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FOREWORD

Performance and Democracy in the Public Sector: Exploring Some Missing Links in the Study of Administration and Society (Part B—Administrative Performance, Citizens’ Participation, and Community Involvement)

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PART B—ADMINISTRATIVE PERFORMANCE, CITIZENS’ PARTICIPATION, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Following Part A of the symposium “Bridging Performance and Democratic Values in the Public Sector,” Part B is oriented more towards the examination of the relationship between administrative performance and other active interactions with the public such as citizens’ participation and community involvement. The papers included here are those of M. Andrews, M. S.

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43 De Vries and A. H. Van der Hooft-van der Zijl, T. Bovaird E. Loeffler, and
44 J. Martin, and finally, R. Dibia. Some of these papers were first introduced in
45 the EGPA meetings both in Vaasa (2001) and Potsdam (2002) yet others are
46 original contributions made especially for this symposium. While again
47 conducted in different settings and cultures (South Africa, the Netherlands,
48 the UK, and Nigeria), all of these studies have several elements in common.
49 First, all of the papers deal implicitly or explicitly with actual participatory
50 behavior by citizens or with community involvement in various ways. Second,
51 the papers again highlight the contradictory nature of performance-seeking
52 bureaucracy and democratic values, this time in terms of actual citizenry
53 behavior. Third, all of the papers criticize the contemporary structure of
54 performance evaluation and orientations, suggesting that some major changes
55 need to be made in order to strike a better balance between business
56 approaches and social responsibilities in modern public administration.
57 However, as demonstrated below, the papers also substantially differ in their
58 level of analysis and understanding of the meaning of performance in relation
59 to democratic values. Nonetheless, both points of similarity and dissimilarity
60 are useful for a better exploration of the hidden links between performance and
61 the democratic nature of our societies. Taken together, the studies serve as fine
62 guides for “bridging” the gap between these spheres and drawing strong
63 connections between managerial reforms and their societal meanings.

64 Part B begins with Andrews’ paper on “New Public Management and
65 Democratic Participation: Complementary or Competing Reforms? A South
66 African Study.” This paper uses the South African arena as a test case for the
67 analysis of one core research question: Can administrative reforms and
68 democratic reforms work together or are they mutually exclusive? Based on
69 an econometric analysis of survey data, the author shows that South African
70 municipalities adopt new public management reforms more readily when
71 influenced by top-down intergovernmental relationships, but adopt participa-
72 tory reforms more readily when faced with bottom-up civic influences. Andrew
73 thus concludes that administrative and participatory reforms may not comple-
74 ment each other and by so doing provides support to the idea that the bridge
75 between performance and democratic values in the public sector is narrow and
76 unstable, if it even exists at all. However, he finally suggests that before drawing
77 the conclusion that reform types are mutually exclusive, one should consider
78 the role of “administrative culture.” It appears that, while there are different
79 relational influences that could easily create tension between different reform
80 types, these pressures can be tempered by experimental and change-minded
81 administrators in local governments. Experimental and performance oriented
82 administrative cultures provide a “bridge” in this sense, between administra-
83 tive reforms motivated by performance and participatory reforms grounded
84 in democratic values. Such a bridge allows one to see that administrative

85 reforms can also be participatory and participatory reforms can also be
86 democratic.

87 From the Netherlands, an enlightening case study by De Vries and Van
88 der Hoofs-Van der Zijl examines “the implications of community policing for
89 police–citizen relationship.” This article deals with the quality of the Dutch
90 police and its relationship with the authority of the police. The authors argue
91 that in recent decades, several internal and external initiatives have been
92 developed to increase the quality of the Dutch police. On the one hand,
93 internal processes and procedures were improved, and clearer measures were
94 created in order to guarantee the quality of police work. There was also an
95 internal change from “quantity-oriented thinking” to “quality-oriented think-
96 ing.” On the other hand, it became clear that the concept of police quality is
97 closely connected with the opinions of citizens concerning the police. The
98 paper introduces the concept of “community policing” and a theoretical model
99 that better explains its feasibility and environment. Following this, the paper
100 demonstrates how the idea of police quality may improve the relationship
101 between the police and the citizens by making the police an integrated part of
102 society. However, based on the Dutch experience, the paper notes that
103 community policing did not fully reach its goals. Despite the fact that
104 community policing may have contributed to the actual safety in neighbor-
105 hoods, citizens remain dissatisfied with the most important fundamental of
106 police authority: the effectiveness of the police. A consequence may be that an
107 objective increase in police effectiveness, in other words, lower crime rates,
108 does not influence the perceptions of citizens about police effectiveness. Thus,
109 the paper provides a rather pessimistic view of our effort to bridge the gap
110 between public sector performance and democratic values as reflected in
111 citizens’ trust in the state authorities.

112 The next study is the Bovaird, Loeffler, and Martin’s paper, “From
113 Corporate Governance to Local Governance: Stakeholder-Driven Community
114 Score-Cards for UK Local Agencies.” This paper challenges the Audit
115 Commission’s methodology for measuring performance in government with
116 the “community scorecard” approach that has been used in the United States
117 for a number of years. It suggests that the Audit Commission approach should
118 be altered to incorporate some of the more imaginative aspects of the
119 community scorecard, particularly with regard to the inclusion of quality of
120 life measures, even where a local authority and other local public agencies
121 have no direct control over the variables which impact upon many aspects of
122 the quality of life that local people regard as important. The paper also
123 examines the scope of local governance processes in the UK to be included in
124 the assessment. By so doing, the paper serves as a good example of how to
125 integrate some community-based criteria into the older conservative methods
126 of performance measurements. The paper suggests that the performance

127 measurement drive in central government has missed some important govern-
128 ance dimensions. This argument is particularly evident in its new approach to
129 Comprehensive Performance Assessment in local government and to “star
130 ratings” in the health service. The paper is a conceptual exploration of the
131 theoretical underpinnings of current government initiatives. It builds on
132 lessons from the literature that has been developed over the past thirty years
133 on how to find aggregate measures of the success of public agencies. The
134 paper discusses whether these lessons are still applicable to the field of
135 central–local relations in the UK today and whether recent government
136 initiatives to transcend these past lessons are likely to be successful. The
137 empirical basis for these contrasts derives from a series of research studies
138 conducted over the past four years, working with local authorities who have
139 been piloting the government’s Best Value initiative, implementing the new
140 regimes under the Local Government Act 2000 and Local Government Act
141 2001, and piloting new approaches such as Local Public Service Agreements.
142 The authors then conclude that aggregating techniques in public service
143 performance measurement, such as the CPA and “star ratings” approaches,
144 should be more sensitive to and appropriate for the multi-stakeholder environ-
145 ments in which they are used. More specifically they recommend that the
146 findings (1) report separately the views of all key stakeholders (360 degree
147 assessments), (2) report separately on service performance and the quality of
148 governance, (3) report separately on an appropriate range of aspirations and
149 achievements including a balanced portfolio of indicators, (4) report on the
150 quality of life outcomes experienced by key stakeholders, and (5) report on the
151 quality of life outcomes in geographical communities, in order to highlight
152 the interacting roles of community-based public services and public agency-
153 based public services in improving well-being in specific localities. These
154 characteristics are built into the Community Scorecard approach. Through
155 such an approach, efforts to measure performance in public services could be
156 redirected away from “blame-dumping” and towards “solution-finding.” In
157 addition, performance measurement processes could incorporate the key
158 governance principles of multi-stakeholder co-operation and transparency of
159 decision-making, rather than inventing more “black box mechanisms” whose
160 results are neither understood nor accepted by the key stakeholders who will
161 be responsible for implementing the consequent performance improvement
162 initiatives.

163 Finally, the paper by Dible is a unique attempt to relate the individual
164 performance of public sector employees in local governance to the idea of
165 political participation in Nigeria. The paper, entitled “Local Governance
166 Servants’ Performance and Citizens’ Participation in Governance in Nigeria”
167 traces the development of local governments in Nigeria from 1945 to date. It
168 then argues that the shift in the critical decision-making powers and functions

169 of local government requires its public administrators to be better-trained
170 professionals. However, without citizens' participation in governance, public
171 servants' accountability remains low. The study focuses on two major
172 questions: (1) how can performance be related to accountability in the local
173 governments, and (2) what is the relationship between performance and
174 citizenship participation in the local governments' development process?
175 Using a survey method, the study analyzed 1350 responses from public
176 personnel in three regions in Nigeria. The study also made use of additional
177 data from public servants, citizens, and a documentary analysis of the 1999
178 election results in local governments. The findings show that local govern-
179 ments in Nigeria do not train their public administrators and that there is no
180 ongoing personnel development. In some local governments where training of
181 staff has taken place, there is no evidence that training and development
182 programs have received increased resources or attention. In addition, an
183 analysis of Nigerian 1999 election results reveals that after more than 35
184 years of military dictatorship, citizen participation in national and local
185 government elections has fallen below 40%. Nearly 70% of the local govern-
186 ment citizens of voting age did not vote in the 1999 presidential election and
187 between 75% and 90% did not vote in any of the state and local government
188 elections held that year. Thus, perhaps 5% of Nigerians are politically active in
189 all of the usual forms of political activity (i.e., taking part in campaign
190 activities, discussing politics, contributing money, going to political meetings
191 etc.). The level of participation in these activities is also related to education,
192 registration laws, age, gender, economic status, and other variables. In addition
193 to the registration requirement, there are socio-economic factors that affect
194 turnout in local government elections. Generally, the 1999 election result
195 reveals that the socially and economically disadvantaged in Nigeria are less
196 likely to participate in the political process. Hence, these groups are less likely
197 to make their voice heard in the local government public affairs arena. In light
198 of these data the author tries to suggest some changes in the human resource
199 policies and in other strategies of the local governments, based on the need to
200 increase collaboration among political and social institutions and to urge
201 extensive improvement of the training and personal qualifications of the state
202 officials.
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