

THE FUNCTIONS OF EVALUATION RESEARCH  
IN  
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS

by

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ABSTRACT

Two main questions form the backbone of this thesis:

- What is the meaning of citizen participation?
- What functions might evaluation research serve in citizen participation programs?

Much of the thesis is an analysis of the literature in an attempt to explore the boundaries and different understandings of citizen participation. It is argued that the citizen participation phenomenon that arose in the 1960's has its broad roots in the social strains and tensions brought about, or intensified, by the change processes of modern society, and that the rationales put forth for citizen participation are largely attempts to resolve these crises. The relationships between citizen participation as a strategy for achieving change and citizen participation as a lifestyle (or precursor of the participatory society) are explored. The thesis concludes that citizen participation is not an adequate dynamic for fundamental, structural change; although it has a key role to play through the processes of consciousness-raising and politicization.

Two case studies are presented: the development of the Britannia Community Services Centre and the Policy Committees of the Greater Vancouver Regional District. In each case study, the functions that evaluation research performed, or might have per-

formed, are examined. It is argued that evaluation research could be a useful tool in helping specific citizen participation programs achieve their goals, and in helping to develop further our understandings of citizen participation.

Several general conclusions about effective implementation of citizen participation programs are drawn from the case studies. The importance of the process aspects of participation (opportunities for learning, social interaction, and making a positive contribution) is stressed. It is argued that the issues and the objectives of a citizen participation program need to be clearly defined early on in the process, and that the expectations of the various groups of actors must be laid out on the table. The thesis concludes that citizen participation in planning should be encouraged primarily at the regional level, and that it should be encouraged at the neighbourhood level only when the issues involved are clearly defined and the resources needed to implement the results of the planning process are available.

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THE FUNCTIONS OF EVALUATION RESEARCH  
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CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

### THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PHENOMENON

The 1960's witnessed a dramatic upsurge in demands from citizens for greater influence and control over the decisions and processes affecting their lives. These demands have followed a myriad of patterns - differing in objectives, strategies, degree of political support, history, and impact. As a consequence, the phrase "citizen participation", now reflects a wide variety of understandings, hopes, aspirations, and feelings.

During the last few years of the 1960's the word 'participation' became part of the popular political vocabulary. This took place under the impetus of demands, notably from students, for new areas of participation to be opened up .... and of demands by various groups for the practical implementation of rights of participation that were theirs in theory. In France, 'participation' was one of the last of De Gaulle's rallying cries; in Britain we have seen the idea given official blessing in the Skeffington report on planning; and in America the anti-poverty programme included a provision for the 'maximum feasible participation' of those concerned. The widespread use of the term in the mass media has tended to mean that any precise, meaningful content has almost disappeared; 'participation' is used to refer to a wide variety of different situations by different people. (A) \*

Perhaps most significant, "citizen participation" became one of the rallying cries of the 1960's, along with such august slogans as "the war on poverty" and "the just society". Citizen participation became the new holy grail - the latest panacea for our social ills and malaise.

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\* Bracketed numbers, eg. (23), refer to the bibliography.  
Bracketed letters, eg. (A), refer to the footnotes at the end of each chapter.

This is not to argue that citizen participation is something completely new. On the contrary, the literature abounds with statements about how participation has long been an ideal in Canadian (or some other country, depending upon the author) life. For example,

The aspirations for more participatory forms of government have parallels in our past. We in Canada have had a long tradition of movements, arising generation after generation, which aimed at improving the common man's ability to share power with those who governed him. In the early 19th century, for example, attempts to move political power away from appointed executive councils and Governors - the Chateau Clique in Lower Canada, and the Family Compact in Upper Canada - and into elected legislative assemblies comprised one such movement, which reached its dramatic peak in the Rebellion of 1837. Aspirations to extend the voting franchise in the late 19th and early 20th centuries constituted another important political movement, with somewhat similar aims. (B)

Whatever its roots in the past, or its connections to the traditional patterns of participation (voting, joining a political party, running for office, ...), it is clear that the citizen participation phenomenon that arose in the 1960's has a number of characteristics that suggest a new trend. The phenomenon is marked by its pervasiveness, not so much in the total numbers of people involved, but in the variety of walks of life from which the participants have come. No longer is active participation limited solely to the well-educated, articulate middle-class or to the major power constellations (business, land developers, and professional associations, for example). The demands for new forms of participation have come largely from the marginal groups

in society - the poor, Indians, the handicapped, the elderly, students, and women. Thus, a major characteristic of the citizen participation phenomenon, and perhaps its prime long term effect, has been the legitimation of the participation of groups of people who had not participated before. In this sense, the phenomenon is not a simple, linear extrapolation from the past - it includes elements that have shifted the meaning of participation into new directions.

The pervasivity of the citizen participation phenomenon has a second dimension. The demands for greater participation have been addressed, not only to the formal political system, but also to the various levels of the civil service, unions, educational administrations, prison officials, businesses, and so forth. This widening of the arena of participation appears to be the result of increased acknowledgment that other institutions besides governments make decisions which have significant public impact. Hence, it is argued that these institutions should be made more accountable both to the people they directly serve and to the wider community. The consumer action movement is a good example of this process. Vancouver's Community Resources Boards, with their emphasis on participation in the administration of the social services and their concern for the participation of client groups, are another example.

Three other characteristics of the citizen participation phenomenon need to be noted. First, many, if not most, of the citizen

participation activities have arisen in response to specific issues. These situations can be divided, in principle, into those cases where the citizens have been attempting to protect their present interests in the face of outside intervention (for example, a single-family neighbourhood organizing to halt the construction of higher density housing in the area) and those cases where the citizens have been attempting to change their present situation (for example, a poverty group organizing for higher welfare rates). Second, the citizen participation phenomenon has been marked by the use of conflict as an action strategy - perhaps the only strategy available to people who are trying to enter the political system from the outside. Third, the citizen participation phenomenon has been coloured by distrust and rejection of existing patterns of authority, and traditional channels for participation.

There are signs of a growing disenchantment with citizen participation, or at least of a growing desire to re-examine the issues involved. The blossom of early hopes has wilted around the edges. There are a variety of indicators - for example, the recent dissolution of the Neighbourhood Services Association's community development program in Vancouver, Vancouver City Council's attempts to hold back on their local area planning program, the Greater Vancouver Regional District politicians' unhappiness with the regional public participation program, and the disillusionment with local area planning of various citizen groups in Kitsilano. As one might expect, the signs do not all point in

one direction. The province's Department of Human Resources is proceeding ahead with the Community Resources Boards and the Provincial Justice Development Commission is attempting to set up regional justice councils. The Federal Government has just initiated a public dialogue on immigration policy.

A number of factors can be suggested to explain the present state of confusion surrounding citizen participation: the intractability of the problems being tackled; the high degree of complexity and interdependency of the issues; the utopian nature of the arguments that have been presented in favour of citizen participation; the reactive and top-down nature of many citizen participation programs; defensiveness on the part of professionals, bureaucrats, and politicians; and the tendency on the part of citizen groups to be parochial in their concerns.

It would seem, then, an appropriate time to re-examine the citizen participation issue.

#### AIMS OF THE THESIS

Two main questions form the backbone of this thesis:

- What is the meaning of citizen participation?
- What functions might evaluation research serve in citizen participation programs?

The first question will be explored along two dimensions. The first is concerned with the relationships between citizen participation and social change. Specifically, the thesis examines



the hypothesis that the broad roots of the citizen participation phenomenon can be found in the modern change environment, and looks at the role of citizen participation in defining and achieving desired change. The second dimension is concerned with the conflicting political ideologies that lie behind citizen participation. Specifically, the thesis examines the relationships between participation as a strategy for achieving some desired end and participation as an end in itself.

The second question will be explored by reviewing the evaluation research literature, focusing particularly on the conceptual frameworks that might be important for citizen participation programs. Two case studies will be presented in an attempt to consider what functions evaluation research performed, or might have performed.

It needs to be noted that the two central threads are mutually dependent. Evaluation research, without the support of a theoretical overview, is an extremely difficult task. At the same time, a major barrier to developing a theory of citizen participation is the lack of evaluative and descriptive case studies.

#### DEFINITIONS

It is traditional, at the outset of a thesis, to provide definitions of the major concepts under study; in this case, citizen participation and evaluation research. A definition of evalua-

tion research is given in the next chapter. Defining citizen participation is a much more difficult, if not impossible, task. As noted earlier, it has become a confusing concept, covering a wide range of meanings and understandings. An important factor behind this confusion has been the different groups of actors who have argued for greater opportunities for participation. Each group has certain central goals and interests in mind which citizen participation is supposed to serve, and their understandings of citizen participation are derived from these central concerns. The interest and concerns of three particular groups - citizens, professionals, and those working for a participatory society - will appear throughout the chapters that follow. A fourth group, the formal decision-makers (municipal politicians, school trustees, Provincial M.L.A.'s, ...), is outside the interests of the thesis. The remainder of this section presents a summary of the perceptions of citizen participation of each of these three groups of actors.

From the point of view of many citizens and their advocates, greater opportunities for participation are a way of coping with specific issues and problems that face them. Most of the specific definitions of citizen participation in the literature arise out of this perception. For example, Cunningham sees citizen participation as:

... a process whereby the common amateurs  
of a community exercise power over decisions  
related to the general affairs of the  
community. (C)

Pateman (62) makes the distinction between pseudo-participation,

partial participation, and full participation. Pseudo-participation covers those situations where an individual participated in some group activity but has no influence over the decisions of the group. Partial participation covers those situations where an individual can influence the decision, but another has the final say. Full participation occurs when all people have equal power in the making of decisions. Arnstein's (3) "ladder of citizen participation" is similar to Pateman's trilogy. What is common to all of these "definitions" is their emphasis on the degree of power delegated to the citizens, and their focus on decision-making as the arena for participation.

A second approach to citizen participation is that of many professionals (social workers, planners, mental health workers, recreation directors, ...). They see citizen participation as a means for improving the services that they are presently offering (see, for example, Burke (10)). The requirement of "maximum feasible participation" in the Office for Economic Opportunity programs in the U.S. appears to be a reflection of this position. Vancouver's Community Resources Boards are another example. Further, some professionals see citizen participation as a strategy for achieving individual or small group change, what Rein (64) has called "community sociotherapy".

Community sociotherapy has to do with the belief system which holds that such processes as organizing groups for self-help, protest, access to community facilities, or even revolution can create a transformation of the individual personality. (D)

A third approach to citizen participation is that of those who seek a "participatory society" (see, for example, Friedmann (29) or Starrs & Stewart (75)). For this group, participation is not so much a strategy as a lifestyle; and the dictionary definition of the word, "participate", namely "sharing", is perhaps most appropriate. Taking off from this, one can talk about the possibilities for sharing (participating) in the wealth of the society, in the opportunities for work and individual self-development, or in the quality of life enjoyed by many in the society.

Citizen participation becomes a very broad concept.

Citizen involvement ..., if approached simply as an aspect of the decision-making process in today's world, is probably too narrowly defined and should be expanded to embrace as well the identification of problems and action upon them. Indeed, 'judging' and 'acting' and 'learning' and 'experimenting' and 'experiencing' and 'becoming' seem likely to be much more integrated activities within persons and institutions than heretofore, and the components of citizen involvement - where it begins and where it ends - may well be indistinguishable. (E)

The obstacles to providing a neat and tidy definition of citizen participation should be clear; much of the thesis is an attempt to explore the boundaries and different understandings of citizen participation. It is important to note here that many individuals hold more than one view of citizen participation, and this may well raise problems for effective implementation of citizen participation programs. Although it will become clear, particularly in the final chapter, the author's bias towards the concept of participation as a lifestyle needs to be acknowledged.

### OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

Chapter 2 contains an eclectic review of the literature on evaluation research and an initial statement of the functions that evaluation research might perform in citizen participation programs.

Chapters 3 and 4 present the attempt to re-examine citizen participation at a theoretical level. Both include discussions of the implications of the theory for evaluation research in citizen participation programs. Specifically, Chapter 3 discusses the relationships between citizen participation and social change, while Chapter 4 looks at the goals and political ideologies surrounding citizen participation.

Chapter 5 contains an exploration of the functions that evaluation research performed, or might have performed, in two specific citizen participation programs in Vancouver: the development of the Britannia Community Services Centre and the Policy Committees of the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

Chapter 6 provides some broad conclusions that arise out of the case studies. It returns to the relationships between citizen participation and radical, structural change and to the question of whether citizen participation is a strategy or a lifestyle.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 1

- A. Pateman, C., Participation and Democratic Theory, Cambridge University Press, London, 1970, pg. 1.
- B. Committee on Government Productivity Staff, Citizen Involvement, Committee on Government Productivity, Government of Ontario, April, 1972, pg. 3.
- C. Cunningham, J.V., "Citizen Participation in Public Affairs", Public Administration Review, Special Issue, October, 1972, pg. 595.
- D. Rein, M., "Social Work in Search of a Radical Profession", Social Work, April, 1970, pg. 23.
- E. Starrs, C. & Stewart, G., Gone Today and Here Tomorrow, Committee on Government Productivity, Government of Ontario, October, 1971, pg. 55.

CHAPTER 2

EVALUATION RESEARCH  
and  
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a review of the evaluation research literature as it relates to citizen participation. It argues that there are two overriding functions that evaluation research can serve in citizen participation programs: helping the program and its participants achieve their goals and providing case studies which will further our understanding of citizen participation and how to effectively implement it.

## SOME DEFINITIONS

Suchman has defined evaluation as:

... the determination (whether based on opinions, records, subjective or objective data) of the results (whether desirable or undesirable, transient or permanent, immediate or delayed) attained by some activity (whether a program, part of a program, ..., an on-going or one-shot approach) designed to accomplish some valued goal or objective (whether ultimate, intermediate, or immediate; effort or performance; long range or short range). (A)

There are numerous other definitions in the literature, their differences deriving largely from the emphasis placed on quantitative versus qualitative research. It is clear, however, that most writers perceive evaluation as having to do with the description, analysis, and making of judgements of attempts at planned change.

The following is a partial list of questions that an evaluation study might try to answer. It provides another means of defining



what evaluation research encompasses.

- Is the program proceeding as planned? If not, what changes have been made, and why?
- Are the objectives being achieved? If not, is this because the assumptions underlying the program (for example, those connecting activities to desired outcomes) are not valid?
- Is the program reaching the people it was supposed to reach?
- Were the initial understandings and estimates of the problems that the program was supposed to tackle accurate?
- Is the program trying to do too much?
- Are undesirable and/or unanticipated effects occurring?
- Are there factors, not under the control of the program, that are affecting the success of the program?

There are a number of key concepts in evaluation research which need to be defined here.

Effects - What changes occur as a result of the program?

- Who or what is affected, and how?

Objectives - What is the program expected to accomplish?

- What changes are considered desirable?

Effectiveness - To what extent have the achieved effects matched the objectives?

- Whose values are used to make these judgments?

Efficiency - What are the costs (time, energy, money, ...) of the program?

### THE COMMITMENT TO EVALUATION

Evaluation studies have a great tendency to run into conflict in the field. The program staff feel that the evaluator cannot possibly understand the complexities of the problems they face, or that the evaluator's demands on their time are too onerous. The evaluator feels that the staff are not taking enough care in the record keeping process, or that they are so biased by their desire to ensure the survival of the program that he cannot rely on their judgments. The program decision-makers wish the evaluator would produce information when they need it, while the evaluator's research design does not permit quick results.

A number of technical suggestions have been made in the literature to alleviate these conflicts. The two most common are that the evaluator should be involved from the very beginning of the program - in the initial planning activities - and that the evaluator should be an internal staff person. However, the conflicts run too deep to be easily solved by technical suggestions. At their roots are two fundamental issues (Carter (13)).

- the degree of commitment on the part of program staff to the need for evaluation, and on the part of the evaluator to the objectives and concerns of the program and the people involved in the program.
- the degree of clarity and agreement over the purposes of the evaluation research.

The question of the purposes or functions of evaluation will be

considered in the following two sections. The issue of commitment has been handled in the literature by making a distinction between on-going programs which, by their nature, do not require evaluation, and social action/social development programs which do require evaluation. On-going programs are

those which have been initiated without any fixed term to their duration and in which long-term administrative and policy decisions have been taken prior to the program's commencement. (B)

Social action/social development programs are

test, pilot, or demonstration projects. These may be one-shot efforts launched without prejudgment as to the possibility of their being repeated, or they may be projects launched to test their usefulness so that a decision may be reached as to the desirability and feasibility of their wide application. (C)

The social action/social development programs can be divided further. For example, Carter (13) suggests three types: inquiry programs designed to gather information on problems, relationships among problems, and attitudes to problems; exploration programs designed to gather information on the problems of implementing a certain strategy; and demonstration programs designed to gather information on the effectiveness of a strategy. Suchman (77) suggests another set: pilot programs which emphasize trial and error and innovation; model programs which demonstrate the success of a strategy under ideal conditions; and prototype programs where a strategy is put to the test of varying environmental conditions.

The usefulness of these distinctions for citizen participation

programs is questionable. Few citizen participation programs are of the on-going type. One example would be the Vancouver City Planning Commission which, although its structure has been modified recently, has become somewhat of an institution at City Hall. The fact that a number of people have been unhappy about its operations and that some changes have been made in the last year suggests that on-going programs do need evaluation of some kind, particularly when the environment of, and the needs for, such a program are changing rapidly.

In general, most citizen participation programs are of the social action/social development type. Political and administrative support for them is at best ambivalent and cautious. Further, they tend to be time limited, and oriented toward a specific task. For example, in Vancouver's Local Area Planning Program, although there is a vague commitment to planning as a never ending, cyclic process, the main emphasis is on the production of a plan to be encoded in the zoning by-law. This would suggest that politicians and administrators would be interested in evaluating these programs to test their effectiveness. This does not seem to be true. One factor, here, may well be a lack of commitment to the basic idea of citizen participation, and a consequent fear that evaluation would prove a program to be a success. Another factor might be that evaluation research takes time and money, both of which seem to be in short supply, particularly at the municipal level.

On the other hand, many of the citizens involved in the participation programs feel that these programs should be on-going, and that the programs are there to meet a need (or solve a pressing problem) rather than to provide an opportunity to learn more about citizen participation strategies. They are likely to react against evaluation, as just one more sign of the lack of political and administrative commitment to citizen involvement.

A basic assumption behind this thesis is that citizen participation is desirable and that we have a great deal to learn about how to affectively achieve it. There seems to be no reason why citizen participation programs cannot both tackle specific problems and provide an opportunity to learn about citizen participation itself. Evaluation research provides a tool that should help both of these aims.

#### THE FUNCTIONS OF EVALUATION RESEARCH

As mentioned earlier, the degree of clarity about the purposes that an evaluation study is meant to fulfill is closely connected to the kinds and degrees of conflict that the study will generate. Further, in designing the evaluation study, the evaluator must answer such questions as: "Who is the evaluation for?" and "To what use will the results be put?". Typical examples of the purposes of evaluation are:

- to demonstrate to others that the program is worthwhile.
- to justify past or projected expenditures.

- to support program continuation, expansion, or re-direction.
- to determine the feasibility of the objectives.
- to compare several programs with similar objectives with regard to their relative effectiveness and efficiency.
- to examine the reasons for the successes and failures of the program.

Two overall types of evaluation are discussed in the literature, geared to two general purposes. Outcome evaluation is aimed at making an overall decision about the program: "Should it be continued or terminated?", "Was it effective?", or "Should it be replicated elsewhere?". This type of evaluation focuses on comparing the final or overall outcomes of the program with the stated objectives, and commonly uses "objective" research techniques such as control groups and before and after measures. Process evaluation is an on-going activity, where information is collected and analysed continuously, as a means to helping the day-to-day decision-making of the program. This type of evaluation concentrates on describing the various activities of the program, and on making relatively subjective judgments about the effectiveness of these activities. It is often concerned with determining the reasons behind the successes and failures of the program, and with helping to clarify and modify the program objectives.

## THE FUNCTIONS OF EVALUATION RESEARCH IN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS

Four functions for evaluation research in citizen participation programs are suggested here. They are not mutually exclusive, nor are they likely to be the only functions that evaluation could perform. It needs to be noted that, in the final analysis, the functions that evaluation research can perform need to be examined in the light of each specific program.

### 1. As a means of feedback

It is extremely easy to become caught up in the day-to-day activities of a program, squeezed between overwhelming demands on limited resources and idealistic objectives. There is little time for reflection about what is being achieved, or where the program is headed. This is particularly true in citizen participation programs since many citizens hold down full-time jobs, and have other interests that they wish to pursue. Their involvement is very much on a part-time basis.

Evaluation research can be used as a tool for gathering and analysing the information that would help people keep on top of what is happening, reflect back over what has happened, and plan for the future.

### 2. As a means of promoting wider involvement

In many citizen participation programs, a handful of people - often termed "professional citizens" - are highly involved,

while the wider community is not involved at all, or only involved in an extremely limited fashion through such activities as public meetings. This gap can be reduced by keeping the wider community informed as to what is happening and why. In addition, this might promote an increased level of direct participation on the part of some people in the wider community. Evaluation research can serve this information process.

3. As a means of providing information, experience, and insight that might be useful to other groups engaged in similar ventures.

It is too often the case that the experience gathered in one citizen participation program remains in the hands of the few people involved. We lack descriptive and evaluative studies of programs that have been tried, which would help us to move onwards, rather than continually repeating the same mistakes. Arising out of her study of the Canadian experience in evaluating social development programs, Carter strongly recommends:

That immediate attention be directed to the problem of communicating information about social development programs under way in other parts of the country. At present the situation is chaotic - projects are initiated and completed, often with little effort made to inform interested groups in the same region. The benefits to be derived from sharing thinking and problems in social development programs and research are numerous. (D)



4. As a means of determining the future of the program

There are likely to be a wide variety of people interested in the future of a citizen participation program: politicians, planners, administrators, program staff, community workers, the citizens directly involved in the program, and the wider community. Each will have their own criteria for judging the impact and effectiveness of the program, and each will have varying views as to whether the program should be terminated, continued, modified, or drastically altered. One might hope, however, that all of these judgments could be based, in part, on a common understanding of what happened and why. One of the functions of evaluation research is to provide the information and analysis to help all of the parties involved make sound judgments. Clearly, this is a difficult task, for the information that is collected is, in part, a reflection of the judgments to be made. Hence, it is important that an evaluator consider all of the parties involved: their perceptions of the objectives and the program effects, their underlying assumptions and values, and their varying needs for information. It needs to be stressed that, in the final analysis, all of the people involved will and should make their own judgments. Evaluation research is a tool for facilitating this process.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS FOR EVALUATION RESEARCH

A conceptual framework (other similar terms are a framework of appreciation - Vickers (87), or a research paradigm - Kuhn (45)) is a set of values, beliefs, assumptions, and ideals which guide

the researcher in defining the questions to be asked, the data to be collected, the aspects of the situation to be considered significant,... Weiss & Rein comment:

The conceptual frameworks function to guide attention to the sorts of events which should be recorded in data-gathering, to the questions which must be answered in the analysis, and to the kinds of questions which should be demonstrated in the report. (E)

The traditional conceptual framework in evaluation research is the experimental, scientific approach, as set forth most clearly in the classical sciences. Suchman comments:

... we would like to make it clear that we do not view the field of evaluation as having any methodology different from the scientific method; evaluative research is, first and foremost, research and as such must adhere as closely as possible to currently accepted standards of research methodology. (F)

It is not so much the principles of research that make evaluation studies difficult, but rather the practical problems of adhering to these principles in the face of administrative considerations. (G)

Within this framework, the ideal model of evaluation research involves the random distribution of the people (groups, communities,...), who are to be effected by the program under study, to control and experimental groups. The control group functions to ensure that the results observed in the program under study can in fact be attributed to the program. In addition, the various objectives (or desired changes) of the program are operationalized into a number of specific, measureable criteria which are observed prior to the commencement of the program,

and at several points in time after the program has been completed, hence providing an objective measure of the change occurring as a result of the program. In general, designing evaluation research consists of adapting this ideal model to the practicalities of the situation; and most designs are characterized as "slippages from the ideal" or as "quasi-experiments".

A number of difficulties in applying the experimental model can be pointed out.

- It is difficult to select satisfactory criteria to measure goal attainment, particularly when the goals are broad and vaguely defined.
- Predetermined criteria for measuring goal attainment tend to deflect the researcher's attention away from the unanticipated consequences of the program, which may be the most significant.
- It may not be possible to construct control groups.
- Randomization may fall apart because the number of cases is too small or because of the tendency to put the program resources into areas that have the most potential for change.
- There is conflict between the researchers and the program staff over the former's desire to have the program remain unchanged over the evaluation period.
- The researchers may find themselves dependent on uncommitted record keepers.
- The criteria for measuring goal attainment developed by

the researchers may become the leading goals of the program staff so that they can ensure a successful judgment.

The experimental model of evaluation has been technically tuned towards developing a compelling answer to the question: "Does the program achieve the stated objective or not?". This "pass-fail" approach misses many of the subtleties involved in the program, and fails to provide ideas and strategies for modifying the program as it develops. It neglects the need to look for change levers, and the need for program experimentation and innovation. This is particularly true when the program is aimed at changing large-scale social systems, which is the usual situation in citizen participation programs. Given the strength of the resistance to change of such systems, it is almost inevitable that the programs will "fail". The issue, then, is not whether the program works, but what happens when it is introduced.

The conclusion to be arrived at here is not that the experimental approach to evaluation should be rejected wholesale, but that it should be recognized as only one conceptual framework for guiding evaluation studies. The important question, then, is: "Under what conditions is the experimental framework appropriate?". Weiss & Rein provide one answer.

When one of the aims of the program, or a single objection to the program, assumes an importance great enough to justify the collection of data which will lead to a relatively unquestionable conclusion, and when the program has the form, or can be given the form, of repeated standardized treatments within a relatively controlled situation, then experimental design is fully

justified. (H)

Given this, it is difficult to imagine situations where the experimental framework would be useful in evaluating citizen participation programs. One example of where it might be important will be discussed in the case study of the development of the Britannia Community Services Centre in Chapter 5.

Weiss & Rein (94) have suggested three alternative conceptual frameworks for evaluation research, which appear to be pertinent to citizen participation programs.

1. A systems framework which

... is useful in suggesting what events or phenomena should be included within the scope of one's inquiry, in suggesting the roles which might be played within the situation by various actors, and in providing general ideas regarding the functioning of inter-related actors whose manifestations can be looked for in the situation studied. (I)

This framework directs attention to the question of what happens when a program is introduced into a community or organization, and relies heavily, though not exclusively, on historical and qualitative data. The systems approach guides the researcher toward looking at the smallest set of individuals, groups, and organizations who, in interaction, can account for most of the change experience, and alerts the researcher to the importance of historical events that impinge upon the system.

One of the advantages of this framework over the experimental model is that it permits the broadening of the basis of appraisal.

Qualitative study presents quite another situation. Now it is possible to describe

the extent to which the program realized its initial objectives, but it is also possible to appraise the extent to which the program realized other goals as well. The investigator can ask whether members of the target population have suffered losses ... as well as gains. He need not restrict his attention to the target population, but can describe what seem to have been the consequences of the program for individuals in other sectors of the community. ... If he wishes, the investigator may evaluate the program from a radical perspective and consider the extent to which the program has patched up a destructive system rather than initiating fundamental changes. (J)

2. A dramaturgic framework which involves

... the construction of a story line involving actors within settings, often engaged in coalitions and conflicts, the course of whose interactions forms plots and subplots which move to some resolution. (K)

This approach is likely to be of most use in describing small scale situations and events, and for exploring individual motivations, desires, commitments, and actions.

3. A political framework which is useful for describing series of events that take place over a long period of time and which involve large numbers of actors.

The actors in this perspective are thought of as representing interest groups, and their actions are interpreted as expressing a strategy. ... Groups may then be seen as bargaining with each other, producing and avoiding conflict as each strives to realize its aims, forming alliances and staking new claims and foregoing old ones. It may be useful to assume that each group has a store of resources it may deploy .... One of the issues in program evaluation is how groups mobilize their resources in response to the program intervention, in what way they commit themselves to affecting events, and with what successes. (L)

### THE EVALUATOR AS CHANGE AGENT

Evaluation is most productive when it can become a continuous process of program assessment and improvement. Too often the need for evaluation is narrowly defined in terms of a one-shot 'pass-fail' decision. Not only is this unrealistic, since very seldom are the results of an evaluation study so definitive as to 'prove' a program a complete failure, nor are the administrative considerations such as to permit the total termination of a program, but also an important function of the evaluation should be to improve the shortcomings of the program in order to increase its effectiveness. (M)

The implications of viewing the evaluator as a change agent are not necessarily within the area of data-collection - they include the questions of power, strategies, tactics, and inter-relationships between the evaluator, program staff, funding sources, and other interested groups and organizations. Many evaluations have been required by some organization external to the program (for example, as a condition of funding); but the literature seems to indicate that, in these cases, the evaluation will almost inevitably have no impact. The final report will be filed away in a drawer, never to be looked at or acted upon. The most fruitful situations for evaluation seem to be when things appear to be going wrong with a program and there is a desire for change, or when the evaluation is built into the program from the very beginning with, hopefully, a commitment to continual change, innovation, and improvement.

Following Jones (40), the role of the change agent is three-fold: helping to clarify the objectives and problems of the client-system (in the case of evaluation, the program being evaluated

and the numerous actors involved in the program), developing strategies and tactics for the client-system to solve its problems, and establishing and maintaining working relationships between the parties engaged in the change. A key question in this process is the power base of the evaluator. Bennis (5) argues that the change agent can have five types of power: coercive power, referent or identification power - the ability to be a role model, expert or knowledge power, legitimate power - deriving from a position in the program's personnel hierarchy, and value power - based on the attractiveness of the values of the change agent. Traditionally, the evaluator has relied only on expert or knowledge power, assuming that most people are "rational" and that if a particular change is "objectively" proved to be in their interest, they will adopt it. It needs to be noted that this is not the only form of power that the evaluator might use to facilitate the implementation of his findings. Further, it is clear that many of the conflicts arising between the evaluator and program staff arise from the latter perceiving the evaluator as having other forms of power - for example, coercive or legitimate power. The alleviation of these conflicts will not come from the evaluator retreating to the neutral position of the expert; but, as mentioned earlier, from the evaluator stating clearly his commitment to the goals of the program, and consciously seeking those forms of power that will enable him to work with the other people involved in the program in implementing the necessary changes. As Benne & Chin have commented,



As attempts are made to introduce new (changes) into (program) situations, the change problem shifts to the human problems of dealing with the resistances, anxieties, threats to morale, conflict, disrupted interpersonal communications, and so on, which prospective changes in patterns of practice evoke in the people affected by the change. So the change agent, even though focally and initially concerned with modification in the (program), finds himself in need of a more adequate knowledge of human behaviour, individual and social, and in need of developed 'people technologies', based on behavioural knowledge, for dealing effectively with the human aspects of deliberate change. (N)

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CHAPTER 3

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

and

SOCIAL CHANGE

There are rare moments in history when the crisis of institutions is closely linked to a crisis of the process by which people make sense of their life and work in society. Goals offered by that society are not attainable; when they are achieved, their promise turns out to be empty. The most basic values which undergird people's lives lose their power; nothing makes sense anymore. In such moments, struggle for radical social change has to do with the development of new processes by which people break the hold of old values and ways of life, discover new reasons for living as well as a form of struggle to make such a life possible.

- Richard Schaul1

## INTRODUCTION

It has become almost a commonplace to state that our society is characterized by rapid (even accelerating) and extensive change; resulting in increasing complexity, interdependency, and uncertainty (see, for example, Toffler's Future Shock). This chapter will explore the relationships between the citizen participation phenomenon that arose in the 1960's and the modern change environment. The hypothesis to be developed here is that the participation phenomenon has its broad roots in the system strains and tensions brought about, or intensified, by these changes, and that the rationales and goals put forth for citizen participation are largely attempts to resolve these crises, whether through a process of adaptation or through large scale structural change.

## THE MODERN CHANGE ENVIRONMENT

In a major review of mankind's history, Gross (35) points out a number of major elements in the change processes that are occurring. Rapidly changing technologies are resulting in unplanned social and cultural change, environmental problems, the displacement of established interests, fundamental shifts in the texture of life, and information-ignorance explosion, and a growing faith in technology. Rapidly changing organizational structures are moving away from the traditional, hierarchical models towards more flexible, decentralized, but centrally coordinated forms. The business system (for example, the automobile-highway-petroleum-trucking complex) is the model of the

future, resulting in a blurring of the distinctions between public and private spheres of action, and in the fragmentation of responsibility. The industrialized labour force is moving toward a professionalized salariat, resulting in increasing professionalism, credentialism, continuing education and retraining, and prolonged adolescence. The industrial cities have become metropolitan regions; and nationalism is giving way to an awareness of world-wide interdependencies.

Out of and within these changes, Gross sees four deepening crises. First, there is a survival crisis, whose backdrop is set by the fact that ours is an atomic age - for the first time we have with us the possibility of the death of the species. More detailed elements of this crisis are damages to the ecosystems, limitations on resources, rising populations, and an increasing lack of sufficient food. Second, there is a crisis in aspirations. Rising levels of affluence have led to rising aspirations, particularly on the part of marginal groups (the poor, blacks, and women, for example), for material goods, but more important, for status, freedom, and equity. When one considers the social functions that these groups perform such as the carrying out of menial labour by the poor or the maintenance of home environments by women (these functions benefit others far more than they benefit those who carry them out), the depth of this crisis becomes obvious. Gans comments:

In sum, then, several of the most important functions of the poor cannot be replaced with alternatives, while some could be replaced, but

almost always only at higher costs to other people, particularly more affluent ones. Consequently, a functional analysis must conclude that poverty persists not only because it satisfies a number of functions but also because many of the functional alternatives to poverty would be quite dysfunctional for the more affluent members of society. (A)

Third, there is a crisis in fragmentation. Fragmentation is occurring at all levels and in all spheres - in knowledge, in responsibility and accountability, in social roles, in communities and families, and in individuals. Fourth, there is a crisis in authority. The traditional patterns of authority (for example, the hierarchical model of management) and traditional figures of authority (for example, parents, teachers, and the U.S. president) are being rejected; while at the same time, elites are maintaining their power through increased flexibility and anonymity. Thayer comments:

... there seems to be underway a fundamental cultural revolution, a guiding precept of which is an almost total rejection of traditional concepts of 'authority', as those apply to all organized human activities, including such disparate structures as labour unions, corporate management overheads, and athletic teams. (B)

Gross confronts us with a choice between two alternative futures. The first is more of where he sees us heading now - "American-style techno-urban fascism".

A managed society ruled by a faceless and widely dispersed complex of Warfare-Welfare-Industrial-Communication-Police bureaucracies, caught up in developing a new-style empire based on a technocratic ideology, a culture of alienation, multiple scapegoats, and competing control networks. (C)

The second would involve a major reconstruction of society along humanist lines.

Trist (82) paints a picture that is similar, though slightly more positive. He argues that:

... an irreversible change process is proceeding in this world, at an accelerating rate but with extreme unevenness, both within and between countries, which I shall refer to as a drift towards the post-industrial society. (D)

Trist first describes a number of "phase changes" that have taken place over the past thirty years (see Table I), and argues that these changes are forerunners of the post-industrial society.

He goes on to develop a second theme:

... the absence of a culture congruent with the needs of the post-industrial society despite the fact that post-industrialism is structurally present to a far greater extent than is commonly recognized. If I ask what are the salient cultural patterns of today compared with those of thirty years ago, more especially those related to our core values, whether personal, organizational, or political, my answer can only be that they are largely the same. It is scarcely surprising therefore that we are witnessing a mounting crisis in alienation whose manifestations increase in variety and intensity, whether expressed as withdrawal or protest. (E)

Table II presents the types of values and cultural shifts that Trist feels are necessary.



Aspect	Pattern Salient Thirty Years Ago	Pattern Salient Today
Type of scientific knowledge	Empirical	Theoretical
Type of technology	Energy	Information
Politically most influential	Financiers and industrialists	Scientists and professionals
Contribution to GNP	Goods and goods related services	Services and person related services
Sector	Market	Non-market
Leading private enterprises	Domestic	International
Costs	Maretable Commodities	Supporting social and urban environment
Compostion of work force	Blue collar	White collar
Educational level	Not completing high school	Completing high school
Work/learning ratio	Work force	Learning force
Type of career	Single	Serial
Work/leisure ratio	More working hours	More leisure hours
Character of unemployment	Cyclical though large	Permanent in disadvan- taged minorities
Basic family type	Nuclear	Semi-extended
Inter-generational conflict	Less extreme	More extreme
Hard goods investment	Businesses	Households
Organizational context	Large single organizations	Inter-organizational clusters
Urban Environment	Single metropoli- tan areas	Inter-metropolitan clusters
Rural Environment	Quasi- Autonomous	Urban-linked or dissociated
Pollution	Within safety limit	Passing safety limit
Natural Resources	Treated as Inexhaustible	Feared as exhaustible.

Table I Patterns of Comparative Salience

Source: Trist (82)

Type	From	Towards
Cultural values	Achievement Self-control Independence Endurance of distress	Self-actualization Self-expression Interdependence Capacity for joy
Organizational philosophies	Mechanistic forms Competitive relations Separate objectives Own resources regarded as absolutely owned	Organic forms Collaborative relations Linked objectives Own resources regarded as also society's
Ecological strategies	Responsive to crisis Specific measures Requiring consent Short planning horizon Damping conflict Detailed central control Small local gov'n't. units Standardized administration Separate services	Anticipative of crisis Comprehensive measures Requiring participation Long planning horizon Confronting conflict Generalized central control Large local gov'n't. units Innovative administration Coordinated services
<p>Table II     <u>Changes in Emphasis of Social Patterns in the Transition to Post-Industrialism</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Source: Trist (82)</p>		

One could go on forever reviewing recent literature that attempts to describe and analyse the change characteristics of modern society; but the central aspects of the picture remain the same. One further question needs to be raised: "Are there indications that the changes going on around and within us are part of a radical social and cultural upheaval - a paradigm change - or, will the present turmoil die away as society adapts

itself to new internal and external demands, without making significant structural and value changes?". It is neither necessary nor possible to attempt an answer here, though it is of interest to note that some authors (for example, Starrs and Stewart (75)) see the citizen participation phenomenon as an indication of radical upheaval.

#### THE ROOTS OF THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PHENOMENON

This issue can and needs to be raised at a number of levels. First, there are the factors lying behind an individual's involvement or lack of involvement. Except for the studies in Political Science on voting behaviour and other traditional political activities (see, for example, Almond & Verba (1), Dahl (19,20), Martin (51), and Milbrath (54)), little work has been done in this area. The dramaturgic framework discussed in the last chapter might provide a useful approach to this issue. Second, one can look at the historical development of a specific citizen participation process (or program), for example, the Third Crossing protest movement in Vancouver or the South Vancouver Community Resources Board. This level might be best served by the political framework discussed in the last chapter, and it will receive some attention in the discussion of the case studies in Chapter 5.

Finally, one can look at the conditions in the social system (the entire society, or the Greater Vancouver urban region) which provide the environment for, are congruent with, or have

"caused" the upsurge in demands for participation. One further introductory remark is necessary. The word, "roots", was selected intentionally, rather than "causes", because it is felt that not only is it not possible to find a neat and tidy package of causes for the citizen participation phenomenon, but also it is not possible to limit the "causes" to endogenous factors. External events, such as the Civil Rights movement in the U.S., have played a major role in influencing the development of citizen participation in Canada. The writing of a complete history of citizen participation in Canada is beyond the scope of this thesis, though it would be an exciting and useful enterprise.

Returning to Gross' four crises, the survival crisis produces widespread anxiety about the future - in the extreme, expressed by the prophets of doom. This seems to result in at least three different patterns: resistance to change or attempts to preserve the present, nostalgia for the past, and cries for new forms of learning and action that will anticipate and guide the change processes going on around us. All three are linked to citizen participation. There have been numerous efforts, particularly on the part of the more affluent, to preserve the present - attempts to retain the low-density character of residential areas in the face of a housing crisis are a good example. Nostalgia is present in those who seek to restore the small-scale geographic community of the past, through such things as decentralization, local area planning, and neighbourhood government.

The third pattern - what has been called the proactive, as opposed to reactive and preactive, stance toward planning - is largely still at the drawing board stage with regard to citizen participation (see, for example, Friedmann (29) or Thayer (80)); but elements of this pattern can be observed in the Public Participation Program of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (see, for example, Tweddell (84)).

The links between the multi-levelled fragmentation crisis and citizen participation are less clear. It seems reasonable to argue that increasing fragmentation leads to increasing alienation, feelings of powerlessness and feelings of bewilderment. The citizen participation phenomenon is, both implicitly and explicitly, an attempt to resolve or ameliorate this crisis, through such strategies as developing community consensus and awareness, expanding the influence that an individual has over the decisions and processes that affect her, developing new forms of involvement that allow people to feel either that they are doing something or, at least, that someone is doing something, and constructing new groups and organizations where people can make friends and feel that they have a significant role to play. Further, the fragmentation crisis is reflected in our lack of a clear sense of the public interest. This leads to the problems of planning in a pluralistic environment, replete with competing interest groups, and, in citizen participation programs, gives rise to the question of representativeness.

The aspirations crisis links more directly with citizen participation. At the most basic level, rising aspirations are an attempt by marginal groups to participate in the wealth and good life offered by the society to large portions of its citizenry. Further, as no or only limited action is forthcoming, the marginal groups begin to demand control over the resources and services that are supposed to be solving their problems, largely because they distrust the ability of professionals and politicians to act in the interests of a group to which they do not belong.

The crisis in authority has a number of aspects that relate to citizen participation. In a democratic society, government is based on the voluntary consent of the governed. Consent, however, requires meaningful choices. In a society where there is no escape from the expanding influence of government and large organizations, such choices can only be based on expanding the opportunities for the individual to participate in the governing processes. The rise of ever larger and more complex organizations (including the governmental civil services) leads to the necessity of administrative elites to manage these organizations. These people are beyond the influence of the individual citizen or worker, are often anonymous, and, increasingly, are beyond the absolute control of the politicians. Finally, the increasing complexity and interdependence of society, and the expanding areas of government intervention, mean that the present forms

of government cannot cope with the workload. As Thayer argues:

Realizing that politicians can deal only with so many issues at a time and convinced that insufficient attention is being given to certain issues, individuals and organizations tend to proliferate interest group activity; there is almost an emerging trend toward the creation of additional political parties, 'splinter parties' if you will, each the equivalent of a single-issue group. .... The point is that individuals and groups seek participation to insure that somebody deals with the issues that concern them. (F)

The running of candidates in the recent Vancouver civic election by the Federated Anti-Poverty Group is an example of this process.

The crises discussed above, and their links with the citizen participation phenomenon, need a much deeper analysis than has been presented in this section. The point here was to support the hypothesis that the citizen participation phenomenon has its roots in the change characteristics of modern society, and has as one of its goals the resolution of the problems brought about by the change processes. The resulting implication for the evaluation of citizen participation programs is clear, namely, that the evaluation must include an analysis of the effectiveness of the program in generating change, co-opting the desire for change, or resisting change.

By way of a summary for this section, Wheatcroft comments:

One of the most important and far-reaching implications of periods of change such as the

present is that men located in different positions in the social structure begin to perceive social reality so differently that the basic bonds of societal consensus are themselves shredded and called into question. ... The most outstanding characteristics of periods of rapid, extensive, uneven, and complex cultural and structural change is not the struggle to define what is right and wrong or good and bad, but the struggle to define the very nature of reality itself. (G)

He goes on to argue that this process is characterized by a decline in importance of traditional forms and sources of knowledge; a widespread perception of traditional institutions as being obsolete; a view of political institutions as being not only irrelevant, but also tools of the ruling elite; and an unmasking of social myths and societal contradictions.

#### PLANNING IN AN ERA OF CHANGE

Much has been written recently about the need to develop new styles and philosophies of planning to enable us to cope with rapid rates of change, increasing complexity and interdependency, and widespread uncertainty (see, for example, Dror (24), Dunn (25), Friedmann (29), Michael (53), Schon (71), Trist (83), and Vickers (87)). A number of elements are common to most of these writers. There is an emphasis on increasing the learning capacity of society, and on developing strategies for innovation and coping with uncertainty. Planning is seen as a continuous, never-ending, process, no longer to be directed at producing a blueprint for the future. The elements of the planned change process - setting goals and objectives, articulating action strategies, implementation, and evaluation - are seen to be interde-



pendent, each feeding back into the others. It is no longer desirable or possible for persons working in one area to be isolated from those working in other areas. Planning is seen to be normative; goals and their underlying values are not to be taken as given, but need to be continuously explored and debated. Trist (83) captures the essence of these new planning styles.

What this may mean begins to become clear as soon as we look at planning as a collaborative undertaking between those of many kinds concerned with social action and those, also of many kinds, concerned with planning. In such a concept, the process is more important than the plan, the learning which takes place more critical than the results obtained. Each fresh step, in conjunction with environmental factors, provides the starting point for the next. There is no finality. The need is to develop a capability, not a product. This strengthening capability has to be brought into existence simultaneously at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. (H)

It is important to note that changing styles of planning have implications for citizen participation in planning. First, there needs to be a shift in emphasis away from a singular concern with "what should be done" and decision-making, towards value exploration and learning about the complexities and interdependencies of the situation at hand. Note that this shift has been argued for as one means to avoiding one of the major obstacles to citizen participation; parochialism and over-identification with a single interest group. Both of the case studies to be discussed in Chapter 5 provide examples of learning-oriented citizen participation. Second, the issue of uncertainty expands the arguments for increasing and widening the opportunities

for citizen participation in planning. As Thayer comments:

Finally, there is a potential reason which may turn out to be the most startling of all. Participation probably is the most efficient and cost-effective manner of making decisions. While conventional wisdom argues that participation slows down decision processes, adds to the overall cost and design of implementation, and introduces a host of irrelevant factors, participation may do precisely the opposite. Most decision-making studies never examine the costs of overcoming consequences not foreseen in advance. There can be no better way of discovering these unforeseen consequences, long a major problem of administration, than by involving in the decision processes those likely to be affected by them. (I)

Third, following on from the perception that all parts of the planned change process are inter-related, comes the view that citizens should participate, not only in the planning and decision-making phases, but also in the implementation and evaluation phases. The development of the Britannia Community Services Centre (see Chapter 5) is one example of what this could mean. Finally, the perception of increasing complexity and interdependency, reopens the question of who should participate. This shifts the debate about the meaning of citizen participation into a different direction. For, if we were to take seriously the view that anyone has the right (and the responsibility) to participate in all decisions that affect him, life would rapidly become one continuous round of meetings. Given that this is both undesirable and impossible, we are forced back into re-examining the bases for trust, responsibility, and accountability in political relationships, and from there into looking at the issue of community in modern societies, (see, for example,

Schaar (69)).

#### THE LIMITS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AS A CHANGE STRATEGY

Any evaluator has to be concerned about the feasibility of the goals and objectives of the program under study. It is not adequate to simply state that a program has failed to meet its objectives. More important is the question, "Why has it failed?", and one possible answer is that the original goals and objectives were impossible given the resources, strategies, and environment of the program. This is a particularly crucial issue in evaluating citizen participation programs, for not only are the objectives usually vague, they also tend to be extremely idealistic. For example, a common goal is the redevelopment of a sense of geographic community. The feasibility of this goal needs to be considered, for example, in the light of recent trends away from geographical personal ties, toward more interest-group based ties.

The title of this section has an implicit assumption that needs to be spelled out. It assumes that citizen participation is a strategy, a methodology, or a technique for achieving some goal - that is, it adopts, implicitly, a task orientation. There is another side to citizen participation, what might be called the process view, that is expressed by the statement, "Every citizen has the right (and the responsibility) to participate in the processes that affect his life." This distinction will be pursued further in the next chapter. It is sufficient,

here, to state that the following comments apply only to citizen participation as a strategy in seeking change.

In order to stress the importance of looking at the limits of citizen participation as a change strategy, it is useful to briefly review Warren's (89,90) evaluation of the Model Cities program in the U.S.

The study gathered data on the development of the Model Cities program in nine cities, and focused on the interaction of six organizations: the Board of Education, the Health and Welfare Council, the Urban Renewal Agency, the Community Action Agency, the Mental Health Planning Board, and the Model Cities Agency. Of particular concern was agency responsiveness to the needs of the poor, and the degree of innovation that occurred. The key findings were:

... the amazing stability of the interorganizational network comprised of these organizations and of other similar community decision-organizations.  
... There was a flurry of activity for a time, but with few exceptions the relations between organizations sorted themselves out with surprising ease, and the programmes became institutionalized.  
... the end product was largely an expansion and extension of existing agency services, with relatively few exceptions and with discouragingly poor prospects of implementing the programme's legislative mandate to improve conditions of living in slum areas. (J)

Both the community action agencies and the Model Cities agencies were able to establish and legitimate themselves within the inter-organizational structure only as they lopped off any aspects of their programmes which were sufficiently innovative to pose a possibly

serious threat to existing power arrangements, existing spheres of legitimated domain, and existing professional intervention strategies. (K)

Perhaps most paradoxical of all, the failure of these organizations to create innovative alternatives to the existing service structure, their failure to accomplish significant change in the community, was accompanied not by growing unrest and rebellion in the country's slum areas, but by a gradual quiescence, a subsiding of the threat of enraged citizens demanding changes by unconventional methods since conventional methods would not work. (L)

For the purposes of this section, a key conclusion from Warren's study was that:

... to the extent that resident groups have gained power in the program-planning process, they almost without exception have come up with substantially the same type of (Paradigm I - individual deficiency) programs as have the more established agencies in cases where resident groups had little power. Decision-making power, often hard-fought and hard-won by resident groups, seems to have made little difference in the actual programs. We have anticipated that since such resident groups were highly critical of the existing programs, and since many of them expressed in one way or another an apparently clear grasp of an identification with Paradigm II (dysfunctional social structure), they would drastically alter the nature of the programs when they had power. Both they and their advocacy planners, where they had them, slipped inadvertently into modes of response based on Paradigm I, the only paradigm which offered explicit technologies (and supporting values, philosophies, and organizational structures) for addressing the problems. (M)

Warren sees three social processes that support the stability of the system, or that preserve the status quo: the socialization process through which most people come to see poverty as a result of individual deficiencies rather than structural dysfunction,

the political bargaining process that takes place between groups and organizations when a new program is introduced, and a process of isolation whereby an organization which persists in challenging the existing system is repelled from the community. He concludes:

Citizen participation as a component of community social programmes is desirable, I believe, but not because it can be relied on as an adequate dynamic for change. To over simplify, slum area residents either become won over to essentially conventional service approaches to poverty, thus having only marginal impact, or they are written off as hopelessly inept, nonprofessional, unrealistic, or downright revolutionary. (N)

Purposive change strategies such as the anti-poverty program and the Model Cities program are bound to have very little effectiveness in changing social conditions so long as they do not help to create alternative institutionalized thought structures based on different diagnostic paradigms which are as integrally supportive of the alternative paradigms as are the components of Paradigm I. (O) (emphasis added).

Two questions need to be raised at this point.

- Is it possible to talk about different levels or orders of change, and if so, do these exist on a continuum or are they discontinuous in nature?
- What are the relationships between citizen participation as a change strategy (or different models of citizen participation) and the various orders of change? Is citizen participation, as a change strategy, limited to only certain types of change?

An initial attempt to examine these questions will be presented in Chapter 6. It is sufficient, here, to restate the importance

of looking at the feasibility of the goals and objectives in evaluating citizen participation programs.

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CHAPTER 4

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

IDEOLOGIES, RATIONALES

and

GOALS

... the most important point of excellence which any form of government can possess is to promote the virtue and the intelligence of the people themselves. The first question in respect to any political institution is how far they tend to foster in the members of the community the various desirable qualities, moral and intellectual.

- John Stuart Mill

... participation can be neither a gift nor an advantage. It is a burden, sometimes a heavy one ... To participate is to lose some of one's freedom; it means abandoning the normally comfortable, sheltered position of the critic; it means running the risk of emotional commitment; it means submitting to the constraints of someone else, to the group or unit in whose decision-making process one participates.

- Michael Crozier

## INTRODUCTION

Whatever its form, evaluation has to come to grips with the objectives of the program under study. The objectives provide at least one yardstick against which the program can be judged. In many situations, the evaluator finds himself staring at a multitude of objectives, often only vaguely stated or only implicit in the program activities. Citizen participation programs, coloured by rhetoric and utopian expectations, and devilled by numerous conflicting interests, are prime examples of the problem of discerning a program's objectives. This chapter, beginning with a discussion of the major political ideologies lying behind citizen participation, will present a framework for examining the objectives of citizen participation programs.

## DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM/ELITISM versus PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Modern theories of democracy are grounded in three basic pre-suppositions. First, they are based on a distrust of the common man. Numerous political studies (for example, Almond & Verba (1), Martin (51), and Milbrath (54)) have shown that most people are not interested in political questions, do not participate in political activities beyond voting, and have only a limited understanding of the current political issues. Further, some of these studies have suggested the prevalence of authoritarian (or anti-democratic) attitudes, particularly at the lower end of the socio-economic scale. As a consequence, the fear of the tyrannical minority (the bugbear of earlier democratic theorists)

has been replaced, or at least joined, by the fear of the common man.

Modern theorists tend to see democracy as a neutral political method, namely,

that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's votes. (A)

The characteristics of this method are universal suffrage, majority rule, freedom of discussion, and free, periodic elections. These are the rules of the game. In addition, the political system is seen to be an arena of competing elites or interest groups, all seeking power, but none able to obtain absolute power because there is a basic consensus on the rules of the game and because people are free, at least in theory, to organize themselves and enter the fray. The different interest groups have cross-cutting memberships which prevent drastic action for fear of future loss or reprisal. This pattern of checks and balances provides the stability of the system, and protects the society from the ascendancy of any minority group to dominant power. Further, it provides the means for responding to the changing needs of the society through a process of mutual adjustment, negotiation, and delaying of decisions. For the purposes of this thesis, the most crucial consequence of perceiving democracy as a neutral political method, is that it is to be judged solely on the basis of its capacity for survival and on the basis of its outputs. Bachrach comments:

This (theory) of democracy construes the interests of the people narrowly and the democratic elite theorist has little difficulty in accepting it. He posits that the value of the democratic system for ordinary individuals should be measured by the degree to which the 'outputs' of the system, in the form of security, services, and material support benefit them. On the basis of this reasoning, the less the individual has to participate in politics on the 'input' and demand side of the system in order to gain his interests on the output side, the better off he is. With rare exception, elites are available to represent his interest in the decision-making process, relegating to him the comparatively painless task of paying nominal dues and occasionally attending a meeting and casting a ballot. By assuming a one-dimensional view of political interest, the democratic elitist is led to the conclusion that there is a natural division of labour within a democratic system between elite rule and non-elite interest. (B) (emphasis added)

The third presupposition of modern theorists is that citizen participation should play only a limited role; that is, it should be largely restricted to periodic voting, the function of which is the protection of the individual from arbitrary government. This is not to argue that there is no concern with equal opportunity for seeking power, although, as Gamson (30,31) has observed, the political system acts to resist the entry of new groups into the political arena. However, faced by the fact that a significant number of people do not vote, and an even larger number do not actively participate in organized political groups, the theorists do not throw up their arms in horror, despite the rhetoric about the importance of voting and political activity. They accept the situation and regard it as a positive support of the stability of the system,

because of their basic distrust of the common man's commitment to democratic procedures. Further, they go on to explain this lack of participation either on the basis of apathy, or by returning to the idea of democracy as a political method. This latter point is critical, for as Dahl (19) has pointed out, under this view there are at least three good reasons why a person will not participate.

- An individual is unlikely to get involved in politics if he places a low priority on the rewards to be gained from political involvement relative to the rewards expected from other kinds of activities.
- An individual is unlikely to get involved if he thinks that the probability of his influencing the outcome of events is low.
- An individual is unlikely to get involved if he believes that the outcome will be satisfactory without his involvement.

The theory of democratic pluralism/elitism does not suffer from a lack of critics. One line of criticism argues that the present crises of modern democratic societies are due to the slow rate of responsiveness of the pluralist model to rapidly changing needs and environmental conditions. Another argument has been that there is a lack of access to the political arena - that, in fact, there is not equal opportunity in seeking power. Finally, particularly from the Marxists, (see, for example, Milliband (56)), there has come the assertion that modern dem-

ocratic societies do have a ruling elite, and that the pluralist model, therefore, does not provide a solution to the problem of the tyrannical minority.

The proponents of democratic pluralism/elitism have had to face the challenges posed by the crises discussed in Chapter 3. The crisis of rising aspirations is a direct criticism of the outputs of the political system. The increasing demands for citizen participation and local control, and the more general crisis in authority, threaten one of the basic pillars of the stability of the system - the voluntary consent of the governed. The proponents have argued that the basic model is sound, but that the actual political system requires modification to make it more accurately reflect the model. Two changes have been suggested: increasing the role of the executive arm of the government so that it has a greater capacity for centralized planning and co-ordination, and increasing the flexibility and effectiveness of those services designed to help individuals gain entry into the mainstream of social, economic, and political life, by decentralizing these services to the neighbourhood level and by involving citizens in their development (see, for example, Kaufman (41,42)). Consequently, although citizen participation plays only a limited role in the democratic pluralism/elitism model, the supporters of this view of democracy can be found in the ranks of those seeking expanded opportunities for citizen participation (see, for example, Dahl (20) and Davidoff (22)).

Classical theory ... is based on the supposition that man's dignity, and indeed his growth and development as a functioning and responsive individual in a free society, is dependent upon an opportunity to participate actively in decisions that significantly affect him. ... man's development as a human being is closely dependent upon his opportunity to contribute to the solution of problems relating to his own actions. (C)

Counterposed to the theory of democratic pluralism/elitism is the notion of participatory democracy, dating back to classical writers such as Rousseau and John Stuart Mill. The basic presuppositions of this view of democracy have found a place in recent writings in organization theory (see, for example, Argyris (2), Bennis (5), and MacGregor (47)), and they have come to the fore again in attempts to re-examine the political philosophical basis for citizen participation (see, for example, Bachrach (4), Hart (37), Pateman (62), and Thayer (80)).

The key idea in participatory democracy is that the individual in order to achieve his potential and to develop his freedom, positively as opposed to negatively, must focus on his role as a citizen - the role of acting with others to achieve common aims and, in the widest sense, the public interest. The function of participation, then, is not just to ensure the desired output of the political system or to protect the individual from arbitrary government, but centres on education, in the widest sense of that word. Democracy becomes not just a means but an end in itself. As Howard comments, in a more specific context:

Participation and health are inextricably linked in two ways. First, the political realities of adequate health care demand



public participation because the issues involved go far beyond technical medical questions into matters of public policy. Second, participation, in the sense of reaching out to take a hand in the determination of one's own fate and that of others, is in itself a way of achieving health. In both senses, health requires participation and participation can help to bring health. (D) (emphasis added)

Participation also serves integrative goals - the development of communities in which people acknowledge others' interests and in which consensus and co-operation dominate conflict and competition - and facilitates the acceptance of decisions - that is, participation is the key to ensuring the legitimacy of the political institutions and the voluntary consent of the governed.

Participatory democracy, therefore, places participation at the centre of its view of democracy. It assumes that individuals can and will develop to be "democratic citizens" who will

- invariably participate given the opportunity,
- receive their greatest satisfaction from participation,
- emphasize consensus and co-operation over conflict and competition,
- understand that their full potential can only be reached through participation.

This image of the individual is strikingly different from the picture presented by the empirical studies of political attitudes, and accepted as realistic and appropriate by the supporters of

democratic pluralism/elitism. One wonders quite how this gap is to be overcome. Pateman's (62) answer is twofold. She argues that one first has to look at the socialization processes where people learn their attitudes toward political activity. She points to the authority structures of the family, the school, the local community, and the workplace; and argues that these will have to be changed to a more participatory style. Secondly, she argues that participation, in its educative mode, begets further participation. As Thayer comments:

Participation is educative. Citizens involved in decision processes learn the skills necessary for continued participation. One cannot learn to participate without doing so, and this makes it unjust to exclude citizens because of a lack of skills. Further, as citizens acquire the skills, they continually improve the processes themselves. (E)

A major consequence of the emphasis on democracy as an end in itself is that power becomes only one issue in citizen participation. Thus, Arnstein's (3) analysis of the levels of power in citizen participation programs becomes only one side, albeit an important one, of the total picture. The degree of power delegated to the citizens becomes only one criteria on which to judge the validity of a citizen participation program.

A second major tenet of participatory democracy is that the concept of what is political needs to be expanded to include all decision-making processes that have a significant impact upon the life of the society and its citizens. The conception of

politics as being limited to the activities of government and the state is rejected as being too narrow. This quickly leads into the notion of industrial democracy which supporters of participatory democracy argue for on the grounds that industry makes decisions that have significant public impact and on the grounds that individuals are more likely to be ready to participate in their workplace because work plays a highly significant role in their lives.

At this stage, the supporters of participatory democracy have not provided much detail as to what the institutions in such a society might look like, or what strategies can be used to move toward such a society. The state of the art is rather crude. For example, Starrs and Stewart suggest that:

In the process of change which is underway, the role of government seems likely to undergo a shift in emphasis from a managerial to a supportive activity. The responsibility of those in government would then no longer be predominantly 'to govern' with some assurance, but 'to nurture' with some humility. The responsibility of the citizen-participant would no longer be to qualify and temper the judgment of public policy 'experts' in a decision-making process that often takes on the character of a confrontation, but to develop a greatly enhanced capacity for making appropriate judgments and to act upon these. The role of party officials, elected representatives and public servants would be to facilitate the development of this new expertise and to participate, on request, in the process of personal and community decision-making. (F)

Friedmann (29) has, perhaps, gone further than most in suggesting what a participant, learning society might look like. He argues for a "transactive" planning style that would embrace the ideas

of mutual learning and continuous dialogue among all participants: citizens, planners, and politicians. The individual participant would acquire a sense of competence in his role as part of the planning-acting process, and would become aware of his relationships to the larger enterprise. Conflict, and the particular interests and commitments of the participants, would be accepted, and hopefully, the process would be designed to allow a common image of the problem to come forth. Structurally, like Thayer (80), he argues for a decentralization of power, and a hierarchical assembly of temporary, task-oriented groups which would be small-scale, interpersonal, self-guiding, responsible, and self-appointed.

Hart (37) has pointed out a number of problems which will have to be resolved, in moving toward a participatory society.

- Participatory democracy seems to rely on a much higher level of consensus with regard to substantive issues such as values and objectives than is necessary in the pluralism/elitism model. Is there a public interest, and will participation help to define it?
- The logic of modern organizations (Michel's Iron Law of Oligarchy) mitigates against decentralization and participation. What new organizational structures can be developed which will further participation, and how effective will these be in achieving organizational goals?
- Many individuals will not wish to participate, for various reasons such as sloth, dissent, desire for privacy, or

greater interest in other activities. Are these people to be treated as deviants, in much the same way that people who are demanding further participation are presently treated as deviants?

- In a rapidly changing and complex society, decisions are often taken at breakneck speed. Does citizen participation require a change in the tempo of society?
- Will consensus breed uniformity and conformity? Is not conflict a potential source of creativity?
- In a complex society, expertise and knowledge is a source of power. In a participant society, are all citizens to become experts? If not, how are the citizens to contain the power of the experts, or how are they to choose between opposing groups or experts?

Concepts and Empirical Statements	Democratic Pluralism/Elitism	Participatory Democracy
Democracy	Political method	Political method and ethical end
Interest	Interest-as-end-result	Interest-as-end-result and interest-as-process
Equality	Equality of opportunity	Equality of power
Political	Governmental decision-making and that which relates to it	Decision-making which significantly affects societal values
Elite-mass structure of modern industrial societies	Unalterable	Alterable
Anti-liberal propensity of a great number of non-elites	Reliance upon elites to safeguard the system	Reliance upon broadening and enriching the democratic process
<p>Table III      <u>The Contrast Between Democratic Pluralism/Elitism and Participatory Democracy.</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Source: Bachrach (4)</p>		

Table III summarizes the arguments of this section. In the short term, both the supporters of participatory democracy and the supporters of democratic pluralism/elitism can be found in the ranks of the citizen participation advocates, and the goals and objectives they argue for are similar. In the long term, their images of the ideal society seem to be radically different, and their ideas as to the place of participation appear to be in conflict.

### CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

The traditional organizations and institutions designed to provide social services, have, increasingly, come under fire. They have been swept along by social currents to the point of their being too big, too distant, and too self-serving. The traditional agency has been criticized as formal, fragmented, impersonal, officious, and timid; as alienating and intimidating people; as ensuring long delays and expecting those it serves to accept its policy without question. But the neighbourhood centre has been championed as informal, integrated, personal, courteous, and courageous; as making people feel that they belong; as offering instant service and promoting the active participation of the neighbourhood in its program. Such, at any rate, is the rhetoric of neighbourhood centres. (G)

Decentralization (whether of a service, the administration of a service, the resources to provide a service, or the political power to make decisions about a service) is not the direct subject of this thesis. However, since citizen participation and decentralization have become so intertwined, particularly in the literature, it is important to consider the relationships between them. In general, the rationales and arguments put forth on behalf of citizen participation and decentralization are very similar, as is indicated in the quotation above (see also, Kotler (43) and Shalala (72)). Further, citizen participation and decentralization are considered to be synergistic, and, by many authors, to be necessary conditions for each other.

Two specific points need to be noted. First, an enhanced sense of neighbourhood identity or geographic community is a commonly

stated goal for both citizen participation and decentralization. For this goal, the two would seem to have to go hand-in-hand. Second, there is a general assumption in the literature that in a large, complex society, participation in national, or even provincial affairs, is impossible because of the large numbers of people involved. This assumption derives from a (in my view, excessive) concern with direct participation. Little attention has been given to other forms of participation, or to the more general issues of legitimate authority, leadership and trust.

There are a number of compelling reasons for separating citizen participation from decentralization. It is often stated that local communities tend to be parochial in their responses to wider issues - they consider their own interests to be primary. This has been commonly used as a reason for denying the validity of citizen participation. By linking citizen participation to decentralization, one ends up tending to reinforce these parochial attitudes. A further result is that, when wider issues are to be decided, there is no formal program of citizen participation. There is some experience to suggest that parochial attitudes can be overcome by structuring the form of participation to encourage an overall perception of the issues. The nature of the issues under discussion is another factor influencing the tendency to be parochial.

The strategies of change that the advocate



planner and his clients utilize revolve around the inherent conflict in the interests of different community groups in the city and the need to organize in their own community to attain their own interests. There is also the implicit assumption that the resources they need can be attained in the particular community through the assertion of their power ... The problem with this commitment to a democratic strategy at the community level is that many of the most critical needs of the poor are not related to their immediate community, but reflect city-wide, regional, and national power centres. Hence, the advocate planners are attempting to perfect a political pluralism in a government that is increasingly centralized and has limited its pluralism to only certain sectors of society. (H)

The significant issues that concern citizens (for example, urban growth, health care, housing, and poverty) can only be dealt with at regional and higher levels, both because of the immensity of the issues involved and because of the increasing interdependencies in modern society. The varying participation rates in elections (4% in the recent Community Resources Board elections, 30% in Vancouver's recent civic election, and 75% in the last Federal election) might possibly be interpreted as an indication that most citizens understand this. Given that people tend to participate in those issues that they consider to be of most significance for their own interests, the linking of citizen participation and decentralization may, in fact, discourage participation.

A final reason for separating citizen participation from decentralization has to do with the thorny problem of geographic community. Most models of decentralization are geographically

based - they assume that some sense of neighbourhood identity or community either does exist or should exist. The debate (empirical and normative) about the existence or non-existence of neighbourhood community (see, for example, Bernard (7), Panzetta (61), Repo (66), Suttles (78), Wellman (95) or Zablocki (97)) will probably go on forever. However, it does seem that the linking of decentralization to citizen participation, and the directing of both towards neighbourhood community development, is too restrictive. Other forms of community or interest groups (for example, women, Indians, and the poor) exist, and it is important to find ways of allowing these groups to participate in the decisions that affect them, particularly given the fact that their aspirations will not be resolved at the neighbourhood level.

#### A FRAMEWORK FOR EXAMINING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION OBJECTIVES

A number of dimensions appear to be relevant in examining the objectives of citizen participation programs.

##### 1. Task and Process

A distinction needs to be made between perceiving citizen participation as a strategy or technique for achieving certain end results (change in individuals, groups, communities, organizations, ...) and believing in citizen participation as a political right or as a necessary condition for human development. This corresponds to the distinction made by Bachrach (4) between two overall interests in democracy: interest-as-end-results and interest-as-process.

The statement, "Everyone has the right to participate in those decisions which will affect their interests", is not, at first glance, a goal statement. However, it would appear that anyone making this statement may (and perhaps, should) have an image in mind of the type of society where this statement would be fully actualized. The earlier discussion of democratic elitism and participatory democracy suggests two such images. Thus, although the belief in the right to participate is not explicitly goal-oriented, it may have implications for longer term goals such as building a society where such a right is manifested. Further, it seems reasonable to evaluate citizen participation programs, not only on the basis of the explicitly stated end or task goals, but also on the degree to which the program actualizes, in a microcosm, the ideal society, and the degree to which the program allows us to learn more about the nature of the participant society.

## 2. External and Internal

A second aspect of the task-process distinction is concerned with those activities which are aimed at developing the program itself: for example, finding ways to make the program enjoyable as a learning experience or as an opportunity for encountering new people. One can argue that these goals are internal, immediate steps in the process of seeking the external, long term goals; but it seems important to also recognise them as valid in their own right, as part of the educative or developmental modes of participation. The external-internal distinction also

corresponds to the recognition that any organization has at least three functions: procuring the necessary resources, maintaining its internal relationships, and achieving its overall goals.

### 3. Orders of Change

This dimension was mentioned in the last section of Chapter 3, and will be pursued further in Chapter 6. To preview that discussion, change is not a monolithic concept, and there seems to be at least three orders of change that can be sought: incremental (or continuous) adaptation and preservation of the present system, readjustment within the system, and structural or paradigm change.

### 4. Levels of Intervention

Planned change efforts are directed at altering some target. The nature of the target provides one dimension for examining the objectives of citizen participation. A simple classification system would be: individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and the entire society. Jones (40) has given a more detailed taxonomy.

### 5. Immediate, Intermediate, Ultimate

The breaking down of the objectives into immediate, intermediate, and ultimate goals (particularly along a time dimension), and the exploring of the relationships between these three levels to produce a hierarchy or lattice of objectives, is an

important strategy in planned change efforts, though it is seldom done in citizen participation programs. The strategy is useful for examining the feasibility of the objectives, for developing ideas as to the what, when, and how of the program activities, and for providing a means for internal evaluation.

#### 6. Whose Goals

Last, but by no means least, it is important to recognize that most citizen participation programs involve a wide collection of actors: individuals, groups, private organizations, and government agencies - citizens, professionals, and politicians. Each set of actors is likely to have its own set of goals, and the degree of consensus or dissensus will be critical to the development of the program. Consequently, the evaluator not only needs to understand the different sets of goals in order to make sense of the overall program, he will likely have to carry out a number of evaluations depending on who is to use the results. Further, an important tool in evaluating citizen participation programs is likely to be exploration of the differences among the various subjective opinions and judgments that people hold concerning the program.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 4

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CHAPTER 5

TWO CASE STUDIES:

THE BRITANNIA COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTRE

and

THE GREATER VANCOUVER REGIONAL DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEES

## THE BRITANNIA COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTRE

### INTRODUCTION

As pointed out in Chapter 1, the objective of this case study, and of the one following, is to explore the ways in which evaluation research was used in the citizen participation process, and the ways in which it might have been used. Neither case study aims at a complete description of what happened, and neither is an evaluation study itself.

The information for this study was gathered by reading the available reports and committee minutes, and by interviewing a number of the people involved. The study is presented in three parts: a description of the history of the project, a discussion of the objectives of the citizen participation program, and an exploration of the functions of evaluation research.

### HISTORY

The Britannia Community Services Centre is an integrated complex serving the sub-areas of Vancouver: Strathcona and Grandview/Woodlands, a population of some 30,000 people. When completed, it will contain a high school, an elementary school, a combined school and public library, an information centre, and a recreation complex (swimming pool, ice rink, playing fields, cafeteria, ...). The Centre will be managed by a Board of Management consisting of five agency representatives (one each from the high school, the elementary school, the library, the recreation complex, and other services) and ten community represen-



tatives elected by the citizens in the Britannia area. The Board is a sovereign body which will manage the Centre through annual operating agreements with Vancouver City Council, the Vancouver School Board, and the Vancouver Parks Board. The agreements will cover such matters as operating funds, responsibilities, and staff supervision.

The history of the Britannia Centre starts in 1967 with two sets of actors. In that year, a group of young people, students and graduates from Britannia High School, formed the Association to Tackle Adverse Conditions (ATTAC). This group, out of their concern for developing programs and facilities for young people, started looking around their community and pinpointing the lack of facilities and services (for example, the lack of a public library, a community centre, and sufficient park space.) ATTAC's activities served to bring these perceptions to the level of conscious community awareness, hence developing the base for community support of the Britannia Centre idea. ATTAC went on to develop a number of programs for youth in the area, and spearheaded the community effort to obtain political approval of the Britannia Centre. It is important to note the constructive and positive approach of ATTAC, compared to the general negativism of student groups at that time. This was probably a major factor in ATTAC's success in generating community awareness and activity, and was a forerunner of the general approach taken to citizen participation in the development of the Britannia Centre.

In the same year, a number of professionals in the Britannia area, particularly those in the social and health services, were becoming increasingly concerned about the level of services and resources in the area, and were becoming increasingly frustrated with the structure of their own agencies. They wanted some measure of decentralization of these services, and saw the citizens as allies in this process.

Arising out of the concerns of the community, led by ATTAC, and of the local professionals, a sub-committee of the Strathcona Area Council and the Woodland Park Area Council (at that time, area councils were typically bodies of professionals, concerned with coordinating services and resolving common problems) was formed to develop a set of ideas for improving the services and the facilities in the area. This committee was chaired by Major Halsey of the Salvation Army, and had the blessing of Selwyn Miller, then Director of Planning and Evaluation for the Vancouver School Board. Miller had previously been a teacher at Britannia High School, and he became a major figure in obtaining political approval for the Britannia Centre proposal. The committee's report, called the Halsey Report, suggested a comprehensive community centre focusing on the existing Britannia High School, and a smaller neighbourhood centre based at the existing Strathcona Elementary School. The neighbourhood centre was completed in September, 1972. The Halsey Report was presented to City Council by the School Board and the Parks Board in late 1967. Council agreed to assess the feasibility of

the proposal. Over one year later, in March, 1969, City Council had approved the idea of the Britannia Centre and had agreed to include funds for the Centre in the 1970-75 Capital Plan. An explanation of this lengthy delay is necessary. The basic issue was capital financing of the Centre. In the past, community centres had been financed under local improvement taxation; and this method appeared to be unfeasible in the Britannia area - the communities to be served were just not rich enough.

In the Spring of 1970, a city-wide referendum was held on the 1970-75 Capital Plan. It is interesting to note that this was the first time that a money by-law received majority approval in the East end of Vancouver. General support for the Britannia Centre, and a good deal of organizing by ATTAC, seem to have been major factors in generating this positive vote. By this time, it looked very much as if the Britannia idea was fast turning into an expensive white elephant. An enormous shopping list of services to be included had been developed as well as a preliminary set of site drawings that covered four more blocks than does the final plan. The community saw it as a rallying point for a neglected area; and the local professionals saw it as a way of getting more resources into the area. The School Board had turned lukewarm to the idea, and the Parks Board was now opposed. As a consequence, it appeared necessary to re-examine the services that would be included, and to set some priorities. If the Centre was to be adapted to local needs and desires, this would require some form of community involvement.

In addition, it was clear that the three key agencies (City Council, the School Board, and the Parks Board) would have to be involved in the planning process so as to obtain their final approval of the designs.

Proposals for the planning process were developed by the City's Social and Physical Planning Departments, in partnership with the community groups in Strathcona and Grandview/Woodlands. The basic idea was a small, joint committee (the Britannia Planning Advisory Committee - BPAC) consisting of four agency representatives (one each from the School Board, the Parks Board, the Planning Department, and the Social Planning Department) and six citizens. Each person had the responsibility of communicating with his constituency, and all final plans and reports had to be approved by City Council, the School Board, and the Parks Board. It is important to note that this was the first time a joint committee of professionals and citizens had been tried in Vancouver. The six citizens were chosen on a geographical basis (three from Strathcona and three from Grandview/Woodlands), on their ability to represent particular constituencies in the community (for example, the major ethnic groups, public housing tenants, and organized citizen groups), and on the basis of their individual level of involvement in community activities. The citizens were elected at a public meeting of the Grandview/Woodlands Area Council (a citizen's group) in November, 1970. It is important to note that, unlike the case with many citizen participation programs, the issue of representativeness has not

appeared in the Britannia case.

Two sets of consultants were to be hired: an architectural programming group (the group eventually selected was a firm created for the purpose - Britannia Design) to develop the profile of services to be included in the Centre and to complete the schematic designs, and an administrative group (John Roberts of the B.C. Research Institute was eventually hired) to develop proposals for the long term management of the Centre.

It is interesting to speculate why the three key agencies (City Council, the School Board, and the Parks Board) agreed to this intense citizen participation process. In the early study by City Council concerning the feasibility of the Britannia Centre proposal, the citizens' role in initiating the ideas was acknowledged, and the need for further community involvement was casually mentioned. This, plus the need to obtain community input to decide on the services to be included, gave the community and City staff the toehold they needed to lobby for the process they thought most desirable. In addition, it appears that the three agencies may have seen Britannia as a trial run for citizen participation. Perhaps most critical, the basic idea of the Centre had received wide support, and the financial commitments had already been made. Thus, the decisions to be made by the BPAC were more implementation decisions than basic political and financial decisions.

The Britannia Planning Advisory Committee (BPAC) first met in March, 1971, and continued meeting until October, 1974, when the interim Board of Management was formed. The work of the committee divides into three parts: development of a profile of services to be included in the Centre and development of schematic designs, overseeing the production of final designs and working drawings, and development of an administrative structure for the Centre. The third phase overlapped in time with the first two.

During the summer of 1971, Britannia Design - the architectural programming consultants - conducted 50 taped, in-depth interviews with residents and local workers. This led to the development of an 8-page questionnaire designed to determine areas of consensus around community needs and desires. The questionnaire was given to 800 adults, 500 high school students, and 200 elementary students, and was delivered and picked up on a block-by-block basis by community volunteers. In addition, an information sheet and short questionnaire was made available to everybody in the Strathcona and Grandview/Woodlands areas. Simultaneously, Britannia Design was working with the BPAC, gathering their aspirations for the Centre, feeding back the results of the interviews and the questionnaires, and developing hundreds of design principles using the pattern language approach. This process resulted in the production of a service profile and schematic designs by January, 1972. These were presented to the Grandview/Woodlands and Strathcona communities for approval

in public meetings in February and March. The designs were presented to City Council, the School Board, and the Parks Board in March.

In April, 1972, the architectural firm of Downs and Archimbault were hired to work with Britannia Design on the final designs and working drawings. These were completed by May, 1972. At this stage, a technical steering committee was set up, consisting of representatives from the School Board, the Parks Board, the School Board Building Department, the Planning Department, the Social Planning Department, and the architects. The role of this committee was to expedite the construction process. The citizens on the BPAC were sent all minutes of the steering committee, and had an open invitation to attend its meetings. All major policy decisions were referred back to the BPAC.

The development of the administrative structure for the Britannia Centre was the touchiest, and probably the most important task undertaken by the BPAC. The question of who would control the Centre is critical to whether the Centre will remain flexible and suited to local needs and desires. From the outset, the citizens on the BPAC wanted the community to have a major role in the management of the Centre, and some of them, responding to negative attitudes towards the three key agencies, particularly the Parks Board, wanted total community control. However, it was one thing for the three agencies to agree to citizen involvement in the time-limited design process, but quite

another for them to consider long-term public participation in the operation of the Centre. The latter would mean giving up some of their power. Throughout the existence of the BPAC, there were constant struggles with the three agencies. The details of these struggles are beyond the direct interest of this thesis, though it should be noted that they played a key role in the citizen's learning experiences. It is also interesting to note that City Council was the prime supporter of the BPAC. The School Board was lukewarm, but not opposed, probably because they were primarily interested in the school facilities which were not a key concern for the BPAC. The Parks Board, who had most to lose, were the most opposed.

The administrative structure that was adopted is an integrated one, based on a partnership arrangement involving the School Board, the Parks Board, the Library Board, City Council, and the community (represented by the Britannia Community Services Society). This structure was facilitated by the fact that the capital funds (from City Council, the School Board, and the Federal Government) were treated as a single consolidated resource. In addition, the physical design was developed so that the Centre would almost require an integrated management arrangement.

So much for the "factual" history of the development of the Britannia Community Services Centre. Before proceeding to a discussion of the objectives of the citizen participation program,



a number of more general observations need to be made.

It is clear that the six citizens on the BPAC were highly involved in the planning process. These people were responsible for communicating with their constituencies, and with a set of community groups and organizations. It appears that this was carried out well in the initial and final phases, and not so well in the middle phase. Every person interviewed was satisfied that the various community groups in Grandview/Woodlands and Strathcona were kept well informed of what was happening and were able to have their views taken into consideration. This was particularly true for the development of the service profile and for the physical design process, and perhaps less true for the development of the administrative structure.

The six citizens, and the groups they represented, do not, however, cover the whole community. The wider community was kept informed through articles in the Highland Echo (the local paper in Grandview /Woodlands - there is no local paper in Strathcona) and through leaflets in three languages (English, Italian, and Chinese) passed out through the elementary schools. Great care was taken to make sure that information concerning the process was widely published, to ensure easy access to further information for those who wanted it, to provide adequate notice of public meetings, and to document all opinions expressed by the community. This allowed the BPAC to defend itself against any last minute cries that people were not given the chance to

express their opinions. In addition to the information process, public meetings were held to gain approval of the schematic designs and the constitution of the Britannia Community Services Society. The questionnaire process promoted wider community involvement, and, finally, around particular crunch issues (for example, whether Britannia was to have a swimming pool) widespread support was organized to lobby the politicians.

The financial resources and the time available played a major role in limiting the scope of wider community involvement. The issue here is not whether wider community involvement would have produced a better design or a better administrative structure. Rather, the question is whether wider community involvement in the planning phase would have facilitated the process of future community use of the Centre, and community involvement in the administration and program development for the Centre. In that the Centre is supposed to become a focal point for the community, this question is of some interest even if, at this late stage, it is purely speculative. It is important to note, however, that the nature of the community involvement is changing, now that the Centre is into the programming phase. Program committees are being set up, and these should serve to spark the interest of a different, if not a larger, group of people, because the issues involved are different from the earlier phase.

Following on from the task/process distinction made in the last

chapter, it is important to make some comments about the nature of the process itself. During the initial stages of the BPAC, there was a fair degree of distrust between the citizens and the agency representatives. However, this quickly changed to a situation where the committee worked as a whole, on a consensus model, in an atmosphere of trust and friendship. After interviewing a number of people involved in the BPAC, it became very clear that the level of positive feelings and satisfactions was and remains very high. Some highlights that may help to describe this are:

- on major issues, the entire committee encouraged the citizens to caucus separately to sort out their views,
- the BPAC held over 60 meetings, over a period of 4 years, and membership in the committee has remained basically the same over that time,
- several committee members have moved out of the area, but they remained involved and committed to seeing the job through. (One might wonder whether this led into questions concerning the representativeness of the BPAC, but no evidence was found to support this).

The committee proved to be a major learning experience for everybody, promoted social interaction and friendship, and gave everyone a feeling that they were contributing to something worthwhile.

It is interesting to speculate why this happened. A number of factors can be suggested.

- the citizens had their own staff support person in the person of the community development worker in Grandview/Woodlands, who attended all of the meetings of the BPAC. This person was eventually selected to be the first executive director of the Britannia Centre.
- the ways in which the consultants worked facilitated consensus and trust - that is, the consultants, themselves, were committed to citizen participation.
- the fact that all people, both citizens and agency representatives were new to the pattern language approach meant that everyone was starting off at the same point, and thus had some common ground on which to interact.
- the process helped to separate the citizens from their usual reactive role by focusing on a positive, clearly defined issue.
- the fact that the agency representatives were separated off from their agencies (by the continual nature of the committee and by holding meetings in the community) allowed them to leave their agency-oriented perceptions behind.
- the fact that there was prior community and political approval, and financial support, gave the committee a degree of legitimacy that many citizen participation programs are never able to achieve.
- the existence of strong, well-organized citizen groups in the Grandview/Woodlands and Strathcona communities (ATTAC, the Grandview/Woodlands Area Council, and the

Strathcona Tenants and Property Owners Association) provided the citizens with the back up support they needed.

A final set of observations needs to be made concerning the outcomes of this citizen participation program. The most obvious outcome will be the completion of the Centre itself, and the future patterns of use that are generated. Whether this will prove to be what was originally desired has to remain an open question at this point in time.

From another perspective, one can ask about the effects of the process on the three city agencies. At one level, the staff who participated on the BPAC gained a great deal of respect for the intelligence of the citizens, and a number of their myths about the ability of citizens to participate were dispelled. Presumably, what they learned through this experience will have some impact on the ways in which they work with other groups. At another level, the effects on the agencies themselves are much less clear. It appears that they are now ready to consult with the Strathcona and Grandview/Woodlands communities more than they would have in the past, and there is some evidence that the experience with Britannia has been one factor in the School Board's shift toward a community school policy. However, whether Britannia experience will have an impact on the ways in which the three agencies operate in other parts of the City in the future remains an open question.

Finally, one can ask about the effects of the process on the citizens involved, and on the Strathcona and Grandview/Woodlands communities. The citizens on the BPAC gained a great deal of knowledge and experience, especially in regard to how the city operates and to the values of positive participation. They gained confidence in speaking to City officials and politicians, and their involvement gave them visibility in the community, thus strengthening their role as local leaders. According to the people interviewed, the strength of the community groups has been increased, local leadership has been improved, and the general levels of involvement have been expanded.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESS

It is extremely difficult after the whole process has taken place to determine what the original objectives of the various actors were, and how they were modified over time. The objectives become intertwined with the outcomes, and it is not easy to pull them apart. In addition, it is difficult to discover the negative impacts of the process, particularly when the overall judgment of all involved is that it was a great success. It is clear that, if evaluation is desirable, it has to begin at the beginning.

Table IV presents a first attempt to delineate the objectives. It is likely not complete, but will serve as an example of the multiple objectives found in citizen participation programs.

Ultimate Objectives	Intermediate Objectives	Immediate Objectives
<p><u>Task-Oriented</u></p> <p>Develop a centre which suits the needs of the community, is flexible, and serves as a focus for the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a physical design which facilitates the services to be provided and citizen involvement in the Centre.</li> <li>- Develop an administrative structure which includes community involvement and promotes flexibility.</li> <li>- Encourage community interest in the development of the Centre as a basis for encouraging future use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a statement of needs and desires for the Centre.</li> <li>- Develop citizen support so that political support is maintained.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Process-Oriented</u></p> <p>Reinforce the growth of political awareness and involvement in the Strathcona and Grandview/Woodlands communities.</p> <p>Shift the three city agencies to a position of stronger support for citizen participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthen already existing citizen groups.</li> <li>- Strengthen local leadership.</li> <li>- Provide an experience of positive participation which will encourage an optimistic attitude toward participation.</li> <li>- Encourage the agency representatives to feedback their experience to their agencies.</li> <li>- Use Britannia as a precedent and a trial run for citizen participation.</li> <li>- Dispel myths about citizens' abilities to participate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Help the citizens on the BPAC learn to work with the bureaucracies and professionals.</li> <li>- Have a representative from each agency who is committed to the process and to Britannia.</li> </ul>

Table IV Objectives for Citizen Participation in Britannia

### EVALUATION RESEARCH WITHIN THE BRITANNIA CONTEXT

Four functions that evaluation research might serve in citizen participation programs were outlined in Chapter 2.

#### 1. As a means of feedback

The Britannia Planning Advisory Committee was small, and, over time, able to develop close and effective working relationships. It would appear, therefore, that this function of evaluation was carried out by the use of minutes, regular meetings, a single chairperson, and having a number of staff people (for example, the community development worker and the architectural programming consultants) who were directly concerned with the process and making sure that the objectives were achieved. Some of the citizens on the BPAC were highly skilled organizers, and their experience and efforts helped to keep the committee on track.

As a more general observation, the task-objectives of the citizen participation program were clearly defined, making it much easier for all involved to be aware of what was happening and why.

#### 2. As a means of promoting wider involvement

This issue has already been discussed. The BPAC kept the wider community informed through a variety of strategies: newspaper articles, leaflets, questionnaires, public meetings, and direct communications with organized citizen groups.

#### 3. As a means of providing information, experience, and insight that might be useful to other groups engaged in similar



ventures.

This function has not been carried out, except at the, not insignificant, personal level of those involved with the BPAC carrying their experience forward to other activities. At one stage, the community development worker in Grandview/Woodlands attempted to procure the resources that would have allowed him to write up his experiences in the area; and some thought has been given to writing a book and producing an audio-visual presentation on Britannia in time for Habitat '76. One can only hope that this will be done, as the experience developed through the Britannia process would be highly useful to other groups.

Two groups might have been interested in this function at the outset of the citizen participation process. The citizens on the BPAC, and the community groups in Grandview/Woodlands and Strathcona, might have been concerned that their experiences, successes, and failures be passed on to other citizen groups in Vancouver to aid them in their attempts to develop citizen participation programs and to demand political approval for such programs. That the citizens did not do so is probably due more to the lack of the necessary resources (money, time, staff, ...) than to feelings that their experience would not be useful to other people. In addition, it appears that the BPAC was not able to cope with outside observers during the initial phases of its activities, and the introduction of an outside evaluator might well have damaged the process.

The politicians (from City Council, the School Board, or the Parks Board) might have been interested in this function of evaluation. Why they have not attempted to carry out any form of descriptive or evaluative study of Britannia is an open question.

4. As a means of determining the future of the program

At various stages along the path toward developing the final working drawings and the administrative structure, the reports and designs had to be approved by City Council, the School Board, and the Parks Board. This can be seen as one form of evaluation of the effectiveness of the BPAC.

More generally, the BPAC was given a time-limited task to accomplish, and so the question of its future existence is not particularly relevant. However, the BPAC was able to develop an administrative structure which facilitates further citizen involvement in the Britannia Centre and hence, in some sense, the citizen participation process will continue on. The annual operating agreements and the Board of Management will provide channels for future evaluation of the Centre.

The four conceptual frameworks suggested in Chapter 2 are all relevant to the Britannia case. The overall goal of developing a Centre that would suit the needs of the community, be flexible, and serve as a focal point for community life, is so compelling that a case can be made for using the experimental framework

to evaluate the success of the planning program in achieving it. The systems framework would be a useful approach for describing and assessing the impact of the program on the Grandview/Woodlands and Strathcona communities, and on the City as a whole. The dramaturgic framework could be used to approach the workings of the BPAC itself, while the political framework would be essential to exploring the various sets of actors and their interactions.

#### CONCLUSIONS

By way of a conclusion to this case study, it seems fair to argue that the success of the planning program was due, in part, to the internal functions of evaluation having been carried out. Further, the process-oriented objectives of reinforcing the political awareness and involvement of the Grandview/Woodlands and Strathcona communities and shifting the three city agencies toward a stronger position of support for citizen-participation could be served by an overall evaluation of the Britannia experience: what happened, why, and with what effects. This has not yet been done.

THE POLICY COMMITTEES OF THE GREATER VANCOUVER REGIONAL  
DISTRICT

INTRODUCTION

This case study will be presented in a slightly different fashion from the previous one. The Policy Committees are a much more complicated situation than the Britannia project, involving many more people. Consequently, because of time limitations, fewer details as to quite what happened will be presented. The interesting point about this case is that three evaluation studies have already been conducted.

The study is divided into three parts: a brief description of the history of the Policy Committees, a review of the existing evaluation studies, and a discussion of the functions of evaluation research. The material for this study was collected primarily from the available reports and sets of minutes. In addition, the author participated in one of the Policy Committees.

HISTORY

The Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) - Vancouver's low-profile form of metropolitan government - was established by the Provincial government in 1967. In 1969, it was given the mandatory function of regional planning, which, at that stage, entailed managing the existing Official Regional Plan that had been developed earlier by the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board. During 1969 and 1970, the GVRD went through a

debate about the role of regional planning, culminating in a decision to develop a new type of regional plan under the overall goal of improving the "livability" of the region. The new plan was to be explicit in its goals, flexible to changing needs, problem and action oriented, and of an on-going, never finalized, nature. The plan was to be developed by 1975 through a Livable Region Program.

In 1971, a Public Participation Program was started which, initially, was to focus on developing public awareness of the importance of setting regional goals and on giving interested groups and persons a more complete knowledge of the Livable Region Program. It is interesting to note that even at this stage, political support for the Public Participation Program was at best ambivalent (Tweddell (84)).

Before proceeding further, it might be useful to inject a personal observation. The GVRD has evolved slowly over time taking on new responsibilities with the agreement of the member municipalities, unlike the instantaneous creation of other regional governments (for example, Greater Winnipeg and Metropolitan Toronto). Hence, the tensions between the municipal and regional levels of government are less than one might expect. They do seem, however, to exist, and one wonders whether this was not a major background factor in the ambivalences expressed by the politicians towards citizen participation in the Livable Region Program. As Smith comments:

... it is important to note that changes in the pattern of citizen participation are guaranteed to produce tension and potential conflict. As long as things remain as they are, that is, as long as the ways of participating do not change very much, everyone is happy. But if the patterns change there will be tension and there are many forces at work in our society producing change. The GVRD itself is a product of these forces, charged with responsibility for developing new patterns. (A)

Any full scale evaluation of the Policy Committees will have to explore the historical development of the GVRD, its present powers and relationships with the municipalities, and the impact of these on the Public Participation Program.

Throughout 1971 and 1972, the staff of the Livable Region Program held 40-50 meetings with citizen groups in the region to discuss the program and the Livable Region Plan. In the Fall of 1972, a report (Report on Livability) was published detailing the progress to date and outlining 30 objectives/policies statements. At about the same time, the GVRD Board decided that the new Livable Region Plan would be completed by March, 1974, one year earlier than anticipated originally.

The increased time pressures meant that the Livable Region Program had to be accelerated and that a number of lines of development would have to proceed simultaneously. Four strategies were adopted. The Public Program consisting of meetings with citizen groups would continue, the Federal and Provincial Governments were asked to carry out a number of technical

studies pertaining to their special interests, the planners were to prepare a draft Livable Region Plan, and nine Policy Committees were to be set up to review the 30 objectives/policies statements developed to date.

This case study is concerned solely with the Policy Committees. The initial conception of these committees was to gather together a wide range of "experts" (Federal politicians and officials, Provincial politicians and officials, municipal politicians and officials, academics, and representatives of the various interest groups in the region) whose combined expertise and advice would become an important input into the Livable Region Program. Each committee was to focus on a particular urban system: transportation, residential living, recreation, education and research, social services, health and public protection, economic production and distribution, environmental management, and government and society. Their task was three-fold: to review the initial 30 objectives/policies statements from the perspective of their particular urban system, to produce a final report by October, 1973, and to review, when it was ready, the draft Livable Region Plan. The final report was to cover: livability objectives, regional responsibilities, livability indicators, policy statements, immediate action steps, and financial implications - a rather tall order. Following the completion of their reports, the committees were to meet with the Planning Committee of the GVRD Board, and with the Board itself, to review the committees' recommendations. The staff

of the Livable Region Program were to provide the secretarial, administrative, and technical support for the committees, and each committee had a budget of \$2000.

In the Spring of 1973, the members of the Policy Committees were "selected" on a principle of open membership. Invitations were sent directly to a number of people and groups, and the existence of the committees was advertised in the mass media so as to encourage the participation of people who were not members of groups. It was at this stage that a fundamental conflict began to arise which appears to have coloured the development of the Policy Committees from start to finish.

It appears, from looking at the terms of reference of the committees, that they were not designed as a process of public participation in the Livable Region Program. On the other hand, the selection process encouraged citizens to appear, and suggested that the committees were an attempt to provide for further citizen involvement, beyond the existing pattern of meetings with organized citizen groups that had started in 1971. This conflict led into a major issue of the representativeness of the Policy Committees. At least initially, there were too many professionals to permit one to say that the committees were a form of public participation, and there were too many people for the committees to appear as task-oriented groups of experts. Further, there was almost a complete absence of politicians and municipal officials. The lack of representative-



ness of the Policy Committees appears to have been a major factor behind a large number of people dropping out of the process (for example, the Residential Living Policy Committee started with 80 odd people in April, 1973, while only 15 people were involved in writing the final report in October, 1973). It has also been used by some of the regional politicians to deny the validity of the work of the committees. By the time that the membership of each committee had stabilized, each group consisted of an odd mixture of professionals, academics, and "amateur" citizens (people with a general interest in the subject matter rather than a specialized interest). It is not known how well these groups were able to meld themselves together, but all except two produced their final reports within a month of the deadline. Further, the one committee with which this author had direct experience - the Residential Living Policy Committee - was able to build a friendly, consensus-oriented, working atmosphere, where the distinction between those with specialized interests and knowledge and those with generalized interest and knowledge became of little significance.

The Policy Committees started operation in April, 1973. The first meetings were confusing, with large numbers of people and a constantly changing membership. They focused primarily on the functions of the committees - what they were supposed to be about, how they were supposed to relate to the planners and the GVRD politicians, and what power they had. A good deal

of rhetoric was loosely tossed around, particularly by the Livable Region Program staff responsible for the Policy Committees, as to the importance of the committees and the willingness of the planners and the politicians to listen to their views and recommendations. In hindsight, it appears that the initial concerns and anxieties of the citizens were never really cleared up; a situation that continued to plague the Policy Committees all of the way through. Most of the committees threw out their explicit terms of reference with which they had been provided (though their final reports covered most of the material expected from them), and elected to re-examine their particular urban system from beginning to end. This decision was critical since it shifted the role of the committees clearly away from the "expert" advisory groups that were to be partners in the coordinated thrust of the Livable Region Program, into a position where the role was no longer clear and the committees' relationship to the Livable Region Program undefined.

Throughout the Spring, Summer, and Fall of 1973, the committees met regularly, holding about 550 hours of meetings involving just over 200 people, producing something of the order of 110,000 person/hours of time and effort. Final reports were produced by the late Fall, and each committee held a brief meeting with the Planning Committee of the GVRD Board to review their report. In addition, most of the reports were given to the press, some before and some after the meetings with the politicians.

In February, 1974, a GVRD seminar on the management of urban growth (a major concern of all of the Policy Committees) was held at which representatives of the Policy Committees were present. The hope was that this would provide a further opportunity for the committee members to interact with the regional and municipal politicians and officials. This occurred, though only at a minimal level. The agenda of the seminar was focused on the interests of the Livable Region Program staff and the GVRD politicians, rather than on the concerns and recommendations of the Policy Committees. In May, 1974, the Policy Committees presented a formal report to the GVRD Board. The report was referred to the Planning Committee of the GVRD Board where it still sits, awaiting some form of response and positive action.

A second growth seminar was held in May, 1974, at which there was no public or Policy Committee participation. In June, 1974, the coordinator of the Public Participation Program was released from his job, and the planned program of 50 public meetings was cancelled. Although the issue will not be pursued here, it needs to be acknowledged that the conflict strategies of the coordinator had a major impact on the successes and failures of the Policy Committees. Effectively, the Public Participation Program was put into abeyance. It appears now that some effort will be made to revive it, though the form it will take is very much up in the air. At the time of writing, the Livable Region Plan is expected to be made public in late March, 1975.

## THE EXISTING EVALUATION STUDIES

### 1. Tweddell's (84) study of the degree of participant satisfaction

Tweddell's concern was to investigate the degree to which Friedmann's (29) model of transactive planning describes the planning style of the GVRD and its Public Participation Program, and to examine the extent of participation within the Policy Committees. The study is in two parts: a theoretical analysis of the GVRD planning style, including the Public Participation Program and the Policy Committees, for evidence of the transactive planning style, and an analysis of the results of a questionnaire that was sent to all participants in the Policy Committees. The questionnaire was designed to test Friedmann's ideas about citizen participation. The results suggest considerable dissatisfaction with the dialogue (or lack of it, to be precise) among the citizens, planners, and politicians; with the willingness of the planners and politicians to act as mutual learners with the citizens; with the degree of involvement of the Policy Committees in the overall planning process; with the GVRD's attempts to explain the role of the Policy Committees; with the degree of representativeness of the committees; and with the levels of communication between the different committees and between the committees and outside resource people and the Public. Satisfaction was expressed only with the increased competence of the participants in their subject area, and with the secretarial and administrative staffing arrangements.

Tweddell concludes that the GVRD was, in fact, using elements of Friedmann's transactive planning style, but that, in the Policy Committees, it attempted too much in too short a time. He argues that the high degree of participant dissatisfaction can be traced to this latter fact. He recommends that:

- there needs to be a high degree of agency and political commitment to the ideals of citizen participation, if citizen participation programs are to be effective.
- one should be careful to not underestimate the resources needed to achieve participant satisfaction.
- there needs to be a flexible strategy in citizen participation programs.

Two observations need to be made about this study.

- The questionnaire makes no attempt to investigate the impact of individual motives and expectations, political and planning decisions, and intra-committee dynamics on participant satisfaction although these were acknowledged as being important variables.
- The questionnaire focused almost totally on the process aspects of the Policy Committees. The study, therefore, is weak in its assessment of the objectives (intended, actual, or latent) of the Policy Committees, the impact of the work of the committees on the planning process, and the effectiveness of the Policy Committees in achieving their objectives. Although it is useful to make a distinction between task and process, this does not mean that one

can properly assess one without looking at the other. Thus, the overall conclusion that the GVRD attempted too much in too short a time is only one aspect of an extremely complex picture. The lack of observable impact on the planning process and the power conflicts between the regional and municipal levels of government are equally important factors in determining the high degree of participant dissatisfaction.

It is important to note that Tweddell was not a participant in the Policy Committee process, and that his study was not conducted at the request of any of the actors in the process. This pure research approach means that the study has limited impact on the future of citizen participation in the GVRD, and it runs into the problem of depending upon uncommitted respondents. The importance of the position of the evaluator in the program under study needs to be stressed, for it is a critical factor in determining whether or not the results will be acted upon.

2. Smith's (74) monitoring report on the Public Participation Program, including the Policy Committees

A portion of the resources for the Public Participation Program, were provided by the Federal Ministry of State for Urban Affairs. During the Fall, of 1974, David Smith came out from Ottawa to review the program. His study was an attempt to discover "where the Public Participation Program was at" and to make some suggestions for the future of the program. The report makes no

attempt to examine the history of the program or to assess its effectiveness.

Smith's methodology was to interview a number of representatives of the three principal groups of actors: citizens, planners and politicians. He assumed that each group would have common and different perceptions of what the Public Participation Program and the Policy Committees were all about, and that future programs would have to be based on the areas of consensus. The interviews were concerned with eliciting people's perceptions of others in their own group, persons in the other two groups, the issue of representativeness, the Public Participation Program, the nature of planning, and the nature of decision-making. The results suggest that:

- both citizens and staff see the staff role as supporting and facilitating citizen input.
- all three groups feel that citizen committees should be representative.
- citizens and politicians have very different, typically negative, perceptions of each other.
- citizens and politicians seem to support the idea of planning, but have only limited understanding of what planning means.
- all three groups agree that decision-making power needs to rest with the politicians.

Smith makes a number of suggestions for the future.

- a small advisory committee of citizens, staff, and politicians should be set up to review the situation and to develop a new Public Participation Program format.
- The Public Participation Program should function for the GVRD as a whole and not just for the Planning Department, and possibly should play a role in supporting citizen participation at the municipal level.
- The Policy Committees should probably be continued in some form because they seemed to have provided a good means for channeling citizen energy and effort, because the reports appear to have been useful, particularly to the planners, and because the Committees help to maintain a balance between dealing with immediate issues and policy development.
- A partnership model should be used as a basis for the interactions between the committees and the planners.
- A committee of politicians, citizens, and staff should be set up to monitor the Public Program for two reasons.

One, if the work is genuinely innovative, no one at this time knows how it will develop and it is, therefore, important to establish guidelines, to keep to them, and to be in a position to modify them as the work develops. Two, genuinely innovative programs require continuing discussion and interpretation if they are to succeed in their purposes and to become an on-going part of the institution. It should also be recognized, as one of the citizens pointed out, that innovation is never neat and tidy and will produce tension and possibly conflict. However, skillful monitoring will reduce the potential for destructive conflict, and increase the possibilities of constructive resolution of tension. (B)



It is clear that Smith's study does not attempt or achieve a full description or evaluation of the Public Participation Program and the Policy Committees. It is extremely positive in its tone, in contrast to the air of negativism that runs through the interview statements. This is an important point, for if the study is to be effective - that is, if its recommendations are to be acted upon-it has to work from the common ground shared by the citizens, planners, and politicians. It is an interesting example of a report written by an evaluator who seems to see himself as a change agent, as well as a researcher.

### 3. Tyhurst's participant observation study

Dr. J. Tyhurst, a psychiatrist, has been conducting a personal study of citizen participation over the past few years, using the participant-observer methodology, supplemented by in-depth interviews with the key actors involved in the programs. Tyhurst attended the initial meetings of all of the Policy Committees, and stayed with three of the committees throughout most of their development. He was involved in the February, 1974, seminar on the management of urban growth, and presented the final report from the Policy Committees to the GVRD Board in May, 1974. (Tyhurst (85)).

Tyhurst has yet to publish the results of his study, and hence little can be said of the efficacy of his methods at this point in time. It appears, however, that his approach, despite its openness to personal biases, will produce a report that fully

describes what happened and that will be of use to other groups involved in similar ventures.

#### EVALUATION RESEARCH WITHIN THE POLICY COMMITTEE CONTEXT

The Tweddell, Smith, and Tyhurst studies cover two of the functions that evaluation research might serve: as a means of providing information, insight, and experience that might be useful to other groups engaged in similar ventures and as a means for determining the future of the program. Two other functions for evaluation research were suggested in Chapter 2 and their discussion will round out the presentation of this case study.

##### 1. As a means of feedback

Apart from the initial confusion over the terms of reference for the Policy Committees, each committee seems to have had good control over its own work - producing a final report within a given deadline. The circumscribed nature of this task probably played a major role in helping the committees keep on top of what they were doing. Intra-committee communication and feedback seems to have been strong, helped by regular minutes and strong leadership from within the committees themselves.

Outside of the internal dynamics of each of the committees, the picture is one of confusion, lack of communication, miscommunication, and a general lack of an overall thrust toward some set of objectives. It would appear that an evaluation team could have played a major role in helping the committees work to-

gether, and in forestalling the ultimately negative clashes between the citizens, the planners, and the politicians. These clashes arose principally because the citizens felt that their work was not having, and would not have, an impact on the planning and decision-making processes of the Livable Region Program. Specifically, the evaluation team might have been able to point out the need for more regular, active communications between the Policy Committees, the planners, and the politicians. Input into a planning or decision-making process is difficult to appraise at the best of times, but when there is little active communication among the groups involved, there is no way in which to pick up the necessarily subjective clues for making such a judgment.

This overall "management" role was supposed to be performed by the staff of the Livable Region Program, but they were not able to do so, possibly because they were too caught up in the program themselves. A number of people have suggested that the Public Participation Program should be separated off from the GVRD entirely, with its own resources and staff. It is difficult to see what change levers the citizens would have if this happened. An evaluation team, not tied to the Planning Department, could likely achieve the same result, without divorcing the citizens from the other actors in the planning process.

## 2. As a means of promoting wider involvement

Although membership in the Policy Committees was open to all people in the region, and the existence of the committees was

well advertised, only 400 people turned up at the beginning, and only 200 stayed the entire route. A number of the committees produced one-hour television programs on their work, and one committee held a public conference, in order to promote wider involvement and to elicit the public's views. In addition, all of the committees released their reports to the press, though this was done primarily to encourage political response to the committee's recommendations.

A basic issue here is the lack of awareness of the GVRD and its responsibilities among the people of the region. The Public Participation Program, since its inception in 1971, has tried to overcome this. Its limited impact in doing so is probably a reflection of the low-profile nature of the GVRD, and of its evolutionary pattern of growth. It is doubtful, therefore, that further reporting of the Policy Committees and their work would have achieved wider awareness of the GVRD and its Public Participation Program.

#### CONCLUSIONS

By way of a conclusion to this case study, it seems fair to argue that evaluation research could have played a major role in helping the Policy Committees determine their objectives, their role in the planning process, and their relationships to the other actors involved in the process; and in helping the committees pursue these objectives.

This case provides excellent support for the argument that evaluation research, if it is to have an impact, needs to be started at the very beginnings of a citizen participation program. Further, at least in this case, there seems to be a definite place for the outside, non-aligned, evaluator.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 5

- A. Smith, D., Monitoring Report on the Public Participation Program of the GVRD, October, 1974, mimeo, pg. 2.
- B. Ibid., pg. 12.

CHAPTER 6

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:  
STRATEGY AND LIFESTYLE

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter has two purposes. The next section will present several personal conclusions concerning citizen participation that arise out of the case studies in Chapter 5. The remainder of the chapter returns to the issues of participation as a strategy for social change (particularly radical, structural change) and participation as a lifestyle.

## CONCLUSIONS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

The functions that evaluation research might serve in citizen participation programs was discussed in Chapters 2 and 5. Four functions were suggested, and their application in the two case studies examined. It appears that evaluation research could be a useful tool in helping specific citizen participation programs achieve their goals, and in helping us develop further our understandings of citizen participation.

Both case studies point up the importance of the process aspects of participation as a key factor leading to the achievement of the program's objectives and to the overall satisfaction of the participants. The opportunities for learning about the issues being debated, for social interaction, and for making a positive contribution need to be stressed. It needs to be pointed out that the contributions made by the participants must be observable. In the Britannia situation, political approval of the physical designs and of the proposed administrative structure, the final completion of the Centre,



and the beginning of the Board of Management provided important clues to the citizens that they were having an impact. In the GVRD Policy Committees, the lack of these clues led to polarization with the citizens on one side and the planners and politicians on the other.

The success of the citizen participation program in the development of the Britannia Community Services Centre was due in part to the issues for discussion being well-defined, to the clear role given to the Britannia Planning Advisory Committee, and to the prior political support given to both the idea of the Centre and to the design process. In the case of the GVRD Policy Committees, the issues for discussion were not well-defined, the role of the committees was obscure, and the degree of political support was unclear. This had an important impact on how well the Policy Committee's were able to coordinate their efforts with each other, and with the activities of the planners and the politicians. One can conclude that the issues and the objectives of a citizen participation program need to be made clear very early on, and that the expectations of the various groups of actors involved in the process must be laid out on the table.

Both case studies suggest that citizen participation in local area planning (and in the Community Resources Boards) is going to be a difficult road to follow. The Britannia case, although operating at the neighbourhood level, involved participation

in a well-defined, politically approved project. Further, the importance of the Centre was widely acknowledged in the community. The GVRD Policy Committees, by focusing on a regional perspective, escaped the tendency to parochialism that is so common at the neighbourhood level. Further, it appeared as if the necessary implementation capacity was present through the GVRD's links to the municipalities and to the senior levels of government. Local area planning (and the Community Resources Boards) typically has none of these positive aspects. The issues tend to be fuzzy; parochial interests and conflicting groups are common; there is no clear feeling that the results of the planning process will be approved by the politicians; and there is a lack of implementation capacity to solve some of the most urgent problems. This author is inclined toward the position that citizen participation in planning should be encouraged primarily at the regional level. At the neighbourhood level, citizen participation should be encouraged only when the issues involved are clearly defined and the resources needed to implement the results of the planning process are available.

#### ORDERS OF CHANGE

Two questions were raised at the end of Chapter 3,

- Is it possible to talk about different levels or orders of change, and if so, do they exist on a continuum or are they discontinuous in nature?
- What are the relationships between citizen participation as a change strategy and the various orders of change?

A number of authors have attempted to delineate different orders of change, or change processes. For example, Nisbet (59) describes three: cultural persistency, readjustment, and change of type (structure, pattern, or paradigm). Cultural persistency is that set of processes whereby a society (or individual, group, organization, or community) maintains its present structure (the roles and functions played by the various parts of the society and the patterns of interaction among these parts), its theories (values, beliefs, myths, and perceptions of reality), and its technologies (social and physical). The process is not static - Schon (71) has termed it "dynamic conservatism"; it operates through cumulative, incremental adaptations to changing internal and external demands. Readjustment covers changes in the parts of the society which are compatible with the overall stability of the society; that is, they do not require changes in the social structure, in the society's understandings of itself, or in the society's technology. Most of these changes are movements toward goals that are offered (at least officially) by the society. The third process of change, change of type, covers those, much rarer, times when the society shifts to a different pattern. Fundamental changes take place in the structure, theories, and technologies of the society, that reverberate through all levels and parts of the society.

Other authors use different names. For example, Watzlawick et al (91) talks about first-order and second-order change; Schon (71) uses the terms "dynamic conservatism" and change of

state; and Kuhn (45) has developed the concepts of normal and revolutionary science. The point here is not to outline in any detailed fashion, the various orders of change; but rather to suggest that change is not a monolithic concept, and that it can and needs to be broken down into various types, if we are to proceed with our search for change strategies and levers.

#### THEORIES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

It is not within the scope of this thesis to delve into the sociological debate (see, for example, McLeish (48), Moore (57), Nisbet (59), and Smith (73)) about social change and its "causes". The central questions in that debate seem to be:

- What emphasis should be given to the stresses and strains within a society as "causes" of change, and what emphasis should be given to changing environmental conditions?
- Are historical events the key to understanding social change, or is the social structure a more significant factor?
- Are changes of type the result of an accumulation of incremental adaptations, or are they discontinuous jumps?
- Is there such a thing as a "law of progress", or does each society change in its own way?

The sociological theories of change are descriptive and explanatory only in hindsight. They are not predictive, and they do little to suggest how one goes about changing a society

(or individuals, groups, communities, and organizations). Most of the literature about planned change (see, for example, Bennis (5), Bennis et al (6), Freire (26,27), Jones (40), and Zaltman et al (98)) seems to have been derived primarily from peoples' experiences. At this stage, planned change is an art, not a science. Thus, it is important that people's experiences with citizen participation as a change strategy be documented, evaluated, and made readily available. Only in this way can we move toward a better understanding of the relationships between citizen participation and social change.

#### CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING

Warren's evaluation of the Model Cities Program in the U.S. (discussed in Chapter 3) suggests that citizen participation, at least as we know it to date, is not an adequate dynamic for achieving fundamental structural change. The dominant conception of citizen participation stresses the gaining of power and a place in the decision-making processes. This conception deflects attention away from developing a critical understanding and examination of the underlying values, beliefs, myths, and perceptions of reality, that guide the ways in which we define and recognize problems, and the tools we consider appropriate for solving them. In many cases, citizen participation has revolved around a group wanting to maintain its place in the sun, or wanting to gain a place in the sun. The question of whether the sun is worth having at all is rarely raised. The deeply internalized images of "what the good life

is all about", that we have learnt through the various socialization processes (the family, schools, the structure of work, ...), are a major factor limiting the adequacy of citizen participation as a strategy for fundamental change. As Freire has argued, in his analysis of the oppressor-oppressed relationship,

... during the initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or 'sub-oppressors'. The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped. Their ideal is to be men; but for them, to be men is to be oppressors. This is their model of humanity. (A)

Consciousness-raising or conscientization appears to be an important approach for citizen participation. As articulated by Freire (26,27) out of his, and others', experiences with literacy programs in Brazil and Chile, conscientization is not primarily a strategy for change. Freire sees each person as having a vocation, the individual and collective struggle for the humanization of the world. This is a continuous process, involving creation and re-creation of history and culture - it does not end with any specific revolution. It is the task of the oppressed to liberate both themselves and their oppressors, through a constant process of critical reflection and action, pushing back the limits of what seems to be possible or to be given. The oppressors do not have the power to seek this transformation. Only the oppressed, working out of their weakness, despair, and anger, have this power. For Freire, the central

problem confronting those seeking structural or revolutionary change is:

How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation? Only as they discover themselves to be the 'hosts' of the oppressor can they contribute to the midwifery of their liberating pedagogy. As long as they live in the duality in which to be is to be like, and to be like is to be like the oppressor, this contribution is impossible. The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization. (B)

Conscientization seeks critical understanding of oneself, one's place in the social structure, and one's relationships and interactions with others. It aims not only at knowledge, but at action that proceeds from knowledge, which in turn generates greater awareness and knowledge. Education becomes a key element in this process, particularly since oppression (or, more generally, any limiting situation) is not only a political and economic reality, but also a cultural reality - a way of life in which oppressor and oppressed are immersed together. Structural or revolutionary change demands change in the ways in which we view reality itself, in what we take to be the limits of our situation. For Freire, education is a process of dialogue between teachers-students and students-teachers, based on faith in the capacities of all people to become Subjects in participating in the transformation of their individual and collective realities.

There are striking similarities between conscientization and the participatory approach to democracy (see Chapter 4). Both stress education; the capacity of all people to act, individually and collectively, to change their situation; and the responsibility of all people to participate in the transformation of their society. The image of the "democratic man" is similar to the image of the "critically conscious man". It becomes clear that participation does not simply mean the power to influence decisions. All activities and occupations can be perceived within a participant framework - working with others to bring forth the goods and services necessary for a healthy and satisfying existence. At the same time, all activities and occupations become situations that have to be changed in the pursuit of structural or revolutionary change. Thus, seen as an approach toward citizen participation, conscientization directs our attention to the educative and process aspects of participation - the development of a critical questioning and understanding of social realities, which provides the groundswell that leads into transformation.

#### FINAL WORDS

Every author has his own biases and particular interests. This thesis has focused on some of the interconnections between citizen participation, social change, and views of democracy. Hopefully, it has raised more questions than it has provided answers - that, at least, was the intention. The problem with citizen participation is not its desirability, but our limited



conceptions of it. If we are to develop meaningful citizen participation, we will have to cast our thought more broadly. We need to look more deeply into the structure of our society - its institutions, patterns of work, opportunities for a healthy existence, ways of caring, technologies, .... We will have to go beyond these to exploring our common images of what it means to be human, how we come to know and define reality, and how our common languages bind and liberate us. Community, authority, and freedom are other issues. These are some of the other dimensions which will have to be examined, and re-examined, as we pursue our notions of citizen participation.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 6

- A. Freire, P., Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 29/30.
- B. Ibid., pg. 33.

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