

**Further Dissecting the Black Box of Quality Citizen Participation:  
When Does Citizen Involvement Improve Local Government Decision Making?**

Kaifeng Yang (contact author)  
Askew School of Public Administration and Policy  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL, 32306-2250  
Email: [kyang@fsu.edu](mailto:kyang@fsu.edu)

Sanjay Pandey  
School of Public Affairs and Administration  
Rutgers-Newark  
Newark, NJ, 07102

## **Further Dissecting the Black Box of Quality Citizen Participation:**

### **When Does Citizen Involvement Improve Local Government Decision Making?**

#### Abstract

While the citizen participation literature has offered various descriptive and prescriptive models suggesting how to improve citizen participation, these models have not been subjected to large-scale empirical tests. It remains untested how citizen involvement as a general strategy can be utilized to improve administrative decision making. This article develops and tests a model that includes some important explanatory variables at the community, organization, and individual levels. In particular, it focuses on several managerial variables that city managers are more likely to be able to control or influence, namely political support, leadership, red tape, and hierarchical authority. It also includes variables about participant competence and representativeness, as well as control variables about community characteristics and institutions. The hypotheses are tested with data collected from a national survey of local government managers.

Citizen involvement, defined as citizens' participation in administrative decision making and management processes, has been increasingly emphasized by public administration scholars (e.g., Cooper, Bryer, and Meek 2006; Denhardt and Denhardt 2000; Frederickson 1982; Roberts 2004; King, Feltey, and Susel 1998; Schachter 1995; Thomas 1995; Yang and Callahan 2005). Unlike political participation (e.g., presidential voting and political campaigning) or individual volunteerism in civic affairs, citizen involvement occurs primarily at the administrator-citizen interface (Yang and Callahan 2005; Wang 2001). It has been supported by three interrelated theoretical arguments: postmodern discourse theory, disillusionment with bureaucracy, and the search for a democratic ideal (Moynihan 2003). Recent literature on collaborative governance emphasizes it as a way to solve complex or "wicked" problems that cannot be addressed by government alone (Cooper, Bryer, and Meek 2006; Fung 2006). In practice, citizen involvement has arguably become an administrative value or professional norm for managers in local governments, where administrative decisions so directly and immediately affect citizens' lives (Nalbandian 1999). Although citizen input is not frequently sought in many decisions or in

functional areas that are managerial or technical, many local government managers recognize its importance and necessity.

Despite the enormous attention paid to this concept both in theory and practice, however, there have always been ambiguities or debates about its impact (Rosener 1978). Many people emphasize citizen involvement for its normative values: it is inherently democratic, fosters citizenship values, and enhances transparency and accountability (Barber 1986). There is some evidence that citizen involvement improves citizen trust in government, transparency, and accountability (Berman 1997; Kweit and Kweit 2004; Wang and Van Wart 2007). But many scholars and citizens observe citizen involvement as not authentic and shallow—it often occurs after the issues have been framed or decisions have been made (King, Feltey, and Susel 1998; Yang and Callahan 2005). From an instrumental perspective that recognizes it is not only the normative values that drive public managers' use of citizen participation but also stakeholder pressures and administrative practicalities (e.g., costs and benefits), some managers question the benefits of citizen involvement, the scope of the benefits, or the cost-efficacy of the benefits (King, Feltey, and Susel 1998; Moynihan 2003; Yang and Callahan 2007).

Thus, a major theme of the citizen involvement literature has been to study when or how citizen involvement improves government decisions. On the one hand, scholars have proposed prescriptive models that identify factors contributing to quality participation outcomes (e.g., Ebdon and Franklin 2006; Kweit and Kweit 1981; Thomas 1995; Walters, Aydelotte and Miller 2000). Those prescriptive models, however, have rarely been systematically tested with large empirical data. On the other hand, scholars have used case studies to illustrate how citizen involvement can work in a particular government, with a particular mechanism such as public meetings (Adams 2004), citizen advisory committees (Irvin and Stansbury 2004), and

neighborhood councils (Bryer and Cooper 2007), or in a particular policy area such as disaster management (Kweit and Kweit 2004) and transportation (Schachter and Liu 2005). These studies, however, do not show whether various participation mechanisms can consistently work across policy areas as they are largely based on selective case evidence. Overall, it remains untested how citizen involvement as a general strategy can be utilized to improve administrative decision making. In particular, it is unclear how organizational characteristics—things that public managers can more directly influence (as opposed to, for example, institutional factors specified in local government charters or constitutions).

This article aims to develop and test a preliminary model that includes some important explanatory variables at the community, organization, and individual levels. In particular, we focus on several managerial variables that city managers are more likely to be able to control or influence, namely leadership, political support, red tape, and hierarchical authority, as building and testing an all-inclusive model is beyond the scope of this study. While we also include variables about community characteristics and institutions, these managerial variables are of great importance because they are frequently used in public management research but have not been linked with the study of citizen involvement. This study will not only advance the administrative perspective of citizen involvement, but also offer practical suggestions that are more accessible to managers. We first review the literature on the determinants of citizen participation effects and then formulate the hypotheses. We test the hypotheses with data collected from a national survey of local government managers.

### **Literature Review**

How to make citizen involvement work is not a new question—it was asked as long as citizen involvement started to be mandated in the 1960s. Towards the end of the 1970s,

Checkoway and Til (1978) reviewed the literature and identified five unanswered questions at the time. One of the questions was: “in what ways does participation make a difference in the decisions and policy outcomes of government, and what kind of difference?” (35). In the same volume, Langton (1978) wrote that the quality of citizen participation was determined by six type of factors: citizenship education (citizen knowledge, attitudes, and skills), elitism (elite attitudes and behaviors), technological complexity (e.g., education techniques), financing, government agency behavior, and representativeness. Perlman (1978) emphasized the organizational characteristics of grassroots or citizen groups—staffing, fund-raising capacity, sophisticated model of operation, issue management, supporting networks, and coalition building. Rosener (1978) highlighted the importance of planning—how to match participation methods to participation purposes. The directions pointed by these early writings are still correct, but they are largely descriptive and prescriptive without large-scale empirical testing.

In their seminal book, Kweit and Kweit (1981) identified three types of determinants of participation success. The first category was the characteristics of the structures of participation mechanisms and organizations (e.g., different forms of participation, citizen organization features, organizational structure, power base, goals and strategies). The second category was the characteristics of the target organization, particularly its resource base, organizational structure, and members’ attitude. The third category was environment characteristics such as environment stability, forms of government, and community size. Kweit and Kweit argue that citizen participation has three types of effects—policy impact, power redistribution, and citizen attitudes, which are affected differently by environment, target characteristics, and participation structures. The variables identified by Kweit and Kweit are still relevant, but their conclusions were not based on large-scale quantitative data or statistical evidence. Some variables, such as

forms of government and community size, have been found to have a more ambiguous and complex relationship with citizen participation (Yang and Callahan 2005).

In his influential work, Thomas (1990) suggested that in order to achieve quality participation, participation mechanisms/forms should be matched with four styles of decision making: modified autonomous/managerial, segmented public consultation, unitary public consultation, and public decision. The four decision styles were further determined by a flow chart that considered seven factors: Are there quality requirements? Does the manager have sufficient information? Is the problem structured? Is public acceptance critical to implementation? Is acceptance reasonably certain if the manager decides alone? Does the public share agency goals? And is conflict within the public likely? The flow chart is a very useful for public managers who want to decide whether and how much to use citizen involvement for a specific decision, but it does not address whether other factors affect the impact of public involvement once it is adopted. In addition, the flow chart is a decision-specific tool, while our concern is conditions that facilitate quality participation across decisions.

King, Feltey, and Susel (1998) aimed to answer how authentic participation is possible. By authentic they mean participation that “works for all parties and stimulates interest and investment in both administrators and citizens” (p. 317). They argued that we have to adjust the relationships among the issue/situation, administrative systems/processes, administrators, and citizens. They suggested that citizens should be central and directly related to the issue, while administrators bridge citizens and administrative systems. More concretely, King, Feltey, and Susel point to three categories of barriers to authentic participation: the nature of life in contemporary society, administrative processes, and techniques of participation. They offered a number of recommendations for overcoming the barriers by educating citizens/administrators

and enabling facilitative systems/processes. King, Feltey, and Susel's work was based on interviews with subject matter experts and focus group discussions among citizens and administrators in Northeast Ohio. It is not clear how practical some of the recommendations are or whether they are generalizable, but the attention to citizens' life, participation technique/mechanism, and administrative structures is consistent with previous work (Kweit and Kweit 1981; Langton 1978; Rosener 1978).

Walters, Aydelotte, and Miller (2000) proposed that participation techniques or strategies should be tied to the purpose for participation and the nature of the issue being considered. Depending on the specific policy development stages, there are five purposes of participation: discovery or searching for definitions, alternatives, or criteria; educating the public about the issue and proposed alternative; measuring public opinion about the options; persuading the public toward an alternative; and legitimizing government decisions. The nature of the issue is determined by six attributes: the degree of conflict over the issue, the number of stakeholders, the level of confidence in the information on the issue, the number of alternatives, the knowledge of outcomes, and the probability of the outcomes. The authors illustrated their ideas with two cases from Utah. Similar to Thomas's (1990) flow chart and Rosener's (1978) methods-purpose matrix, this framework is very useful, but again it is a decision-specific tool. This matching idea is also reflected in some other recent models. For example, using a game metaphor, Stewart (2007) emphasizes matching participation mechanism with participation purposes determined by four factors: agenda-setting control, decision-making control, citizen leadership quality, and state official leadership quality (see also Fung 2006).

Considering a broader range of factors, Ebdon and Franklin (2006) proposed an impressive model of citizen participation impact in budgeting. Although the model focuses on

the budgeting area, it is based on the general participation literature and can be applied to other areas. The authors argue that the impact of citizen participation depends on the likelihood of use of citizen input, which is further influenced by four types of variables. The environment variables include forms of government, political culture, legal requirements, population size, and population diversity. The process design variables include timing, budget type, participants (selection method, numbers, and representativeness), and preferences. The mechanisms refer to techniques such as public meetings, focus groups, and surveys. The final type of variables is the goals and expected outcomes of participation such as reducing cynicism and educating citizens. This comprehensive model contributes greatly to the literature, but again it has not been fully tested and some of the relationships it proposes are still a matter of debate such as the impact of forms of government and population size (Wang 2001; Yang and Callahan 2005).

The studies reviewed above are just a sample of the literature, but they are representative. In general, the participation literature has proposed varied but consistent theories about quality citizen involvement, which offer a solid foundation for future inquiries. Nevertheless, three closely related issues still need to be addressed. First, the literature is based more on qualitative evidence or context-specific reasons, so the factors identified in those theories have rarely been operationalized and tested with large-scale quantitative data.<sup>1</sup> This limitation may have valid and legitimate reasons: qualitative studies are good for theory generating and quantitative designs are difficult on this topic because the impact of participation is contingent upon specific situations, issues, and mechanisms. However, as a step forward, it is important to test the theories across situations and mechanisms. The impact of participation may be highly context-specific and

---

<sup>1</sup> There are many quantitative studies that include variables discussed in this article to examine political participation (e.g., Oliver 2000; Verba et al. 1993) or citizen involvement (e.g., Yang and Callahan 2007), but these studies aim to explain the adoption of involvement by governments or the decision to participate by citizens, not the impact of such involvement efforts. Adopting citizen participation does not necessarily lead to quality outcomes.

issue-specific, but there is reason to expect that there are general patterns across contexts and issues.

This relates to the second limitation of the literature: the lack of use of mainstream organizational theories. Although the literature acknowledges strongly that administrative systems are a major concern and Kweit and Kweit (1981) emphasized the characteristics of target organizations, how organizational configurations and variables affect the impact of participation in a multivariate model remains relatively unexplored. For example, leadership and communication skills of public managers should be important regardless of contexts. Ultimately, adopting citizen involvement is an organizational decision and its implementation reflects an organizational adaption or change process that has organizational consequences. The research advancement in group dynamics and organizational adaption has not been fully incorporated in the study of citizen involvement. It is important to note that although citizen's participation occurs largely in the citizen-administrator interface, the outcome of the participation depends on factors beyond that interface. Once citizens give their voice, how that voice affects bureaucratic management and decision depends on characteristics of the target organization and its political environment.

Third, to some extent there is a tendency in the literature to equally count in all relevant conditions for quality participation without differentiating their relative importance or recognizing their potential tensions. Is it always necessary for all good conditions to be in place? Can strong leadership and commitment overcome the limitations on resources and techniques? Without multivariate model testing, it is impossible to assess accurately the relative importance of the factors contributing to quality participation outcomes. To build a thorough multivariate

model one needs organizational theory to understand how various variables are linked with one another in a complex organizational process.

### **Framework and Hypotheses**

Consistent with the literature, we consider four types of variables in explaining citizen involvement outcomes: the involvement mechanisms/tools, the characteristics of participants, the characteristics of target organizations, and the environment. We develop hypotheses only for variables that directly relate to the limitations of the literature, that is, variables that are important in public management or public organizational theory, such as red tape and transformational leadership, and variables that are linked in an interactive way, such as citizen competency and citizen representativeness. Other variables will be included in the testing, but only as control variables.

#### **Environment**

One of the defining differences between government and business organizations is that government organizations are heavily influenced by multiple, and many times competing, political principles such as elected officials, the courts, and the chief executive (Rainey 2003; Pandey and Wright 2006; Yang 2009). As a result, to what extent an agency has wide political support will greatly affect its behavior. At the local level, strong elected official support is particularly important because it brings funding, agency stability, and agency autonomy (Yang and Pandey 2009). Elected official support is found to affect the innovation, performance, and effectiveness of public organizations (Moynihan and Pandey 2005). Yang and Callahan (2007) find elected official support is a major reason why local governments adopt citizen involvement.

We believe elected official support affects not only the adoption of citizen involvement but also its outcomes. First, lack of political support or government bashing is negatively

associated with administrators' trust in citizens (Yang 2005). Without trust, public managers are less likely to involve citizens or take their input seriously. Second, elected official support enables public managers to change bureaucratic structures that are often mandated by external political authorities (Moe 1991; Yang and Pandey 2009), while bureaucratic structures are a major barrier to authentic citizen participation (King, Feltey, and Susel 1998; Kweit and Kweit 1981). Third, elected official support facilitates adequate internal communication in an agency (Yang and Pandey 2009). Without effective communication, citizen input will not be appropriately shared within the agency and discussions about potential changes will not occur. Fourth, in a hostile environment, the bureaucratic tendency is to avoid risk and stick to the old way of doing things, so managers are less likely to open up their decision making and invite potential threats. Finally, citizens' input in local politics is not always perceived as neutral or standing for public interest; instead, it may be perceived as coming from a particular political perspective or benefiting a particular political coalition. When local agencies do not have wide elected official support or when elected officials have conflicts about the agency and its policy, managers may adopt citizen involvement mechanisms in order to "show" that their decisions are based on public input, but they are less likely to actually use citizen inputs in their decisions. After all, their job stability is directly determined by the elected officials.

H<sub>1</sub> Perceived elected official support is positively associated with quality participation outcomes in decision making.

Environment characteristics relevant to citizen participation include other institutional variables such as forms of government and community demographics such as population size, diversity, education level, and debt. Since our focus is to develop an organization theory perspective of participation impact, we treat these variables as control variables for the simplicity of presentation. It is beyond the scope of this study to develop theories that address the debate

regarding the impact of such variables. For example, while Ebdon and Franklin (2006) state that the council-manager form of government is more supportive of citizen participation and more likely to experience long-term participation effects than other forms of government, Kweit and Kweit (1981) suspect that council-manager governments may have less citizen participation, but when citizen participation does occur they are more likely to see better outcomes and redistribution of power. But Yang and Callahan (2007) concluded otherwise, and empirical evidence is generally mixed (see also Yang and Callahan 2005). This issue is further complicated by the emergence of the “adapated city” wherein council-manager and mayor-council forms of governments are beginning to adapt and adopt features of the other form of government (Frederickson, Johnson, and Wood 2003). Similarly, the literature is split on the impact of community size on citizen participation, with one side supporting “small is beautiful” and the other side supporting “bigger is better” (Kelleher and Lowery 2004).

### **Target Organization Characteristics**

Bureaucratic structures have been recognized as a major barrier to quality citizen participation (King, Feltey, and Susel 1998). Kweit and Kweit (1981) conclude that organic organizations are more likely to experience more participation and better participation outcomes than mechanic organizations because of their flexibilities and willingness for change. However, such effects are rarely tested statistically. We use red tape and hierarchical authority to capture bureaucratic structures. Red tape, or burdensome administrative rules and requirements, has several negative effects on citizen participation. They create barriers for citizens to get government information timely and accurately. Without knowing the issues, the policies, or the problems, citizens are less likely to participate or participate well. Some potential participants may shun away from participation because of the red tape relating to participation. Managers

trapped by more red tape are less tolerant of risk-taking and change (Bozeman and Kingsley 1998), which are necessary if quality participation outcomes are expected. Finally, government red tape is often created and mandated by external political authorities, so managers must conform to the rules even when citizen input may say otherwise.

H<sub>2</sub>      Bureaucratic red tape is negatively associated with quality participation outcomes in decision making.

Hierarchical authority that emphasizes chain of command is another bureaucratic characteristic that reflects many government agencies' preference for stability, consistency, control, and risk-aversion (Rainey 2003), an emphasis that is antithetical to authentic citizen participation. Hierarchical authority is closely related to centralization (Hellriegel and Slocum 2004), which is found to lead to responsiveness, intelligence dissemination, and market orientation (Jaworski and Kohli 1993). Yang and Pandey (2007) find that decentralization is positively associated with public organizations' public responsiveness, as empowered employees are more likely to respond to citizen preferences. Hierarchical authority also relates to multiple management levels and centralized community channels, which impede information sharing and learning that are important for quality participation outcomes (Hellriegel and Slocum 2004).

H<sub>3</sub>      Hierarchical authority is negatively associated with quality participation outcomes in decision making.

An organizational characteristic that might overcome the constraints of bureaucratic structures is transformational leadership. Meta-analyses have consistently found that transformational leadership behavior is at least as common and effective in public organizations as in private ones (Dumdum, Lowe, and Avolio 2002). Transformational leaders motivate behavior by changing their followers' attitudes and assumptions (Burns 1978), which seems crucial in citizen participation because participatory governance often means doing things much differently from the bureaucratic tradition. Transformational leaders are typically seen as

catalysts of organizational change, and their charisma and inspirational motivation help public employees see the potential benefits of citizen participation and embrace change resulting from participation (Bass 1985). Particularly, transformational leadership in the public sector often emphasizes the role of citizens and citizenship in formulating and realizing shared goals (Denhardt and Campbell 2006).

H<sub>4</sub> Transformational leadership is positively associated with quality participation outcomes in decision making.

Regarding target organization characteristics, we also include two control variables. One is organizational size. One may expect quality participation outcomes to be more likely in smaller organizations, but what is more important may be the organizational structure, not its pure size. The other variable is budget flexibility—whether an organization is able to shift resources within its budget. Since cost is often a barrier to wide and authentic participation and since citizen involvement is often not a core task of government agencies, budget flexibility may affect whether managers have discretionary money to adopt citizen involvement.

### **Involvement Mechanisms**

Participation is impossible without mechanisms. As aforementioned, the literature in this regard has largely focused on the match between mechanisms and participation purposes or decision making stages (Rosener 1978; Thomas 1990; Walters, Aydelotte, and Miller 2000). Since “match” is case-specific, it is difficult to measure in a large-scale study. Instead, we pay attention to the variety of mechanisms or the use of multiple types. When multiple types of mechanisms are used, it is more likely that the match exists. In reality, there are often multiple participation mechanisms for one decision. When Ebdon and Franklin (2006) discuss involvement mechanisms, they place “multiple types” in one extreme of a continuum and suggest it leads to long-term and deepest impacts. Yang and Callahan (2005) find that use of

multiple involvement mechanisms is positively associated with rationales such as building trust in government and enhancing service quality. Berman (1997) finds that using multiple participation methods reduces citizen cynicism toward government. Wang (2002) treats various participation mechanisms as citizen-oriented accountability tools and finds that using multiple mechanisms is positively associated with stakeholder consensus, public responsiveness, and trust in government.

H<sub>5</sub> Using multiple involvement mechanisms is positively associated with quality participation outcomes in decision making.

The literature also emphasizes that each of the mechanisms can work well if they are well designed and implemented. For example, Ebdon and Franklin (2006) point out the importance of process design variables such as timing and participant selection method. Baker, Addams, and Davis (2005) identify critical factors for enhancing public hearings. Instead of measuring all those critical design factors in one study, we argue that strong leadership and commitment can lead to good process designs. That is, leadership affects how participation mechanisms are designed and implemented. Indeed, Steward (2007) illustrates that the choice of participation mechanisms depends on leadership quality. He suggests that better leadership quality facilitates the use of mechanisms offering citizens more control and leading to greater decision impact. We argue that when multiple mechanisms are adopted, transformational leadership can strengthen or reinforce their impact on decision outcomes.

H<sub>6</sub> There is an interactive effect between transformational leadership and variety of involvement mechanisms so that the latter's impact on decision outcomes is likely to be enhanced by the former.

### **Participant Characteristics**

Participant characteristics, particularly citizen competence and representativeness, are critical to the quality of participation outcome (Langton 1978; King, Feltey, and Susel 1998; Kweit and Kweit 1981). First, educating citizens and improving their knowledge and

participation skills are typical recommendations in the participation literature, and many public managers do not trust citizens have the competence to participate effectively. A 1998 survey by The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press reports that 77% of presidential appointees and 81% of senior civil servants do not believe Americans know enough about issues to form wise opinions (in Bok, 2001). Public managers are less likely to involve citizens if they do not have such trust (Yang 2005). If citizens do not know about the issues, taking time to educate them delays the decision process. If citizens cannot communicate well, not only decision processes will be delayed, consensus is more difficult to achieve and quality solutions are less likely to emerge.

Second, representativeness is a fundamental concern and many managers are frustrated with the fact that only the same handful of people participate most of the times and question whether the small group represents the community at large (King, Feltey, and Susel 1998). Even when citizens are competent, they are not equally willing to participate. Thus, unequal representation is likely to occur and further decrease equality given the current uneven distribution of power and resources (Arnstein 1972; Kweit and Kweit 1981). The requirement for competence and representativeness may vary depending on the type of issues and involvement purposes, but it is generally believed that stronger citizen competence produces better citizen input and citizen input coming from a representative group is more likely to be valued by government officials.

H<sub>7</sub> High levels of participant competence are positively associated with quality participation outcomes in decision making.

H<sub>8</sub> High levels of participant representativeness are positively associated with quality participation outcomes in decision making.

However, there might be an interactive effect between competence and representativeness so that when representativeness is high the effect of competence may be

reduced. There are three somewhat different logics for this. One is that the two factors may be difficult to optimize simultaneously. If one wants to only involve citizens who are highly competent, then s/he is unlikely to get a representative group because highly competent citizens tend to be more educated and wealthier (Verba and Nie 1972; Verba et. al. 1993). If one tries to include all types of citizens, then s/he may get people who are not competent at all. In this case, one would wish for great competence and representativeness, but they just cannot come together. The second logic assumes that high competence and representativeness can come together, but that may not be a good thing in local administrative decision making. Local residents often fall within different and even competing groups/coalitions based on political party lines, political connections, or interests/preferences. If all of them are equally competent and come together and fight, it is not necessarily beneficial for governments who need to make timely decisions. This logic indicates that we may see negative effects from the two variables.

The third logic is based on what is normally required in local citizen involvement efforts. Citizen involvement in administrative decision process, after all, is not legislative decision making where representation is crucial. The majority of involvement efforts in local governments are not the type of direct democracy envisioned by Barber (1986); instead, they are used to collect citizen input as an additional source of information for elected officials and managers. That is, at least in current practice, what local governments seek in most cases are “relevant” (as opposed to representative) participants: those who are directly affected by a forthcoming decision, those who have expert knowledge about a future plan, or those who are most dissatisfied with a service. As a result, when involvement situation is such that representativeness is a not a big concern (e.g. expert panel), the requirement for competence tends to greater. In situations where representativeness is a big concern (e.g., town hall meetings

for community visioning), competence is still a concern otherwise people with better participation skills may dominate the process (Young 2000), but the importance of competence may be relatively lower (though not negative). Regardless of the logic, we hypothesize that the interaction term between competence and representativeness will be negative in the final model.

- H<sub>9</sub> There is an interactive effect between participant competence and participant representativeness so that higher levels of representativeness reduce the impact of competence.

## **Methodology**

### **Data Collection**

The data for this study were collected in Phase 4 of the National Administrative Studies Project (NASP-IV), a key part of which is a survey administered to a nationwide sample. The theoretical population of interest for was comprised of senior managers (both general and functional) in US local government jurisdictions with populations over 50,000. The general managers included the city manager and assistant/deputy city managers. Functional managers included in the study headed key departments, namely, Finance/Budgeting, Public Works, Personnel/HR, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Planning, and Community Development. The sample design and construction was aided by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), which is widely regarded as the authoritative source of information about US local government jurisdictions and professionals. Based on the study criteria, ICMA compiled a list with contact details of potential respondents. Beginning with the initial list provided by ICMA, the NASP-IV team used publicly available information to gather basic information about each jurisdiction's chief administrative officer.

These efforts resulted in 3,316 individuals in the study sample. Each of them was sent an initial letter through US Mail which introduced the study and provided details on how to participate. They were directed to the study website and provided a secure participation code.

After the initial letter, multiple methods were used in follow-up efforts – e-mail, fax, and phone calls. When the study concluded 1,538 of the 3,316 had responded, for a response rate of 46.4%. As a key explanatory variable was transformational leadership exhibited by the chief administrative officer, we did not want to rely on self-reports of transformational leadership by chief administrative officers themselves. We also wanted to focus on city departments (specific work units or divisions), so we excluded reports from deputy/assistant city manager. Therefore, our observations came from 1,097 functional managers. The distribution of functional specialization of respondents closely matched the distribution of functional specializations in the sample. The mean age was 50 with an inter-quartile range of 11 (25<sup>th</sup> percentile being 46 and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile being 57). As expected, a sizable majority were male (67.8%), white (86.3%), highly educated (more than 57% with graduate degrees), and well compensated (58% with salaries over \$100,000). On average, the respondents have been in their present position for 7.6 years.

## **Measurement**

Wherever possible, the study variables were measured using multiple item measures that have been tested and validated in earlier studies (see the Appendix for specific wording and sources). For example, In an effort to minimize survey length and maximize survey response, transformational leadership was measured using a small set of items selected from four socialized charismatic leadership subscales (vision, role modeling, inspirational communication, and intellectual stimulation) developed by House (1998), which depict the three transformational dimensions (inspirational motivation, idealized influence and intellectual stimulation).<sup>2</sup> One item

---

<sup>2</sup> Although transformational and charismatic leadership are often discussed as separate theories in the literature, conceptual and empirical evidence suggests a considerable degree of overlap exists between these theories and their measures (Avolio, Bass & Jung 1999; Hunt 1999; Yukl 1999).

was taken from each of three subscales (Intellectual stimulation, role modeling and inspirational communication) while two items were selected from the vision scale because of the underlying importance transformational leadership places on organizational goals and vision. Although this five-item measure represents items from four different subscales (House 1998), a factor analysis of these items extracted only one factor that explained nearly 76% of their variance and is consistent with previous findings that suggest the transformational dimensions may be best characterized as a single factor (Avolio, Bass and Jung 1999).

Measures of citizen participation variables were written specifically for the NASP-IV study. However, the development of these measures relied not only upon recent scholarship on citizen participation (e.g., Bryer 2007; Ebdon and Franklin 2006; Moynihan 2003; Yang 2005), but also upon the input and review by a large number of expert reviewers for this project.

Among control variables, jurisdictions' financial health was measured by total outstanding debt per capita from the 2004 US Census Historical Database on Individual Local Government Finances. Organization size was measured by the number of employees of the departments (not the city, and log transformed in the testing). Population size of the jurisdiction was measured with the 2000 Census data. Education level of the jurisdiction was measured by the percentage of population over age 25 with bachelor's degree or higher in 2000 Census data.

### **Analysis Procedure**

Hypotheses were tested with Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression. Regression diagnostics were run and OLS regression assumptions were met. Since interaction terms were included, we used the mean centering method to avoid multi-collinearity. We chose not to use Structure Equation Modeling (SEM) because we did not hypothesize mediating relationships in

this article. The second reason was that the number of variables and the test of moderating (interactive) effects would not be easily accommodated with SEM given our sample size.

Another choice was whether to use multi-level modeling. We had many cases where one jurisdiction had only one respondent, but we also had cases where one jurisdiction had multiple respondents representing different departments. For the latter situation, the departments were nested in the jurisdictions. We used SAS Proc Mixed procedure and tried several hierarchical models with jurisdiction variables placed at the second level, but the Null Model Likelihood Ratio Test suggested that it is not necessary to model the covariance structure of the data. The Proc Mixed results are essentially similar to the OLS results.

Finally, since our responses came from seven functional areas, it is necessary to address the effects of functional areas. We ran one-way ANOVA with participation outcomes as the dependent variable and found that the functional areas fall in three categories. The first category includes parks/recreation, planning, and community development; the second includes finance/budgeting and public works; and the third includes personnel/human resource and economic development. The ANOVA results suggest that better participation outcomes are more likely in the first category than in the third category. This is reasonable as planning is an area more conducive to citizen participation (Kweit and Kweit 1981), community development agencies are often charged with citizen participation, and park/recreation is directly related to citizen daily lives. In contrast, finance/budgeting and public works are technical areas where participation is less common and managers are less receptive to citizen participation (Yang and Callahan 2005). The results show that the second category is in between and not statistically different from either the first or the second category. According to Yang and Callahan (2005), personnel/human resource is managerial function and similar to technical functions regarding

citizen participation. For simplicity, instead of creating six or two dummy variables, we included in the model one dummy variable—whether it is in the first category or not.

## **Results**

Table 1 provides the univariate statistics of the study measures. On average, respondents reported positive participation outcomes in decision making, existence of transformation leadership in their chief executive officials, elected official support, and use of various participation mechanisms. However, they also reported the existence of red tape and concerns about the lack of participant competence and representativeness.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Table 2 summarizes bivariate correlations and reliability of the index measures. All multiple-item measures achieved an acceptable level of reliability (ranging from .70 to .92). The correlations suggest that the measures are largely distinct and yet related (in expected ways). All correlation coefficients were below .45 except a moderate correlation between participant competence and representativeness (.64) and a strong correlation between population size and organization size, which is understandable. Notably, none of the community demographics, financial health, or form of government was correlated with managerial variables. In addition, community demographics, financial health and form of government were not correlated with the dependent variable, suggesting that they are unlikely to be antecedent variables (see later discussions).

[Insert Table 2 here]

Regression results summarized in Table 3 showed that the overall model was significant ( $F=16.82$ ;  $p < .0001$ ) with an adjusted  $R^2$  of .23. Consistent with the correlation results, most control variables were not significant in the model. For the nine hypothesized independent

variables (or interactive terms), six were significant at the .05 level and three were significant at the .10 level.

[Insert Table 3 here]

## **Discussions**

### **Hypothesis Testing**

This article aims to develop and test a multivariate model that helps advance an organizational perspective of citizen participation impact and recognizes the complex relationships among typical recommendations. Our results support this overall purpose. The results show that Hypothesis 1, that elected official support is positively associated with quality participation outcomes, is supported. This extends the previous studies that show elected official support is importance for the adoption of citizen involvement efforts (Yang and Callahan 2007). Although many public administration scholars conceptualize citizen involvement as occurring in the administrative process (i.e., administration-centric, see Yang and Callahan 2005), it is crucial to note that any administrative decisions are political, so are any involvement efforts. Indeed, there is no pure administration-politics dichotomy in local governments, but more often a partnership between the two sides (Nalbandian 2005; Svara 2001). Building a trusting relationship between elected officials and public managers is important for making positive changes via citizen participation. Without trust and support, citizens input may be politicized, decision based on the input is likely to be delayed, and changes are less likely to occur.

Hypothesis 2, that red tape is negatively associated with quality participation outcomes, is supported. Hypothesis 3, hierarchical authority is negatively associated with quality participation outcomes, is supported only at the .10 significance level. The results confirm the literature that has long argued that bureaucratic structures are a major hurdle for authentic participation. If

managers already face considerable red tape and hierarchical authority, they are more likely to view citizen participation requirements as another red tape adding more burdens. Note that red tape and hierarchical authority are significant with organization size being controlled for and organization size is not significant in the model. The results suggest that even large organizations can be flexible, “flat,” and ready for change which might result from citizen participation. In contrast, even small organizations can face burdensome circumstances that are not conducive to citizen participation. Also note that red tape and hierarchical authority are only moderately correlated ( $r = .44$ ), suggesting that they are two distinct variables. The regression results (Type I SS and Type II SS) suggest that red tape is probably a more important explanatory variable than hierarchical authority.

Our results and additional analysis suggest that transformational leadership of the chief executive official is positively associated with quality participation outcomes, supporting Hypothesis 4. Although the  $p$  value for transformational leadership in this model (.07) is greater than .05, it should not be used to downplay the role of transformational leadership. Facing similar environment and external pressures, transformational leaders are more likely to reduce red tape, create public value, and win political support (Moore 1995), which, in turn, facilitate quality participation outcomes. The correlation matrix in Table 2 shows that transformational leadership is negatively associated with red tape and positively associated with political support. We tested a model that excluded red tape and political support, and we found that transformational leadership became significant at the .01 level. We also tried to regress red tape and political support on transformational leadership and found a significant relationship. In other words, transformational leadership’s impact on participation outcome may be partially mediated by red tape and political support. Our results suggest that the call for city managers to be more

concerned with citizen participation is timely and appropriate (Nalbandian 1999, 2005). The results do not directly confirm, but are consistent with, the idea that transformational leadership in government settings are necessarily associated with democratic norms and citizenship values (Denhardt and Campbell 2006). This connection warrants future inquiries.

Hypothesis 5, regarding the positive role of using multiple involvement mechanisms, is supported. The literature has long argued that no involvement mechanism is suitable for all situations and the choice of mechanism has to be contingency-based. Our results show that using multiple mechanisms across decisions and time periods is more likely to lead to better decision making, which is consistent with previous studies that find using multiple mechanisms enhances trust in government (Berman 1997) and public responsiveness (Wang 2002). The implication is that public managers should go beyond mandated involvement mechanism, be creative, and design mechanisms that best fit participation purposes, participant characteristics, issue characteristics, and organizational resources. In doing so the managers can utilize various tools proposed in the literature (e.g., Thomas 1990; Walters, Aydelotte, and Miller 2000).

Good tools or combination of tools are always a good thing, but their ultimate effects have to do with the people who use them. Hypothesis 6 proposes that transformational leaders can better take advantage of a better combination of involvement mechanisms. The interactive term between transformational leadership and variety of mechanisms has a positive coefficient that is significant at the .05 level, supporting Hypothesis 6. The results can have an alternative interpretation: good participation tools can enlarge the positive impact transformational leaders may have. Regardless, there is a reinforcing relationship between mechanism variety and transformational leadership, which has not been directly discussed in the literature.

Many public administrators do not trust citizens have necessary competence to participate well (King and Stivers 1998; Yang 2005), and there is plenty evidence that shows citizens sometimes do not know enough about government decisions (Bok 2001). Our results support Hypothesis 7 that participant competence is positively associated with participation outcomes. In fact, participant competence is the most important explanatory variable in the model, with the largest Type I SS and Type II SS. This finding does not mean that incompetent citizens should not be involved. For one thing, participation itself is a process through which competence can be improved, and this is why for some people participation is inherently beneficial. For another, even though many citizens are not issue experts or do not have the same level of knowledge as public administrators, they can still use information shortcuts and make good decisions (Lupia 1994). But the finding does support the importance of educating citizens: teaching citizens how to work with the system, strengthening civic education, building social capital, holding participation workshops, among other things.

Regarding the positive role of participant representativeness (Hypothesis 8), the regression coefficient is positive and significant at the .10 level. The importance of the significant level should not be overstated in such a large model where potential mediating and moderating effects are not directly addressed for the simplicity of the study. In our early discussion on Hypothesis 4 results, we mentioned an additional mediation analysis, one part of which was to drop red tape and political support from the model. In that testing, participant representativeness became significant at the .04 level. Nevertheless, despite its fundamental policy implications discussed in the literature, it is a less important explanatory variable here (in terms of Type I SS and Type II SS) and certainly far less important than participant competence. This empirical finding is not unreasonable and it is consistent with the third logic on which we

developed Hypothesis 9 (higher levels of representativeness may reduce the impact of competence). That logic is that most involvement efforts currently in local governments are not for decisions that require broadest possible participation; rather, most involvement efforts seek only relevant participants that possess certain knowledge or experience.

Relatedly, Hypothesis 9 is supported by our results showing that the interaction term is highly significant and actually the second most important explanatory term (second highest Type I SS and Type II SS). This is a striking finding considering how often people talk about the desire for both competence and representativeness. While all the three logics about the interactive effect are reasonable, the empirical results of this article seem to support more the third one. The first one assumes that great competence and representativeness are unlikely to come together, but the bivariate correlation between the two is positive (Table 2,  $r=.64$ ). Considering the regression coefficients for competence, representativeness, and the interaction term,<sup>3</sup> it does not seem possible that the impact of competence can be negative, not supporting the second logic about competing interests impeding administrative decisions.

### **Control Variables**

Not surprisingly, functional area is highly significant in the model, indicating that planning, community development, and park/recreation are more “friendly” to or supportive of meaningful citizen participation than other four areas (finance/budgeting, public works, personnel/HR, and economic development). This is consistent with the literature (Kweit and Kweit 1981; Yang and Callahan 2005) and highlights the fact that citizen participation is policy-contingent. Not all policy areas are equally in need of citizen input. Calls for more involvement

---

<sup>3</sup>The relationship between the two variables and quality participation outcomes (with their values mean-centered) can be expressed roughly as  $Y = .335 * \text{competence} + .105 * \text{representativeness} - .041 * \text{competence} * \text{representativeness} + C$ . It can be converted to  $Y = (.335 - .041 * \text{representativeness}) * \text{competence} + .105 * \text{representativeness} + C$ . The impact of competence turns negative when  $.335 - .041 * \text{representativeness} < 0$  or when the original value (not mean-centered) of representativeness becomes about 15, which is outside the scale range.

efforts cannot be equally applied across functional areas. The theoretical implication is that we need to pay attention to the policy context of our conclusions and recommendations, knowing how it constrains the generalizability of our statements.

Interestingly, most control variables are not significant in the model, including budget flexibility, organization size, form of government, debt per capital, population, and population diversity. Except budget flexibility, they are not even correlated with participation outcomes in bivariate statistics (Table 2). The results about budget flexibility and debt per capital seem to suggest that resources are not a determinant of participation outcomes. This finding is consistent with Yang and Callahan's (2007) observation that although lack of resources may force governments to open up (see also Kweit and Kweit 1981), it is not associated with the use of citizen input in strategic decisions. On the list of obstacles to citizen participation reported by managers in Yang and Callhan's (2007) study, lack of resources is not high on the list. The results about population and population diversity are also consistent with previous studies, which find that larger communities may have more resources and more diverse communities may have more needs to adopt participation mechanisms, but they also face more contested issues and tensions in making strategic decisions (Oliver 2000; Yang and Callhan 2007). The results here suggest that "small could be beautiful" and "big could be good" as well. The role of form of government is ambiguous in the empirical literature (Kweit and Kweit 1981; Yang and Callhan 2007). Although many people believe council-manager governments are more likely to see better participation outcomes (Ebdon and Franklin 2006), the results here suggest that it is not an important factor for participation outcomes.

While education is significant at the .10 level in the regression model, its bivariate correlation with participation outcomes is extremely small (-.01) and highly insignificant.

Education was also highly insignificant when we exclude red tape and political support from the regression model. This is intriguing because education is often identified as the most powerful predictor of citizen willingness to participate, and Yang and Callahan (2007) find that education level is positively associated with governments' use of involvement mechanisms and use of citizen input for strategic decisions. Future studies are necessary to further examine this variable.

### **Limitations**

One limitation of this study is that the adjusted  $R^2$  is only .23, which implies that some important explanatory variables are not included. An important omitted factor is, for example, public managers' values and attitudes about citizen participation, which has been found to be a key to explain governments' involvement efforts (Yang and Callahan 2007). Other omitted variables include the community's social capital, political culture, and a direct measure of the match between mechanisms and purposes, among other things. Nevertheless, our research plan was thoroughly based on the literature review and included variables about the environment, the participants, the target organization, and the mechanisms, and our focus was on applying organizational theory constructs and public management theories. To the extent one wants to fully explain the quality of participation outcomes in decision making, future studies need to include those omitted variables.

Another issue that deserves future attention is the potential of complex mediating relationships among the variables. As aforementioned, the impact of transformational leadership on participation outcomes is partially mediated by red tape and perceived elected official support. Given the space and our focus, this study primarily focused on the direct impacts without showing the results for the mediation analysis. There are other potential mediating effects. For example, perceived elected official support is likely to affect the level of bureaucratic

structures such as red tape and hierarchical authority (see Yang and Pandey 2009). Another example is that the impact of red tape on participation outcome may be partially mediated by participant representativeness. To fully explain and test all those potential mediating effects, one needs to have strong theories about them and then use structure equation modeling for testing. This is not feasible here as this study is the first one to test the effects of those organizational variables on participation outcomes.

This study has the typical limitation associated with survey research with cross-sectional data, that is, the causality cannot be guaranteed and may be reversed. For example, quality participation outcomes and better decisions may lead to more elected official support, less red tape, and less hierarchical authority. We acknowledge this limitation but argue that any research design has limitations and our results should be interpreted in conjunction with findings from other qualitative and quantitative studies. Viewed this way, our findings have strong theoretical support and are consistent with other studies.

Finally, we relied on managers' perception to measure participation outcomes in decision making, but managers' judgment may be different from that of citizens. Managers probably know better the issue at hand, the participation process, and the bureaucratic decision process before and after citizens' participation, so they are in a better position to judge the impact of citizen involvement. But their perspective is nevertheless unique and one should interpret our results with the recognition of this limitation. Future studies should include citizen evaluations in the measurement and assess there are significant differences between managers and citizens.

### **Conclusion**

Authentic citizen participation, where government decisions can be substantively improved, is important to building democratic governance in local governments. Despite its

fundamental importance and a tremendous literature, it is unfortunate the case that many administrators and citizens are frustrated about citizen involvement efforts. The road to authentic participation continues to be a black box. This article contributes to dissecting the black box by applying public organizational theories, testing a multivariate model, and starting to address the relationships among typical recommendations.

First, our results suggest that public management matters in citizen participation. When it comes to whether participation improves administrative decision making, community characteristics (population, racial diversity, education, financial health) and forms of government are not significant predictors, although the literature often links them with governments' willingness to involve citizens or citizens' willingness to participate. Resources are not a significant factor either. Instead, several typical public management variables, including elected official support, red tape, hierarchical authority, and transformational leadership, are found to be significant determinants. These variables are important even when participant competence, representativeness, and involvement mechanisms are controlled for. The practical implication is that in order to improve decision making based on citizen participation, public managers should display transformational leadership, create political support, reduce red tape, and utilize "flatter" structure. These results are certainly consistent with the existing literature, but applying public organizational theories provides more updated and sophisticated description and explanation. Theoretically, bridging the citizen participation literature and the recent public management literature provides great new opportunities to advance theory development in both research domains.

Second, our results suggest that not all typical recommendations for improving participation outcomes are equally important and they do not affect participation outcomes in a

straightforward way. The literature usually gives a list of recommendations and desires that they all be in place. However, public managers do not work in an ideal place and they often have to make priority of things. Our results show that participant competence is the single most important predictor—much more important than are, for example, participant representativeness and variety of involvement mechanisms. Moreover, this study starts to examine moderating relationships among the explanatory variables. We find that transformational leadership can amplify the positive impact of using multiple involvement mechanisms. We also find that when participant representativeness is high, the positive impact of participant competence is reduced. This latter finding is fascinating because both competence and representativeness are so highly valued in the participation literature, which does not recognize the possible tradeoff between the two. Our analysis shows that representativeness does have positive effects on participation outcomes, but it is relatively smaller given the current stage of citizen participation.

Third, the contributions discussed above are impossible without testing a multivariate model with empirical data. While we acknowledge that quantitative designs, particularly survey research with cross-sectional data, have limitations, their benefits cannot be downplayed. Our quantitative design enables us to find some interesting things. We show that form of government is not a determinant of participation outcomes, which contrasts much of the literature that argues otherwise. More importantly, without such testing, we would not be able to show the relative importance among the explanatory variables, nor would we be able to show the moderating effects. Unlike the literature on political (electoral) participation that tends to be very quantitative, the studies on administrative citizen involvement have not fully taken advantage of quantitative designs. We believe that combining both quantitative and qualitative inquiries will greatly benefit the research on citizen participation.

Finally, this study's substantive findings are contingency-based. In order to make better governance and decisions based on citizen participation, public managers need to first think about the policy or functional area they are dealing with and then think about the issue at hand. These considerations should determine the purpose of participation, the level of representativeness desired, the combination of involvement mechanisms to be used, and the competence participants should have. In the mean time, public managers are always encouraged to become transformational leaders, gain political support, and reform bureaucratic structures.

### References

- Adams, Brian. 2004. Public meetings and the democratic process. *Public Administration Review* 64(1): 43-54
- Arthur Lupia. 1994. Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections. *American Political Science Review* 88:63-76.
- Bass, B. 1985. *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York: Free Press.
- Bass, Bernard. M., and Ronald E. Riggio, R. E. 2006. *Transformational Leadership* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Berman, Evan. 1997. Dealing with Cynical Citizens. *Public Administration Review* 57(2): 105-112.
- Bok, D. (2001). *The trouble with government*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bozeman, Barry. (2000). *Bureaucracy and red tape*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Burns, James M. 1978. *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Checkoway, Barry and Jon Van Til. 1978. What do we know about citizen participation? A selective review of research. In *Citizen Participation in America*, ed. Stuart Langton, 25-42. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Cooper, Terry, Thomas Bryer and Jack Meek. 2006. Citizen-centered collaborative public management. *Public Administration Review* Special issue on collaborative public management: 76-88.
- Denhardt, Robert and Janet Denhardt. 2000. The New Public Service: Serving rather than Steering. *Public Administration Review* 60(6): 549-559.

- Denhardt, Janet and Kelly Campell. 2006. The role of democratic values in transformational leadership. *Administration and Society* 38(5): 556-572.
- Dumdum, Uldarico R., Lowe, Kevin B., and Avolio, Bruce J. (2002). Meta-Analysis of transformational and transactional leadership correlates of effectiveness and satisfaction: An update and extension. in Bruce J. Avolio and Francis J. Yammarino, eds, *Transformational and Charismatic Leadership: The Road Ahead*, 35-65. New York: JAI Press.
- Ebdon, Carol and Aimee Franklin. 2006. Citizen Participation in Budgeting Theory. *Public Administration Review* 66 (3): 437-447.
- Frederickson, H. George, Gary A. Johnson, and Curtis H. Wood. 2003. *The Adapted City: Institutional Dynamics and Structural Change*. Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe
- Frederickson, H. George 1982. The Recovery of Civism in Public Administration. *Public Administration Review* 42 (6): 501-507.
- Fung, Archon. 2006. Varieties of participation in complex governance. *Public Administration Review* Special issue on collaborative public management: 66-75.
- Gianakis Gerasimos A and Wang Xiaohu.2000. Decentralization of the purchasing function in municipal government: A national study. *Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting, and Financial Management*. 12:421-40.
- Hellriegel, Don and John Slocum. 2004. *Organizational Behavior* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Mason, Ohio: South-Western.
- House, Robert. J. 1998. Appendix: Measures and assessments for the charismatic leadership approach: Scales, latent constructs, loadings, Cronbach alphas, interclass correlations. In Fred Dansereau and Francis. J. Yammarino (Eds.), *Leadership: The multiple level approaches contemporary and alternative*. London: JAI Press.
- Irvin, Renee and John Stansbury. 2004. Citizen participation in decision making: Is it worth the effort? *Public Administration Review* 64(1), 55-65.
- Jaworski, B. and Kohli, A. 1993. Market orientation: Antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(3), 53-70.
- Kelleher, Christine and David Lowery. 2004. Political Participation and Metropolitan Institutional Contexts. *Urban Affairs Review* 39(6): 720-57.

- King, Cheryl S., Kathryn M Feltey, and Bridget Susel 1998. The Question of Participation: Toward Authentic Public Participation in Public Administration. *Public Administration Review* 58 (4): 317-326.
- King, Cheryl S. and Camilla Stivers. 1998. *Government is Us*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kweit, Mary Grisez and Robert W. Kweit. 1981. *Implementing Citizen Participation in a Bureaucratic Society*. New York: Praeger.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2004. Citizen participation and citizen evaluation in disaster recovery. *American Review of Public Administration* 34(4): 354-373.
- Langton, Stuart 1978. What is Citizen Participation. In *Citizen Participation in America*, ed. Stuart Langton, 13-24. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Marlowe, Justin and Shanon Portillo. 2006. Citizen Engagement in Local Budgeting: Does Diversity Pay Dividends? *Public Performance & Management Review*, 30 (2): 179–202.
- Moore, Mark. 1995. *Creating public value*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Moynihan, Donald P. 2003. Normative and Instrumental Perspectives on Public Participation. *American Review of Public Administration* 33(2): 164-188.
- Nalbandian, John. 2005. Professionals and the Conflicting Forces of Administrative Modernization and Civic Engagement. *American Review of Public Administration*, 35(4): 311-326.
- Nalbandian, John. 1999. Facilitating Community, Enabling Democracy: New Roles for Local Government Managers. *Public Administration Review* 59(3): 187-197.
- Oliver, Eric. 2000. City Size and Civic Involvement in Metropolitan America. *American Political Science Review* 94 (2): 361-73.
- Pandey, Sanjay K., David H. Coursey, and Donald P. Moynihan. 2007. Organizational effectiveness and bureaucratic red tape: A multi-method study. *Public Performance and Management Review* 30(3): 398–425.
- Pandey, Sanjay K., and Bradley E. Wright. 2006. Connecting the dots in public management: Political environment, organizational goal ambiguity and the public manager's role ambiguity. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16(4): 511-532.
- Pandey, Sanjay K., and James L. Garnett. 2006. Exploring public sector communication performance: Testing a model and drawing implications. *Public Administration Review* 66(1): 37–51

- Pandey, Sanjay K., and Patrick G. Scott. 2002. Red tape: A review and assessment of concepts and measures. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 12(4): 553-580.
- Perlman, Janice. 1978. Grassroots participation from neighborhood to nation. In *Citizen Participation in America*, ed. Stuart Langton, 65-80. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Rainey, Hal. 2003. *Understanding and managing public organizations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Roberts, Nancy. 2004. Public Deliberation in an Age of Direct Citizen Participation. *American Review of Public Administration* 34(4): 315-353.
- Rosener, Judy. 1978. Matching method to purpose: The challenges of planning citizen-participation activities. In *Citizen Participation in America*, ed. Stuart Langton, 109-121. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Schachter, Hindy. 1995. Reinventing Government or Reinventing Ourselves: Two Models for Improving Government Performance. *Public Administration Review* 55 (6): 530-537.
- Schachter, Hindy Lauer and Rongfang Liu. 2005. Policy development and new immigrant communities: A case study of citizen input in defining transit problems. *Public Administration Review* 65(5): 614-623.
- Stewart, Kennedy. 2007. Write the rules and win: Understanding citizen participation game dynamics. *Public Administration Review* 67(6): 1067-1076.
- Svara, James. 2001. The Myth of the Dichotomy: Complementarity of Politics and Administration in the Past and Future of Public Administration. *Public Administration Review* 61(2): 164-71.
- Thomas, John. 1995. *Public participation in public decisions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1990. Public involvement in public management: Adapting and testing a borrowed theory. *Public Administration Review* 50(4):435-445.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry Brady and Norman Nie. 1993. Citizen activity: Who participate? What do they say? *American Political Science Review* 87(2): 303-318.
- Verba, Sidney and Norman Nie. 1972. *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Walters, Lawrence, James Aydelotte and Jessica Miller. 2000. Putting More Public in Policy Analysis. *Public Administration Review* 60(4): 349-359.

- Wang, Xiaohu. 2001. Assessing Public Participation in U.S. Cities. *Public Performance & Management Review* 24(4): 322-336.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2002. Assessing Administrative Accountability. *American Review of Public Administration* 32(3): 350-370.
- Wang, Xiaohu and Montgomery Van Wart. 2007. When public participation in administration leads to trust: An empirical assessment of managers' perceptions. *Public Administration Review* 67(2): 265-278.
- Yang, Kaifeng. 2009. Examining perceived honest performance reporting by public organizations: Bureaucratic politics and organizational practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 19(1):81-105.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. Public Administrators' Trust in Citizen: A Missing Link in Citizen Involvement Efforts. *Public Administration Review* 65(3): 273-285.
- Yang, Kaifeng and Kathe Callahan. 2007. Citizen involvement efforts and bureaucratic responsiveness. *Public Administration Review* 67(2): 249-264.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. Assessing Citizen Involvement Efforts by Local Government. *Public Performance & Management Review* 29(2):191-216.
- Yang, Kaifeng and Sanjay Pandey. 2009. How do perceived political environment and administrative reform affect employee commitment. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 19(2):335-360.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. Public Responsiveness of Government Organizations: Testing a Preliminary Model. *Public Performance & Management Review* 31(2): 215-240.
- Young, Iris. 2000. *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## Appendix: Study Measures

---

### **Transformational Leadership**<sup>1</sup> (Adapted from House 1998)

- The Chief Administrative Officer/City Manager clearly articulates his/her vision of the future
- The Chief Administrative Officer/City Manager leads by setting a good example.
- The Chief Administrative Officer/City Manager challenges me to think about old problems in new ways.
- The Chief Administrative Officer/City Manager says things that make employees proud to be part of the organization.
- The Chief Administrative Officer/City Manager has a clear sense of where our organization should be in five years.

### **Hierarchical Authority Structure** (Bozeman 2000)

- Please assess the extent of hierarchical authority in your organization: (Please enter a number between 0 and 10, with 0 signifying few layers of authority and 10 signifying many layers of authority).

### **Red tape** (Bozeman 2000; Pandey and Scott 2002)

- If red tape is defined as burdensome administrative rules and procedures that have negative effects on the organization's performance, please assess the level of red tape in your organization: (Please enter a number between 0 and 10, with 0 signifying no red tape and 10 signifying the highest level of red tape).

### **Participation Outcome in Decision Making**<sup>2</sup>

- Citizen participation in the decision process reduces our department's influence. (R)
- Citizen participation slows the decision process by creating excessive delays. (R)
- Citizen participation makes it hard to reach consensus and closure in decision process. (R)
- Citizen participation improves the decision process by bringing new ideas on delivering city services.

### **Variety of Involvement Mechanisms**<sup>3</sup> (Wang 2001; Yang and Callahan 2005)

How important are the following methods of gaining citizen feedback for your department?

- Town hall meetings
- Budget hearings
- Citizen/customer surveys
- Citizen feedback via the web
- Direct contact via phone, mail, e-mail, office visit
- Indirect contact via elected officials

### **Participant Competence**<sup>2</sup>

- Most citizens who participate have the people skills needed to make a valuable contribution.
- Most citizens who participate have the expertise or technical knowledge needed to make a valuable contribution.
- Most citizens who participate have the civic knowledge (how government works) needed to make a valuable contribution.

### **Participant Representativeness**<sup>2</sup>

- When considered as a group, the citizens who participate accurately represent the concerns of the community as a whole.
- Citizen attendance in our citizen participation programs is generally large enough to legitimately reflect community attitudes.

**Perceived Elected Official Support (Political Support)**<sup>2</sup> (Gianakis and Wang 2000)

- Most elected officials trust the organization.
- Most elected officials believe that the organization is effective.

**Budget Flexibility**<sup>4</sup>

- My department is able to shift financial resources within its budget to accomplish its mission.
- My department is able to shift non-financial resources within its budget to accomplish its mission.

**Population Diversity** (the logic of the Hirschman Index, see Marlowe and Portillo 2006)

$\{1 - [(\text{white population percentage})^2 + (\text{black population percentage})^2 + (\text{other population percentage})^2]\} * 1.5$

**Form of Government**

1 is coded as council-manager forms of government and 0 represents other forms.

---

(R) Reverse worded.

<sup>1</sup>Responses on a five-point agree/disagree scale coded 1 (Strongly Disagree) through 5 (Strongly Agree).

<sup>2</sup>Responses on a seven-point agree/disagree scale coded 1 (Strongly Disagree) through 7 (Strongly Agree).

<sup>3</sup>Responses on a seven-point scale coded 1 (Not important at all) through 7 (very important).

<sup>4</sup>Responses on a six-point agree/disagree scale coded 1 (Strongly Disagree) through 6 (Strongly Agree).

**Table 1: Univariate Statistics**

	Items in Scale	Potential Scale Range	Scale Midpoint	Mean	Standard Deviation
Participation outcome in decision making	4	4-28	16	19.45	4.78
Transformational leadership	5	5-25	15	19.69	4.68
Hierarchical authority structure	n.a.	0-10	5	4.70	2.38
Red tape	n.a.	0-10	5	5.31	2.18
Variety of involvement mechanisms	6	6-42	24	29.32	6.51
Participant competence	3	3-21	12	11.03	3.88
Participant representativeness	2	2-14	8	6.65	2.92
Political support	2	2-14	8	10.13	3.14
Budget flexibility	2	2-12	7	9.18	2.01
Population diversity	n.a.	0-1	0.5	0.57	0.22
Form of government	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.72	0.45
Education level of the jurisdiction	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.27	0.13
Population 2000	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	142609.16	225864.45
Debt per capita of the jurisdiction	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1992.26	2437.97
Organization size	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1747.22	3201.34

**Table 2: Correlation Matrix**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 Participation outcome	(.75)													
2 Transform. leadership	.20***	(.92)												
3 Hierarchical authority	-.13***	-.15***	(na)											
4 Red tape	-.17***	-.19***	.44***	(na)										
5 Mechanisms	.26***	.23***	.01	-.00	(.75)									
6 Competence	.39***	.18***	-.05	-.12***	.38***	(.89)								
7 Representativeness	.32***	.21***	-.04	-.14***	.36***	.64***	(.82)							
8 Political support	.23***	.30***	-.17***	-.20***	.24***	.23***	.25***	(.94)						
9 Budget flexibility	.16***	.23***	-.21***	-.19***	.16***	.17***	.19***	.23***	(.70)					
10 Diversity	-.00	.06	.04	.00	.03	-.02	-.02	-.01	.00	(na)				
11 Form of government	.05	.10**	-.03	-.08*	.06	.04	-.01	.07*	.11***	.08*	(na)			
12 Education	-.01	.04	.02	-.00	-.05	.10**	.03	.04	-.01	-.22***	.05	(na)		
13 Population	.01	.03	.11**	.10**	.03	.04	.04	-.05	-.02	.26***	-.12***	-.05	(na)	
14 Debt per capita	.00	.02	.03	.03	.02	-.00	.04	-.02	.02	.12***	-.07*	-.00	.20***	(na)
15 Organization size	.02	.03	.07*	.09**	.02	.04	.05	-.05	-.04	.23***	-.18***	-.01	.83***	.25***

Note: Inside the parentheses are standardized Cronbach Alpha values.

**Table 3: OLS Regression Results Explaining Participation Outcomes in Decision Making**

Independent/Control Variables	b	$\beta$	Sig.
Perceived elected official support	.120	.079	.02
Red tape	-.190	-.086	.01
Hierarchical authority	-.125	-.062	.07
Transformational leadership	.059	.066	.08
Variety of involvement mechanisms	.056	.076	.00
Participant competence	.335	.272	.00
Participant representativeness	.105	.064	.10
Leadership*Variety of mechanisms	.008	.058	.05
Competence*Representativeness	-.041	-.107	.00
Budget flexibility	.058	.025	.43
Organizational size (log)	.271	.053	.16
Form of government	.229	.021	.47
Debt per capital of the jurisdiction	-.00	-.001	.72
Population 2000	-.00	-.004	.88
Education level of the jurisdiction	-1.95	-.052	.09
Population diversity of the jurisdiction	-.576	-.026	.42
Function area	1.06	.110	.00

*Note:* n = 926; adjusted  $R^2$  = .23;  $F$  value = 16.82 and  $p < .0001$ .