of arming bands of vigilantes to round up the criminals.

A second constraint is the continually changing dynamics of the participatory process. Every time a public manager or concerned group organizes a discussion group, the interested parties are new and different. Each time the collaborative process takes on a new issue or revisits an old issue, the barrier of mistrust must be dealt with anew (M. McKinney, personal communication, October 26, 1993). The idea of constantly building new relationships and interacting in new dynamic situations may seem a constraint. But some would argue that it is a necessary and important constraint. Only through education and practice can initial suspicions be delayed quickly (Dukes, 1993).

Some researchers argue that time constraints encourage "less involvement than would otherwise appear desirable, without endangering eventual decision effectiveness" (Vroom & Yetton, 1973, 84). This position is not supported by empirical evidence. John Thomas found that "effective decisions were reached as often with time constraints (47% of the cases) as without (48% of the cases)" (Thomas, 1990, 442). It was found that public managers that resist or
reduce public involvement when a quick decision needs to be made endanger the implementation of such decisions.

Time spent to involve mayor actors in decision making can expedite implementation (i.e., because those involved are likely to support implementation); and time saved by excluding actors from decision making can slow implementation. (Thomas, 1990, 442)

At times public managers do not have enough time to solicit comments or suggestions. However, it behooves the public administrator to adopt some form of public feedback, no matter how truncated.

The collaborative approach is not a universal method that will solve every dispute or have application for every public policy. Consensus building is one tool among many from which the public administrator can choose. By attempting to explore the exciting ideas of entrepreneurial government while sustaining valued democratic principles, the collaborative approach provides public managers, concerned citizens, and interested groups a forum through which progress can be made.
Currently, only ten groups have formed RMC's in cooperation with the CHA. Vince Lane and the Federal government promised self-management and ownership possibilities to commence within three years. The Chicago community, whether by way of non-profit or neighborhood organizations, needs to be allowed to address its own problems and find solutions for Chicago. (M. Davis, personal communication, December 29, 1993)

This sentiment was expressed by four different organizations contacted regarding the CHA's handling of tenant-managed developments. The other groups, Chicago Community Trust, Operation PUSH, and Inner-City Affiliated Churches, expressed the feeling of frustration described by Peter Johnson of the Bonneville Power Administration. Although the CHA is moving in the direction of entrepreneurial government, democratic values of social equity, accountability, and public participation must not be ignored.

On the issue of public housing, Gaebler and Osborne believe that "when governments push ownership and control into the community, their responsibilities do not end" (Gaebler & Osborne, 1992. 13). Irene Johnson, the president of the LeClaire Courts RMC, has found that management by the residents has produced many positive things. But the CHA and the HUD representatives are hesitant and often resistant to new ideas and approaches (Johnson, 1993).

During the spring of 1984, Mayor Washington unveiled the "Chicago Works Together" economic development program.
Part of that package was the development of neighborhood growth and management programs. "The administration's philosophy of neighborhood planning, given the city's very serious resource constraints, was - whenever possible - to build on the organizational capacities of existing neighborhood groups" (Bennett, 1988, 24). The Washington administration attempted to include businesspeople, homeowners, landlords, tenants, and neighborhood associations in developing policy for the specific communities.

The CHA, in its attempt to "empower" residents and shed some management responsibility from the burdened public agency, has taken action in breaking the welfare cycle. However, the method by which this process has taken place, by receiving direction and aid from HUD, has continued to strip residents and communities of their autonomy. According to the individuals interviewed for this paper, the idea of piggybacking local and even federal programs onto methods neighborhoods are in the process of using is the model that should be followed.

The collaborative approach is very appropriate for decision-making in the CHA. As a public agency with 200,000 constituents, maintaining an almost dictatorial fashion of policy formulation is not very effective, efficient, or equitable (Thomas, 1990). Principles of consensus, such as mutual trust and inclusiveness, must replace antagonism and exclusion in decision-making. The interested individuals and groups are there, and by way of informal survey, very willing to work with residents, HUD representatives, CHA members,

Programs like "Chicago Works Together" have begun to cultivate a new sense of community. The CHA, by exploring resident management and resident ownership, has begun to build such a sense of "place" (Kemmis, 1990). Vince Lane and the CHA must include all of the residents, not just the ones of "swept" buildings. Community members who are affected by public housing, neighborhood leaders and organizations that have influence in public developments, HUD and CHA representatives, local, state, and federal legislators, and even contractors who service the CHA must be invited to debate the direction and needs of public housing in Chicago.

By employing an ends-based approach to policy strategy, the CHA has managed to increase resident satisfaction and lower crime in the RMC buildings (S. Canty, personal communication, October, 1993). Without attempting a process-oriented method, such as collaboration, the CHA has alienated RMC presidents, residents of non-RMC units, community leaders, neighborhood organizations, the ACLU, and the NRA (E. Hollander & I. Johnson, personal communication, December 1993). Lane, the CHA, and HUD have all turned a deaf ear towards suggestions other than privatization of management and ownership. Although the RMC program has produced positive benefits, some argue that getting the "government to do the right things may ultimately be more important than getting government to do things right" (Donahue, 1989, 222).
The CHA, public agencies and public managers across the country can not simply accept the ideas of market-based public management without exploring methods of implementation. Public servants must not allow themselves to become caught in a phenomenon without examining the effect such techniques may have on core democratic values. To paraphrase Benjamin Barber, public administrators need to take their political authority seriously and follow the principles of democratic theory in policy design and implementation. However, public managers must be concerned with a more active approach to administrative responsibility which includes citizen education and public involvement (Thomas, 1990).

Summary and Conclusion

Much of Gaebler and Osborne's thesis involves the privatization and load shedding of public services and public duties. HUD and the CHA have begun to move Chicago public housing in the direction of resident management/ownership. This shift in policy, however, was made with only the desired ends as justification.

Although the RMC program in Chicago has produced some positive results, insufficient public participation has caused problems with accountability and equity for other public agencies. For example, the community development banks established in Los Angeles after the riots have to date allocated limited funds to rebuild South-Central L.A. Also, the banks have loaned little to what they consider risky
enterprises (E. Hollander, personal communication, December 28, 1993). The privatization of inner-city growth in L.A. has led to monies being allocated in a non-equitable fashion with little governmental oversight.

The CHA case and the many success stories present in Reinventing Government tend to overshadow the costs to democratic values. In order to attain equity, encourage public participation, and hold public officials accountable, public administrators must resist the temptation of adopting market-driven policy without sufficient public involvement. The benefits of such a method are not yet definitive.9

The collaborative approach is not a panacea. Consensus building is a process which public managers may enlist in the development of policy. Many of the tenets of an ends-based approach, such as placing an importance on the customer (constituent) and forcing the adoption of new methods, may help the public administrator break the image of government as a non-caring, sluggish entity. The public official, however, must ensure that the common good is still being served through public participation and bureaucratic responsibility. Consensus building offers a mechanism to public managers which exploits the positive attributes of the market while remaining true to democratic dogma.

9 Donahue's thesis cautions public administrators from thinking that privatization is the answer to all that ails public management. By way of example, Donahue suggests that privatization should be attempted on a case-by-case basis.
APPENDIX A

STATEMENT OF VINEY REYNOLDS
B.W. COOPER TENANT MANAGEMENT

B. W. Cooper Development was built in 1941 and 1936, and is located on 56 acres of land.

Tenant Management started at B. W. Cooper in 1976. Funds were made available through H.U.D. and the Ford Foundation, to demonstrate Tenant Management in our city.

In 1976, B. W. Cooper formerly Calliope was considered one of the worst projects in the city.

The project was at its highest with:

I. High vacancy
II. Vandalism
III. High accounts receivables
IV. Maintenance problems
   A. Heating and electrical
   B. Broken appliances
   C. Broken stair wells and deteriorated hallways
   D. Ground maintenance
V. Graffiti
VI. Crime, poverty and social delinquency
VII. And the community spirit was at its lowest.

Tenant Management goals were to:

I. Improve Management by reducing the accounts receivables, discover income and decrease vacancies.
II. Increase resident satisfaction
III. Increasing employment by providing jobs through tenant Management.
IV. Provide self-determination
V. Provide a sense of communication
VI. Show the city that Tenant Management would work.

Today, B. W. Cooper:

I. Vacancy rate monthly is 0 to 10
II. Accounts receivable is 11% to 13%
III. The monthly rent roll increased from $36,408.00 to $139,271.00
IV. The residents have input in major decisions pertaining to the development.
V. Quarterly meetings are held with the residents.
VI. Many refrigerators, ranges, new hot water heaters, and space heaters were installed in the apartments.
VII. The grounds are cleaned on a daily basis. Garbage is picked up on a four (4) days a week.
VIII. Maintenance work is performed on a daily basis, and an emergency line is available after working hours.
IX. The broken stair wells are repaired
X. The entire electrical system has been replaced.
XI. The community spirit is at its highest.

B. W. Cooper Apartments are fully occupied, and all residents are counselled by the Board before an eviction. The physical condition of the development is brought up to standards. Today, B. W. Cooper is a better place to live.
REFERENCES


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