

6

The Quest for Collaboration Toward a Comprehensive Strategy for Public Administration

Eran Vigoda and Etai Gilboa

University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel

INTRODUCTION

Bureaucracies of the twenty-first century will undoubtedly have to move from the old orthodox type of administration to rethink their outputs, outcomes, image, and position in a rapidly changing environment. In fact, many scholars suggest that such a transition is already on track. They point to recent years' enterprises of new public-sector management, reengineering, and the ethos of reinventing government as reliable indicators and signals of such trends. A consensus exists on the need to alter the old type of bureaucracy and to adjust it more vigorously to the nature of modern society. This is the only way by which sustainable progress in public administration can be diffused, and moreover, in which democracy can continue to flourish.

The present chapter concerns a strategic method for the study of organized collaboration in public domains. It argues that reformation endeavors in public administration that are taking place before our eyes simultaneously create new avenues of participatory governance and collaborative administration. These avenues portray a revived coexistence of bureaucracy and democracy by illumination

of practical alternatives to the "old types" of running the state (Peters, 1996). They do so by devising new models of conflict management, higher involvement, empowerment, knowledge-sharing mechanisms, and various other partnership projects with "others"; for instance, citizens as individuals and groups, private-sector firms, and third-sector organizations (Sanderson, 1999, Vigoda and Golembiewski, 2001).

Experience across the globe has already proven that a wise design and implementation of joint ventures between these players may formulate a different type of governance, which will highlight a collective "we" rather than a segregated "they" spirit of administration. Doing so may contribute to the emergence of better collaboration in modern societies. Collaboration with citizens and closer partnership with citizens' groups and associations thus have the potential of forming fresh values of democratic culture in the years to come. Stated otherwise, it may build a "culture of joint problem solving" between stakeholders in public domains (Bardach, 1999). The questions today are not whether such collaboration is needed or is possible, but how can it be achieved and what transformations it will impose on the public sector. As with other organizational and managerial changes, however, this process is not problem-free, and it faces complex obstacles of practical implementation. Mainly, it needs to break through the minds of people to convince them of the potential advantages of a win-win alternative for various public concerns.

In the following sections we try to elaborate on the meaning of a strategic collaboration process as stemming from the latest theoretical thinking and practical experiences. We employ a theoretical guided analysis of the growing number of challenging collaboration ventures, and provide a general map of effective collaboration processes as demonstrated in the local government arena. Our expectation is that this dual anchored synthesis, both practical and theoretical, will be of value for the disciplines of governance studies and participatory democracy, and in particular will reframe innovative thinking in contemporary public administration.

COLLABORATION AND HUMAN NATURE: THE WIN-WIN ALTERNATIVE

Rational choice theory suggests that humans are motivated by self-interest. On the grounds of utilitarian philosophy and game-theory arguments (Boschken, 1998; O'Tool, 1995) it has been posited that individuals, as well as groups and institutions, mostly operate according to desired goals and objectives. These may be formal or informal, but they always aim at maximizing personal benefits and minimizing costs (Ostrom, 1986). On the assumption that social players constantly seek more revenues and at the same time attempt to reduce expenses and

The Quest for Collaboration

101

ers basically contradicts human nature. This contradiction evolves with the rapid increase of public interests, divided ambitions, and the potential of conflict among all players.

As opposed to this rationality, healthy, and prosperous civic societies practically seek higher levels of cooperation among their members to increase general "public goods" and to improve the welfare and well-being of large communities. Collaboration is thus frequently referred to as another mechanism for conflict management. For example, Fredericksen (1996) elaborated on the usefulness, but also the fragmentation, of analyzing conflict management methods in public domains as a continuum running from competitive to cooperative techniques. While the former represent a win-lose game, the latter and better described as win-win alternatives. Between the two extremes several other alternatives exist, such as litigation, arbitration, mediation, facilitated problem solving, and collaboration. Analyzing the nature of partnership, Cigler (1999) suggests a slightly different continuum of networking, cooperation, coordination, and collaboration. According to this definition collaboration has six main characteristics: (1) being a strategy rather than a limited tactic, (2) involving strong ties among participants, (3) involving groups from different sectors (public, private, third sectors), (4) involving a group of members who are committed to a long-term activity, (5) having a formal pattern of running the process and a clear method of documentation, and (6) inclining to transparency and encouraging involvement and contribution of other citizens and public groups.

In light of the above we suggest that cooperation usually denotes a limited, low-level, and mainly tactical assembly of forces to achieve a defined goal, while collaboration reflects a wider and more extensive stage of cooperation with strategic, far-reaching, and integrative significance. As suggested by Cigler (1999), "collaborative actions involve strong linkages among stable membership in specific and often complex purposes, and usually are long term" (p. 86). Beyond cooperation of organizational units, firms, or other interest groups in society, collaboration represents a longer-range ideology which, to be successful, must gain the support of senior decision makers, leading public officials, and experienced managers in governmental agencies. According to the social ecology theory and the strategic management approach, organizations (and other parties in public alliances) benefit from collaboration by reducing uncertainty in their environment (Berman, 1996).

Moreover, evidence does exist today that such collaboration is possible and effective and thus may be described as a win-win alternative for all partners involved (Fredericksen, 1996; Fisher and Ury, 1983). In fact, the plausible contradiction between utilitarian human nature and the desirable altruistic nature of civic societies is not necessarily contradictory. For the emergence of reliable and honest collaboration, mutual self-derived interests and shared goals must be allocated to all parties. These goals and interests are primarily egocentric and

self-directed, but when they cohere with supplementary or similar aspirations of others they acquire meaningful collective power. Indeed, many issues are still unlikely to become win-win situations in public policy or public administration ventures (e.g., budgetary conflicts, staffing and promotion of public personnel, competitive business ventures); nevertheless, the space for effective collaboration is wide enough to include many public initiatives that frequently and mistakenly seem a win-lose game. The principle of rational choice is well inured in all players. According to this rationality, the greater this collaboration, the bigger and better the benefit to each participant and to the entire community. Furthermore, when public agencies and bureaucracies are involved their stability, sustainability, effectiveness, and general success are better served. Consequently, healthy collaboration in public domains counts on rational choice, on social/economic exchange theory (Blau, 1964), and on the collective vision of communal solidarity. True collaboration therefore exists only in liberal environments and prosperous societies, those that are abundant in mutual understanding and acceptance of others' needs and aspirations but also that highlight the idea of free markets and free exchange mechanisms among people. Wherever such acceptance and approval are sparse there is a greater likelihood of diversification, intolerance, conflict, and self-derived activity rather than social-oriented concern or public solidarity.

Accordingly, pessimists will note that collaboration is against human nature. They will turn to basic assumptions on self-derived activity, utilitarian rationality, and egocentrist logic to support this claim. By this rule, the effect of collaboration on public administration and on citizens in general is marginal. Collaboration is of no use in a free-market society, in which individual interests collide and most of them do not conform with the collective public interest. The more optimistic will argue, however, that collaboration among various players in public domains is possible, even if not easily accomplished. According to Gardner (1991) and Berman (1996), broad-based strategies work because people do not resist their own ideas and because they find support, reinforcement, and identity from like-minded people. Collaboration thereby breeds commitment of participants and yields improved policy advocacy, grantsmanship, increased ordination of resources and know-how, and effective countermeasures against opponents (Coleman, 1989; Roberts and Bradley, 1991; Berman, 1996). For the attainment of collaboration and for the certainty of its positive long-term impact, serious difficulties need to be overcome. Among these, crossing mind bridges is perhaps the most challenging. A psychological willingness to cooperate and become honest partners in the collaborative process can be secured by convincing the involved parties why it is in their best interest to join forces. The cognitive barrier is thus crucial, and proves even more complicated in the public arena because of the large number of players and the diversity of issues and interests

involved, as well as the long-range and extensive impact of the issues on citizens, organizations, markets, and societies.

COLLABORATION AND THE POWER OF BUREAUCRACY

In recent years collaboration has been successfully utilized in many fields associated with local governance activities. Studies have found that a wider involvement of public agencies, private organizations, and third-sector bodies in community-based strategies was positively associated with the use, effectiveness, and targeting of various social programs, such as homelessness care (Berman, 1996), pollution control, ecology, and environmental protection ventures (Weber and Khademian, 1997), along with the general responsiveness of local governments to citizens' needs (Crook, 1996).

These studies and others suggest that many local authorities in America, Europe, and other Western states have adopted new concepts and strategies of power sharing, community-based policy making, and participatory management processes in community affairs aimed at extending decision-making circles in the local arena (Berman, 1996; Bryson and Crosby, 1992; Wheeland, 1993; Ostrom, 1993). What is the reason for such trends? Advocates of collaboration argue that the complexity of many contemporary social problems requires increased cooperation among social players. These include public and private organizations (Berman, 1996), public agencies, nonprofit organizations of the third sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and quasi-NGOs (QUANGOS) (Grubbs, 2000; Arsenal, 1998; Bardach, 1999; Sarason and Lorentz, 1998; Gidron, et al., 1992), as well as citizens, either as individuals or as members of smaller informal groups (Vigoda and Golembiewski, 2001). By this approach, cooperation becomes a necessity of modern times even if it basically contradicts many of our fundamentally skeptical assumptions on human nature. In fact, individuals, organizations, and bureaucracies remain highly self-focused and self-centered, but to secure their needs and interests they are obliged to collaborate. To keep abreast of modernity and secure legitimization in the eyes of their customers/citizens, they need to join forces. No public bureaucracy or public agency today is powerful enough to foster its strategies and policies independently. It frequently lacks sufficient knowledge, experience, motivation, technology, legitimization, or other resources that foster the successful initiation and implementation of serious cutting-edge public programs, yet decentralization in bureaucracies ultimately means conveying power to other stakeholders and limiting the power of public agencies. Organizational management theory usually denotes such processes as participation in decision making—or better, empowerment (Sanderson, 1999). In fact, this is one critical obstacle to more collaboration in government. As bu-

reaurcratic theory suggests, governors and public administrators do not graciously yield power and authority to others. Thompson (1983) stated that "democracy does not suffer bureaucracy gladly. Many of the values we associate with democracy—equality, participation, and individuality—stand sharply opposed to hierarchy, specialization, and impersonality we ascribe to modern bureaucracy" (p. 235). In keeping with this, Golembiewski and Vigoda (2000) suggested that bureaucracies, like many other big organizations, constitute a work-site that is anything but democratic. The greatest fear of bureaucrats therefore turns out to be their strongest argument against collaboration. According to their position, devolution of power prevents bureaucracies from doing their jobs well, obscures them from fulfilling their responsibility to the public, and simply inhibits them from governing. Nevertheless, practical experience and empirical evidence of recent years show quite the opposite. In most cases, implementation of a "wise collaborative process" by governmental agencies has a positive effect on these agencies, and their staffs. It fortifies the legitimacy of elected officials and public officers, improves the performance of bureaucracies by making their policies more effective, increases transparency and accountability, and in fact positively contributes to citizens' trust in and image of government and the latter's outcomes. A paradoxical linkage results, in which empowerment and a higher level of participation in public decision making increases the impact and governing power of bureaucracies.

What is the meaning of a "wise collaborative process," however? Are there any rules and guidelines that distinguish right from wrong actions in turning a collaborative initiative into an effective process? Theory in this field is quite vague, or at least equivocal. On the one hand studies focus on the importance of collaboration as another tool in conflict resolution management and on its contribution to the management of public organizations (e.g., Weber and Khademini, 1997; Bardach, 1999; Cigler, 1999; Fredericksen, 1996). On the other hand, this literature is frequently supported by case studies that contribute to our experience and understanding of actual collaborative ventures (e.g., Toregas, 2000; Shaveily and Desai, 2000) but that fail to draw the entire picture or move toward reliable generalization. As far as we could find, no satisfactory attention has so far been given the configuration of a strategic process for collaboration in the public sector. Some effort has been dedicated to developing integrative collaboration methods in urban planning or local housing programs (e.g., Nicol, 1998; Kermit, 1994; Cole and Goodchild, 1993), but these attempts were limited in scope. An inclusive strategic approach should establish a common denominator of various collaboration ventures to promote a more comprehensive theory. Accordingly, the following sections will attempt to fill the gap in this field, and portray a general map for strategic collaboration in public administration agencies.

COLLABORATION AS A STRATEGIC PROCESS

Despite the growing number of collaborative ventures in government and the knowledge that has subsequently accumulated, only slight regard has been given so far to the need to develop a comprehensive strategy for collaboration in and around public administration. As suggested by Cigler (1999), collaborative actions frequently emerge from disastrous events that trigger fiscal stress or perceived stress. In light of this inconsistent, ad hoc approach to collaboration it is easier to understand why the literature lacks a more strategic orientation to the field. The potential advantages of collaboration as a strategic apparatus for public agencies are many. It can contribute to the mutual power of public programs, increase commitment of players to a specific idea or initiative, stimulate productivity and the performance of people and institutions, enhance the image and legitimacy of players in the eyes of citizens, augment trust in government, and secure democratic values (Nye et al., 1997).

Like any other administrative or managerial strategy, our suggestion also rests on several assumptions. The first is that public administration, its agencies, and its personnel, should seek higher levels of collaboration with other social players whenever possible and whenever the public interest may benefit. As will be explained below, another assumption is that the local government arena is a good habitat for such experiences, at least in their first steps. Beyond the first two assumptions, which are normative, however, the third is much more realistic. It argues that rationalism as rooted in human nature permits collaboration only in a limited, albeit increasing number of public ventures, and that collaboration is best described as a complex process with advantages but also drawbacks.

There are also several preconditions for a strategic approach to collaboration. Generally we adopt Cigler's (1999) suggestion of nine such preconditions: (1) a disastrous event, (2) fiscal stress or perceived stress, (3) a political constituency for cooperation, (4) supportive capacity building, (5) early and continued support by elected local officials, (6) visible advantages of cooperation for participating government, (7) the existence of a policy entrepreneur, (8) early focus on visible effective strategies, and (9) emphasis on collaborative skill building. These conditions set the stage for a collaborative venture and make it a relevant mechanism to deal with a public issue.

A better understanding of the collaborative process is based on systematic analyses platforms. One such platform is presented in Figure 1. Here a general map for collaboration between public administration and others in the local government arena is suggested. This map is based on six main stages and checkpoints of the process: (1) deciding on a fitting issue for collaboration, (2) characterizing the issue by "what and where" inquiries, (3) finding out who is involved,

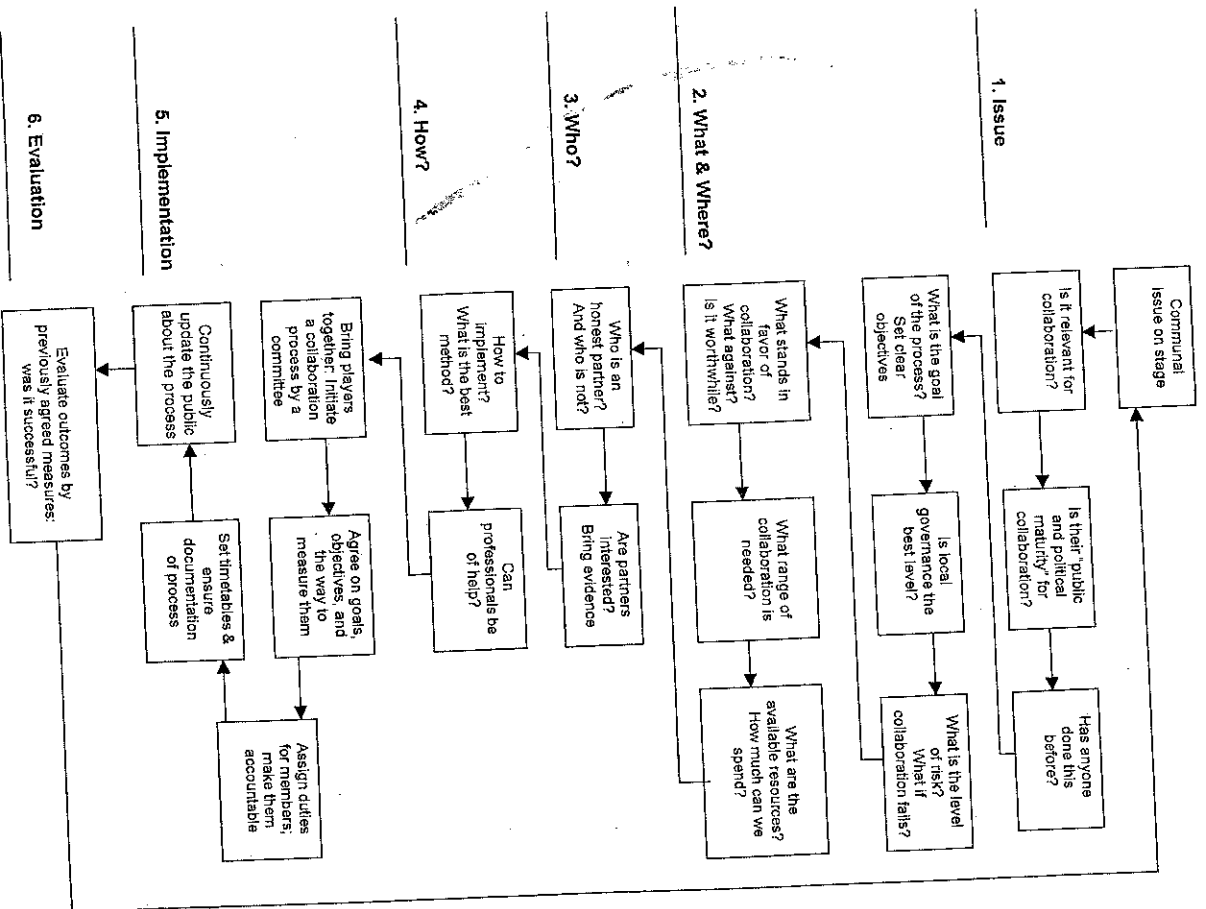


Figure 1 A strategic map of an effective collaboration process as demonstrated in the local government arena.

(4) finding out *how* to implement, (5) launching *implementation*, and (6) *evaluating* the process. These stages will be broadly developed below.

Note also that while collaboration can be analyzed from various perspectives we have decided to focus on the local government level. Beyond the global, regional, and even the national levels, a local governance view is the most applicable and realistic for practical and theoretical reasons. To date most collaborative projects reported in the scientific literature have been conducted in this environment, so our present knowledge relies heavily on such experiences. Moreover, as suggested by Sobel (1993) and Elzioni (1994; 1995), the local/communal level is ideal for increasing citizenry involvement in government. It has the potential of bringing together individuals, groups of citizens, private and third-sector organizations, and public agencies, and helping them cooperate in a microcosm. The outcomes of collaborative programs in local government are manifested directly to the people. The results are more clearly observed by public stakeholders, who also develop a sense of attachment, concern, and criticism toward these programs. In the longer run these endeavors may evince relevancy and compatibility in national or federal domains.

Issues for Collaboration

A good collaboration process starts with an appropriate and worthy issue. From a professional angle the most complex and critical task in a collaboration venture is to classify which public issue really *deserves* collaboration and which does not. Collaboration can prove successful under two main conditions: (1) when an issue merits investment of effort and making alliances work, and (2) when there is a good reason to believe (but still not confirm) that the power and influence of those who join an alliance are significantly greater than the power and influence of their opponents. This said, we certainly do not assume collaboration to work under sterile conditions. A collaborative process can work even if there are opponents but only when their power and influence remain considerably low. Moreover, collaboration will not reach fulfillment when another solution that is cheaper and more elegant and involves a minimum of players presents itself. In other words, when another good and economical solution for a social problem is available, collaboration is not needed.

Another criterion is legitimization. A desirable issue for collaboration is one that wins wide-ranging approval among citizens in addition to support expressed by other public stakeholders. In representative democracies public opinions very frequently diverge from the opinions of electorates or public personnel. Issues that receive much attention of the public but do not seek public legitimization in response are less likely to be suitable for collaboration, thus prior to any decision taken regarding issues for collaboration a thorough examination of alternatives and stakeholders' interests is recommended. Moreover, as can be seen

in Figure 1, these initiatives must rely on adequate public and political maturity. This is expressed as (1) cultural acceptance of collaboration as an effective mechanism to deal with public concerns, (2) trust in the "good will" and sincerity of potential participants, and (3) willingness to take active or at least passive part in this process.

Finally, issues for collaboration may naturally be raised by different players in the social system, be they public or political institutions, other nonprofit or third-sector organizations, or groups (private or business firms) or ordinary citizens, either as interest groups or as individuals. As the literature review shows, however, most current initiatives of collaboration are initiated in local government by the authorities and by their public administration cadre (e.g., Cigler, 1999; Berman, 1996; Boselken, 1998).

Analyzing the Problem: What Is Involved and Where Should One Begin?

A comprehensive analysis of the issues set forth involves several questions. What is the goal of the process? Is local governance the best level? What is the level of risk (namely, what happens if the entire process fails to achieve its goals)? What range of collaboration is needed? What are the available resources for collaboration? What are the available financial resources for collaboration?

First, goals and objectives must be clearly defined. Collaborative ventures that are too vague may miss their target. Such goals and objectives need to be measurable, otherwise it will be impossible to effectively evaluate results when the process approaches its final stages. As will be explained later the goals and objectives and the way to measure them must be agreed upon by all partners involved.

When an issue is defined as "potential for collaboration," the next task is to find out whether or not local government is the best level for such a process. In recent years more responsibilities and decision-making power have been devolved to local municipalities and to communal public-sector agencies, with central government playing mainly a coordinating-supervisory role. Environmental issues, cultural ventures, welfare responsibilities, education, transportation, planning and development, and sometimes even health care services are provided by or with the assistance of local governments and their administrative cadres. In Britain, for example, such trends were associated with the renewal of local democracy and more direct forms of participation (Sanderson, 1999). Even issues that deserve collaboration, however, should not necessarily be treated at the local government level. For example, when powerful interests of other players are involved that reach beyond the local government arena a different level of collaboration may be preferable. In addition, when an issue captures a higher level of

or federal level, through the media, by state comptrollers, or in the courts), limited collaboration in the local government arena will probably be useless or at least ineffective. Local governance will then be ideal for collaboration in such communal topics as urban planning, rural development, limited ecological problems (e.g., water use and purification, waste treatment), welfare initiatives, education projects and initiatives, or transportation plans that concern residents of a defined area. The local government level is frequently inappropriate for collaboration where wider projects with greater impact beyond the local geographical area are concerned. In such ventures the decision-making power of local authorities is low or does not exist at all. Still, theory and experience frequently suggest that smaller-scale initiatives at the local government level have the advantage of becoming indicators or facilitators of wider initiatives in national or federal circles (John et al., 1994).

Like any other strategic decision in public domains, collaboration also involves a certain level of risk for potential parties. The most visible source of risk is the need to share information among players. As suggested by Weber and Khademian (1997), "sharing information creates opportunities for participants to discover more numerous and innovative solutions . . . that otherwise would be beyond their reach. But when that information is revealed, participants become vulnerable in a number of ways" (p. 397). Commitment to the process may decline, participants may withdraw, information may be used to advance self-interests at the expense of the interests of others, and defectors may use the information they gathered during the process to advance contradictory initiatives. Moreover, a collaborative process gathers more information from various participants and thus extends the realm of possible policy outcomes. This may finally cause an agreement that is less predictable and harder to digest by partners. Beyond the risk of shared information, however, poor management or unprofessional handling of a collaborative process may produce meager outputs. Failure to meet the desired goals can cause discouragement in future collaborative attempts, increase mutual antagonism among parties, reduce willingness for future cooperation, and most important, portray an image of public leadership unable or unqualified to direct such projects. These outcomes may inflict long-range harm on citizens' trust in government and raise the levels of pessimism and delegitimization of democratic institutions in general.

Other "what-and-where" questions concern the required range of collaboration and the available resources that permit its implementation. The range of collaboration is usually linked to the number of participants; this issue is elaborated more in the following section. Prior to any decisions on partners, however, the leading group and initiators of the process (usually elected officials and public administration servants) need to decide on relevant circles of potential contributors. These circles may be geography-anchored, profession-anchored, or task-anchored. For example, collaboration in local governance may be conducted in

neighborhoods, in larger local areas, or throughout the entire local municipality district. Collaboration may also be assigned by professional groups interested in the process, such as teachers, parents, and children councils for education initiatives (Frederickson, 1996). It may involve traders' associations, customer groups, and business experts for commerce ventures. A decision on the range of collaboration is meaningful since it determines the level of required resources and helps in focusing on relevant social groups that may have an effective say. It is useless to enlarge a collaborative process to involve uninterested, irrelevant, or hostile partners, just as it is problematic to overlimit circles and exclude participants who may raise productive ideas, share experience and information, or introduce challenging viewpoints that enrich the process.

While the financial issue may seem merely technical it is of great importance and needs to be clarified at a very early stage to ensure that efforts are not wasted and resources are available (Harrison et al., 1995). As with other organizational and public ventures, expenses for a collaborative process are not marginal. Prompt financing is required for all stages from initiation to completion, including public relations, information gathering, and organizational expenses, as well as for the evaluation method and lesson-learning mechanism. The leaders of the process are responsible for furnishing answers to these questions prior to implementation. Assuming that public administration takes the lead in initiating collaborative processes, it has the duty to allocate resources for—but not necessarily to finance—the process. In most cases the financing body will be a business concern interested in making the process work or a joint effort by several bodies capable of and interested in moving a certain venture forward. Public money will be involved only in projects that disengage private firms. For example, collaboration between the public sector and third-sector/voluntary bodies necessitates spending more public money to launch and sustain the collaborative process since the third sector naturally lacks self-resources. In addition, public money will be used in cases in which public administration and individual citizens are the only partners involved.

Analyzing the Players: Who Is Involved?

Honest partners in collaboration projects are those who favor and are interested in a long-range activity that promotes their interests together with the interests of others. These players must also show a high level of commitment, trust, and belief in the general goals as set by leaders of the process. Not infrequently, players contribute to the redefinition of goals and targets, again on the condition that changes are accepted by all parties.

First, partners need to have an interest in the goals and objectives of the process. They are expected to grasp correctly the mutual benefit of self-interests

The Quest for Collaboration

to the collaboration process on the basis of their interests or according to their representation of different public sectors. An effective process engages a limited number of significant players concerned to make collaboration work. Players may often hold conflicting interests, yet at the same time they should believe that the social interest can coexist side by side with their personal interests. Moreover, only as long as the benefit is perceived by each player as greater with than without collaboration is the collaboration process worthwhile and possible. It is thus necessary to identify players well and to define their actual interests properly. Note also that actual interests should be distinguished from overt formal interests and reflect the net benefit to the player in personal or organizational terms.

Relevant players must likewise exhibit commitment to the collaboration process and a strong belief in its usefulness. This is not an easy requirement, especially when the general culture in local government is authoritarian and individuals are unfamiliar with the advantages of the collaboration process. To increase players' commitment it is recommended that seminars conducted by professionals to be held, that successful examples of collaboration processes used in other places be presented, and that a greater sense of openness and transparency be fostered by local agencies of public administration. The term *honest partner* denotes a party that has self-interests but is willing to share whatever is needed on the way to successful collaboration. A typology of players may run from individual citizens through smaller (formal or informal) citizens' interest and ad hoc groups (e.g., neighborhood committees, parents' and students' councils) and professional councils to organizations of the private and third sectors (Vigoda and Golembiewski, 2001). A central player in all collaboration ventures is public administration, which bears responsibility for coordinating players and directing them toward the appointed goals.

Moving Towards Implementation: How Is This Activated?

Successful implementation of a collaboration process relies on good programs and appropriate methods. A literature review reveals a wide range of alternatives, each one differently formulated in accordance with desired goals and objectives of the players. Similarities exist that permit a higher level of generalization among these methods, however. For example, Nicol (1998) suggests a version of Hatson groups. These are forums of public officers and representatives of business firms that discuss a variety of issues concerning urban-planning programs. They allow a clear presentation of policy issues and an exchange of useful information in a convenient atmosphere that is problem-solving-oriented rather than conflict-focused. Mandell (1999) notes a different structure, termed network structures (NS), which involve private-, public-, and third-sector organizations as well as individual citizens in discussions on topics that are relevant to community welfare. Network structures cannot operate by traditional managerial methods, how-

ever, but have to rely on conflict management methods, empowerment, and trust building among parties (Sanderson, 1999). The NS method can thus take the form of a limited task force, a coalition activity, or a coordination group. All these forms rely upon mutual commitment of the parties to each other and to their common goal. An essay by Vigoda and Golembiewski (2001) reviews other platforms of collaboration with citizens and elaborates on the idea of citizenry conferences as applied in several countries, such as Denmark and Israel. Citizens' conferences and committees deal with actual public interests and try to influence decisions on issues that are not fully addressed by governments but that the government is willing to promote (e.g., see <http://www.zippori.org.il/English/index.html>). Here too governments and public administration are encouraged to maintain their advisory position, providing the citizens with sufficient conditions and experience to elaborate on their spontaneous ideas and sound counsel.

The move to implementation of a collaboration process also calls for the potential contribution of professionals. Experts of process management, project control and assessments, public financing, taxation law and policy, engineering and architecture, marketing and market research, statistical analysis and surveys, communication media, and arbitration and law are not always available inside the local authority or even in central government bodies. They therefore need to come from the free market or from external institutions that possess specific knowledge. Over the years evidence has accumulated that professionals' support, as provided by individuals, private consulting firms, or academic institutions, is beneficial for collaborative negotiations and community training interventions (Frederickson, 1996). The contribution of the professional is threefold. First it has an important role of developing skills such as cooperation and collaboration talent (Palvolgyi and Herbai, 1997; Bianchi, 1997). Since many of the collaborative ventures initiated in public administration have no specific background to rely on, participants must be trained prior to launching the program. As the theory of conflict resolution shows, the lack of such training may cause damage or even the collapse of the entire process because of ineffective group dynamics or hazardous conflicts among participants. Professionals thus take the responsibility of leading the process on its methodological side and assisting the leading administrative cadre in running the program more effectively and smoothly. Second, professionals provide frontline information and intimate ideas and knowledge that enrich the collaboration process. They can furnish comparative examples of close or similar ventures tested elsewhere, and learn their lessons. Last, professionals serve as a reliable and mostly disinterested party, to whom other participants turn in times of crisis or when the potential for conflict looms larger. Professionals in conflict resolution and in the field of collaboration enjoy the general image of an objective player. They are concerned for the success of collaboration as a democratic process that stands for itself. They usually take no side in debates as

fields. Their contribution consists of escorting others through the difficulties of compromising and working out a mutual plan that best responds to the needs of everyone, particularly the needs of the public.

Collaboration in Practice: Implementing a Program

In general, approaches to collaboration are inherently biased by having the implementation stage placed at the heart of the entire process. While it is indeed a core stage, it would be quite misleading to concentrate on implementation alone unless it is well rooted in the planning and predevelopmental stages. The implementation process deals with several targets: bringing players together under any method chosen; rethinking and redefining goals as well as determining performance indicators (PIs) for the entire process; assigning duties to members, setting timetables for various tasks; keeping documentation to create accountability; and ensuring that the public knows and is continuously updated by all possible means.

The first step of this stage may be defined as the initiation of action. A committee of players' representatives is convened and chaired by a leading public administrator who has been assigned to and trained for the duty in advance. Decisions of the committee need to be taken democratically but with strong emphasis on a consensus, otherwise collaboration is meaningless. This process is time-consuming and thus can use professional ad hoc advice from time to time. Second, participants rethink and redefine goals to make them measurable by various means. An extensive literature on PI provides the logic and tools for the creation of measurable goals (e.g., Politt, 1988). Unless PIs are strictly agreed on by all members there will be no effective way to evaluate the process in its final phases. Only when the entire implementation stage is clear to all participants is it possible to assign duties to members, set timetables, and approve reliable documentation to make accountability possible. An effective and honest collaboration process applies transparency and provides open gates to the public. When the work of a committee is accomplished but the public is unaware of the process, a central effect of public encouragement is missed. A strategic process of collaboration substantially differs from limited partnership or short range alliances by referring to enduring ventures that inspire other initiatives in the future. It is therefore important to explore the benefits as well as the difficulties of the process and to create a culture of a learning environment.

Evaluation: Was It Successful?

The evaluation process is required mainly for future learning and lessons of similar or identical projects. As with many other organizational ventures and policy programs, evaluation represents a feedback mechanism that provides an option for improvement and advancement. Adjustments in a collaboration project are an indispensable part of the entire strategy. They need to be made since reality

transforms the conditions under which the collaborative process operates. In fact, a rigid strategy is no strategy. Unless a collaboration strategy is sufficiently flexible to cohere with transforming reality, its contribution is in doubt.

An extensive arsenal of evaluation methods and techniques can be found in various disciplines. For example, organizational development and organizational behavior tools may assess the inner dynamics and attitudes of parties directly involved, while policy programs analysis and public opinion methods may be applied to evaluate more general outcomes. It is important, however, to create a knowledge bank for relevant collaboration experiences. Prior to launching new collaboration ventures, it is recommended that lessons be learned from past experience and that the necessary amendments be made according to specific requirements as determined by the project leaders and other parties. Here also professionals and academics can be of help. Many existing collaborative projects use such knowledge at the evaluation stage but also at other stages to monitor and revitalize the process.

Evaluation primarily has the instrumental role of controlling results. It has another significant aspect, however, namely of assessing the symbolic-cultural impacts and change for affected organizations, for organization members, or for the citizens they serve (Grubbs, 2000). While the literature usually assesses an evaluation process in terms of "getting a job done," it is crucial that more attention be given to the cultural and symbolic waves initiated by a collaboration process. Beyond making a project more effective and responsive to citizens' need and demands, one should keep in mind that collaboration breeds citizenship involvement and changes individual mindsets regarding their part in building flourishing communities. A successful collaboration process may persuade pessimistic citizens that public administration can operate better, replace its old orthodox image with a modern responsive one, and draw up new frontiers for effectively managed democracies. The symbolic impacts of collaboration programs and their evaluation are perhaps the hardest objective to get on our strategic map. Still, they are the most challenging ones because of their wide-range influence and long-term sustainability for generations to come.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Recent works on collaboration have encouraged public administration agencies and leaders to adopt new models of alliances among diverse groups and individuals in society. Similarly, collaboration has become a necessity in local governance owing to its growing responsibilities and the continuous devolution of central governance, which transfers more tasks to local authorities. A process of reinvention in local government has thus been inspired by the increasing need to enhance collaboration. Alliances have become strategies for institutions of governance to create leadership systems based on steering not rowing.

and to treat citizens as customers (Grubbs, 2000) or even partners equal to state and local authorities (Vigoda, 2002). It has been pointed out that the future of modern public administration depends heavily on joint forces and improved patterns of collaboration among various social players. Citizens' needs and demands, the increasing complexity of public programs, and the magnification of different social problems serve as main accelerators that bring citizens, public- and private-sector bodies, and third-sector/nonprofit organizations together. This process reflects self-derived interests but also a collective viewpoint of win-win alternatives.

For this purpose, a strategic agenda of collaboration needs to be rebuilt. Its power may draw substance from theory-anchored models and from practical and empirical experience as presented here. A core assumption of the strategic approach is that public administration can no longer settle for a limited level of cooperation between sporadic players and thus tends to collaboration. Public agencies, both governmental-political and organizational-administrative, will need to adopt a culture of mutual effort and to put more energy into joint ventures that are inclusive and long-term. The strategic platform as presented in this chapter may contribute to the development of such interdisciplinary orientation and increase the impact of public-private-nonprofit alliances, both instrumentally and symbolically (Grubbs, 2000).

This chapter also identified a theoretical gap in contemporary administrative and political science literature, which frequently classifies collaboration as another technique of conflict management or conflict resolution programs (Fredrickson, 1996). The first goal of our chapter was therefore to treat collaboration as an individual phenomenon, one that deserves its own theoretical attention separate from other writings on straightforward conflict management theory. We have argued that the option of collaboration is becoming highly relevant to public administration of our times, and that it proves useful in a number of local government issues. In line with this, our second goal was to more clearly set a strategy for collaboration, one that may serve as a road map for the future, both theoretically and practically.

The importance and relevance of collaboration for public administration and for citizens of our era are not disputed. While there are equivocal attitudes on the best way to implement collaboration there is consensus on its necessity. As it progresses, public administration will have to collaborate with a variety of participants and integrate various attitudes and interests to accomplish its future challenging tasks. Traditional, albeit effective techniques of participation in decision making or negotiation management are expected to grow and mature into a more extensive strategy of collaboration. Ambitious projects and programs for larger groups of citizens will have to rely on collaboration and support the communal "we" rather than an alienated "they" spirit in society. This is a main track that can lead public administration on its way forward.

REFERENCES

- Arsenault, J. (1998). *Forging Nonprofit Alliances*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bardach, E. (1999). *Getting Agencies to Work Together: The Practice and Theory of Managerial Craftsmanship*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Bernart, E. M. (1996). Local government and community-based strategies: Evidence from a national survey of a social problem. *American Review of Public Administration*, 26, 71-91.
- Bianchi, G. (1997). Training in skills for coping with democracy. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 552, 114-124.
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Power and Exchange in Social Life*. New York: Wiley.
- Boschken, L. H. (1998). Institutionalism: Intergovernmental exchange, administration-centered behavior, and policy outcomes in urban agencies. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 8, 585-614.
- Bryson, J. M. and Crosby, B. (1992). *Leadership for the Common Good: Tackling Public Problems in a Shared Power World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cigler, A. B. (1999). Pre-Conditions for the emergence of multicommunity collaborative organizations. *Policy Studies Review*, 16, 87-101.
- Cole, I. and Goodchild, B. (1993). *Local Housing Strategies in England*. CRESR working paper 26. Sheffield: Hallam University School of Urban and Regional Studies.
- Coleman, J. (1989). The dynamics of community controversy. In: R. Warren and L. Lyon (eds.), *New Perspectives on the American Community*. Chicago: Dorsey.
- Crook, R. (1996). Democracy, participation and responsiveness: A case study of relations between the Ivorian communes and their citizens. *Public Administration*, 74, 695-720.
- Etzioni, A. (1994). *The Spirit of Community*. New York: Touchstone.
- Etzioni, A. (1995). *New Communitarian Thinking: Persons, Virtues, Institutions, and Communities*. Charlottesville: Virginia University Press.
- Fisher, R. and Ury, W. (1983). How to fight dirty tricks in negotiations. *Marketing Times*, Sept.-Oct., 36-40.
- Fredericksen, J. P. (1996). Community collaboration and public policy making. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 39, 552-569.
- Gardner, J. (1991). *Building Community*. Washington, DC: Independent Sector.
- Gidron, B., Kramer, R. M., and Salamon, L. (1992). *Government and the Third Sector: Emerging Relationships in the Welfare State*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Golembiewski, R. T. and Vigoda, E. (2000). Organizational innovation and the science/craft of management. In M. A. Rahim, R. T. Golembiewski, and K. D. Mackenzie (eds.), *Current Topics in Management*, vol. 5. Greenwich, CT: JAI, pp. 263-280.
- Grubbs, W. J. (2000). Can agencies work together? Collaboration in public and nonprofit organizations. *Public Administration Review*, 60, 275-280.
- Harrison, L., Hoggett, P., and Jeffers, S. (1995). Race, ethnicity and community development. *Community Development Journal*, 30, 144-157.
- John, D., Kettl, D. E., Dyer, B., and Lovan, W. R. (1994). What will new governance mean for the federal government? *Public Administration Review*, 54, 170-175.
- Kernit, P. C. (1994). Collaborative genius: The regional planning association of America.
- Mandell, P. M. (1999). Community collaborations: Working through network structures. *Policy Studies Review*, 16, 46-63.
- Nicol, C. (1998). Collaboration and co-ordination in local government. *Local Government Studies*, 24, 51-66.
- Nye, J. S., Zeilikow, P. D., and King, D. C. (eds.). (1997). *Why People Don't Trust Government*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ostrom, E. (1986). An agenda for the study of institutions. *Public Choice*, 48, 2-25.
- Ostrom, E. (1993). A communitarian approach to local governance. *National Civic Review*, 82, 226-232.
- O'Tool, L. (1995). Rational choice and policy implementation: Implications for inter-organizational network management. *American Review of Public Administration*, 25, 43-57.
- Palvolgyi, R. and Herbai, I. (1997). Public participation in cooperative planning: A local tax issue in Nagykanizsa, Hungary. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 552, 75-85.
- Peters, G. B. (1996). Models of governance for the 1990s. In D. F. Kettl and H. B. Milward (eds.), *The State of Public Management*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 15-44.
- Pfeffer, J. and Salancik, G. (1979). *The External Control of Organizations*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Politt, C. (1988). Bringing consumers into performance measurement. *Policy and Politics*, 16, 77-87.
- Roberts, N. and Bradley, R. (1991). Stakeholder collaboration and innovation. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 27, 209-227.
- Sanderson, I. (1999). Participation and democratic renewal in the U.K.: From 'instrumental' to 'communicative rationality.' *Policy and Politics*, 27, 325-341.
- Sarason, S. B. and Lorentz, E. M. (1998). *Crossing Boundaries: Collaboration, Coordination, and the Redefinition of Resources*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Shavely, K. and Desai, U. (2000). Municipal government nonprofit sector collaboration in Bulgaria. *American Review of Public Administration*, 31, 49-65.
- Sobel, R. (1993). From occupational involvement to political participation: An exploratory analysis. *Political Behavior*, 15, 339-353.
- Thompson, D. (1983). Bureaucracy and democracy. In G. Duncan (ed.), *Democratic Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Torgas, C. (2000). Lessons from the "Y2K and you" campaign for the local government community. *Public Administration Review*, 60, 84-88.
- Vigoda, E. (2002). From responsiveness to collaboration: Governance, citizens, and the next generation of public administration. *Public Administration Review*, Forthcoming.
- Vigoda, E. and Golembiewski, R. T. (2001). Citizenship behavior and the spirit of new managerialism: A theoretical framework and challenge for governance. *American Review of Public Administration*, 31, 273-295.
- Weber, E. and Khademian, M. A. (1997). From agitation to collaboration: Clearing the air through negotiation. *Public Administration Review*, 57, 396-410.
- Whealand, C. M. (1993). Citywide strategic planning: An evaluation of Rock Hill's E. *Public Administration Review*, 53, 65-72.