

Public Sector Management and the Democratic Ethos: A 5-Year Study of Key Relationships in Israel

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the nexus between bureaucracy and democracy in a management-oriented public sector. The article develops the idea that public administration plays a major role in determining citizens' political attitudes and behaviors. A theoretical model is suggested to examine the relationship among citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making, perceived managerial quality, perceived public sector performance, and democratic participatory behavior (i.e., trust in administrative agencies, political participation, and community involvement). A sample of 2,281 Israeli citizens provided information on the research variables over a 5-year period (2001–05). Findings reveal that citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making are positively related with perceived managerial quality but are not related with perceived public sector performance. In addition, perceived managerial quality is positively related with trust in administrative agencies as well as with political participation and community involvement. Finally, public sector performance is a mediator in this relationship. These findings lead to a discussion about the linkage between the bureaucratic and the democratic ethos in modern managerial governance, theoretical and practical implications, as well as suggestions for future studies.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the study of New Public Management (NPM) reforms, public sector performance indicators (PIs), and the effect of modernized public administrations on nations and societies worldwide. For example, studies have suggested that the need for modernization in the public sector is often a response to low levels of citizens' trust in government (Bouckaert and Van de Walle 2003; Vigoda 2002). The negative image citizens have of their government and of public administration may be

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a consequence of the way these institutions function, meaning that better quality public services should lead to more satisfied users and in turn increase trust in the government (Anderson 1995; Glaser and Hildreth 1999). Furthermore, some studies have suggested that trust in government strengthens and stabilizes democratic systems (Borre 2000; Coulson 1998) by increasing good citizenship behavior and levels of participation in the democratic process that may be seen as “new citizenship” (Rimmerman 1997). From another perspective, a stable democracy requires active citizenship participation and involvement in various ways (e.g., Barner-Barry and Rosenwein 1985; Box 1999; Frederickson 1982, 1997). Despite some criticism about the nature of citizens’ participation in the managerial era of governance, most of the literature supports higher levels of citizenry involvement in both administrative and political processes (e.g., Rimmerman 1997; Thomas 1995; Vigoda 2002). The main argument of these works is that citizen participation and involvement, both on the organizational/bureaucratic level and on the communal/political level, may increase trust in governance and potentially in administrative agencies because they enhance the information citizens have about various processes and their identification with policies and outcomes (Rose 1999; Yankelovich 1991).

Nonetheless, the relationships between public management mechanisms and the democratic process have received only scant attention in both the political science and public administration literature of recent years. Hence, the potential contribution of this article is threefold. First, it attempts to integrate ideas rooted in political science theory, public administration, and public management writings into one integrative model that explains at least some relationships between bureaucracy and democracy. The model proposes a link between better management in modern bureaucracies on one hand and higher levels of trust in administrative agencies, coupled with enhanced democratic participatory behavior in the communal and political arenas on the other. As such, it follows the path forged more than two decades ago by scholars who linked the democratic and bureaucratic realms (i.e., Mosher 1982; Thompson 1983; Waldo 1977). More specifically, our model is based on the idea of the “reconciliation of the bureaucratic and democratic ethos” suggested by Woller (1998). Second, the article puts the theory to empirical examination and tests each of the proposed relationships. Finally, the article relies on survey data that have been collected over a 5-year period. This method yielded a relatively large sample size that was used to test the model across several years. By so doing, we hope to ground our arguments and findings on a solid basis that can enrich future studies in the field. The article begins by developing the theory behind the core concepts and their interrelationships and by exploring the model. A series of eight hypotheses are then suggested and empirically examined. The article ends with a detailed discussion about the implications of the study’s findings, theoretical and practical conclusions, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

MANAGEMENT, PERFORMANCE, AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: A THEORETICAL REVIEW

Managerial Quality of the Public Sector

The meaning of managerial quality is discussed extensively in business administration literature. As suggested in previous studies (i.e., Kahn 1993; Koch and Cabula 1994; Vigoda-Gadot and Yuval 2003), managerial quality is a multifaceted concept expressing some theoretical and empirical complexities. This complexity derives from two major

approaches: (1) the economic market-derived approach and (2) the behavioral and human resource management approach. According to the more conventional, market-derived view, managerial quality is defined by financial and budgetary measures. The quality of a managerial cadre is best expressed by economic values such as salaries and profits. An alternative human resource approach treats managerial quality quite differently. According to this view, managerial quality is related more to human and social values than to economic ones. This view looks at the success of employees in fulfilling their job tasks (be they formal or informal ones) and focuses on managers as effective leaders and decision makers.

The quality of the workforce in the public sector refers to the merit and professionalism of public personnel as gauged by objective assessors. Excellent managers in all sectors are expected to provide employees with supportive working environments. It is the managers' responsibility to provide a vision, but at the same time, to provide the tools for translating this vision into actions. As mentioned in various other studies, an efficient, skillful, professional, and committed public service supports governments in their work (e.g., Hart and Grant 1989; Holzer 1989; Holzer and Rabin 1987; Vigoda 2000). In addition, transparency and accountability provide an indication as to the internal mechanisms of managerial self-criticism and willingness to improve existing processes and procedures. Transparency is usually crucial in financial and budgetary policy, but it is also recommended as a good strategy for building commitment among clients and citizens. A bureaucracy that is willing to work under transparent conditions signals that it has nothing to hide, is built on foundations strong enough to squelch criticism by the public, and constantly seeks self-improvement (Finkelstein 2000). Accountability relies on transparency, and the two terms go hand in hand when seeking to explore new avenues for organizational improvement and development. Accountability refers to the duty of governments and public officials to report their actions to their citizens and the right of the citizens to take steps against those actions, if they find them unsatisfactory. As suggested by Halachmi (2002), accountability requires us to discern who is accountable, for what, to whom, in what respect, and how to assess it. Undoubtedly, both transparency and accountability are crucial elements of quality management in modern democracies.

Along with the need for professionalism, transparency, and accountability, managerial quality is also grounded in a wider set of values, norms, and unwritten rules that create a fair and just administrative culture. Hence, standards of morality and ethics may be seen as the hidden underbelly of bureaucracies. Although every bureaucracy is characterized by a formal set of regulations and laws, their implementation is weighted by the way in which they are interpreted by managers (DeLeon 1996; Gawthrop 1976; Lui and Cooper 1997; Richardson and Nigro 1991; Suzuki 1995; Wilenski 1980). All the above studies have agreed that managerial quality also encompasses ethical standards, integrity, fair and equal treatment of citizens as clients, and appropriate criteria for rewarding public servants.

Finally, a leading component of managerial quality is innovativeness, which serves as an essential engine for renewal, development, and continuous advancement toward the realization of the collective organizational vision. Traditionally, public sector organizations are viewed as uncreative and stagnant entities. Still, managerial innovation and creativity are essential for those administrators and systems who seek to perform better and compete successfully with other organizations from the private sector or from the third sector (Golembiewski and Vigoda 2000). The above four factors thus seem to be good indicators of managerial quality in the public sector.

Public Sector Performance

Over the past few decades, PIs have become a central concern of administrative systems seeking renewal, reform and change. It is a common view today that a better understanding of public sector performance should rely on enriching and improving our “toolbox” of PIs. Thus, public sector performance and PI are evaluated according to various economic parameters with tools borrowed from the policy evaluation field. In addition, however, performance evaluation also utilizes the attitudinal-behavioral approach that uses noneconomic parameters as measurements. This approach argues that the traditional economic approach cannot supply all the required information needed for a comprehensive performance evaluation. Such a comprehensive evaluation must also take into consideration the attitudes of the citizens, who are often defined as the customers or consumers of public service, as well as the attitudes of the public administrators themselves. Our article follows this theoretical line of thinking.

The attitudinal-behavioral approach is applied to many aspects of public sector management and performance. Some of these areas include the scope and quality of services offered to citizens and public satisfaction with them, effectiveness and efficiency, and the equitable distribution of public resources. This approach also considers the public’s willingness to contribute to the advancement of prioritized social and public values that public administration finds difficult to deal with or does not wish to handle and opinions about the management style and quality of human resources in the public service systems (for more detailed examples, see: Balk 1985; Carter 1989; Hart and Grant 1989; Local Government Training Board 1987; National Consumer Council 1986; Smith 1993; Thomas and Palfrey 1996; Winkler 1987). In line with recent reforms in public administration, especially those stemming from the NPM paradigm, many PIs have been developed to evaluate administrative performance (e.g., Berman 1997; Nyhan 1995). Nonetheless, two of the most commonly used perceptual measures are (1) attitudes toward the general responsiveness of governments and public administration and (2) detailed evaluations of citizens’ satisfaction with governmental services.

Responsiveness to citizens as clients may be regarded as the Holy Grail of modern public administration. A responsive bureaucracy delivers services and goods to its destinations with optimal speed and accuracy (Chi 1999; Vigoda 2000). Thomas and Palfrey (1996) argued that responsiveness attests to the speed and accuracy with which a service provider replies to a request for action or for information. Speed can refer to the waiting time between citizens’ request for action and the reply of the public agency. Accuracy means the extent to which the provider’s response is appropriate to the needs or wishes of the service user (Rourke 1992; Stewart and Ranson 1994). Beyond the idea of measuring the general responsiveness of public agencies, there is also a need to evaluate the satisfaction from services received more closely. In other words, administrative performance means a comprehensive, distinctive, reliable, and continuous assessment of citizens’ satisfaction from governmental operation in various fields. Satisfaction measures make up an important component of the NPM and PI evaluations in both state and federal agencies. They were largely prompted by the NPM’s concept of the citizen as customer and by the vision of “putting citizens first” (Caiden and Caiden 2002). Hence, public administration encourages the use of satisfaction measures as part of performance evaluations both inside public agencies and around them (e.g., Poister and Henry 1994; Swindell and Kelly 2000). It should also be noted that this strategy has been adopted

despite some limitations it has and some criticism it needs to address (Stipak 1979, 1980).

Participation in Decision Making and Democratic Participatory Behavior

The appropriate role of the public in public administration has recently received significant attention from both practitioners and academics (Ebdon 2002; King, Feltey, and Susel 1998; Thomas 1995; Weeks 2000). This interest is basically the result of public disenchantment and apathy at the end of the 20th century, which expressed itself as a reduced level of trust in the governments of many Western democracies (Putnam 1993; Simonsen and Robbins 2000). Whereas some scholars suggest that higher levels citizenship involvement (i.e., participation in administrative decision making, political participation, or community involvement) may lead to increased conflict over policy making and implementation (i.e., Thomas 1995), there are also other, more positive, perceptions about the functionality of such involvement. Today, most studies assume that citizens' participation at the administrative level can improve public sector performance. The same logic is suggested for higher levels of political participation and community involvement that urge policy makers to advance innovative strategies for the people. Thus, recent studies have concentrated on finding the most efficient methods of participation—usually at the local/communal level and/or in the budgeting process (Berner 2003; Church et al. 2002; Franklin and Ebdon 2004; Irvin and Stansbury 2004; Orosz 2002; Simonsen and Robbins 2000). For example, public hearings are one of the most frequently used formats for participation, yet such public participation proves inefficient in several ways (Berner 2003). Arnstein (1969) and Church et al. (2002) suggest viewing community input as a spectrum or “ladder” of participation. The lower rungs of the participation ladder comprise processes in which power holders seek to educate the public about particular issues. Higher up on the ladder are processes through which power holders consult those individuals or groups who could potentially be affected by a proposed or current policy. Still higher up on the ladder, power holders and interested parties agree to share or delegate responsibilities for decision making. At the top rungs of the ladder, lay individuals dominate decision making. This level of participation requires a transfer of decision-making power from traditional decision makers to lay individuals.

Irvin and Stansbury (2004) weigh the advantages and disadvantages of citizens' involvement at the organizational/administrative level and conclude that the ideal conditions for its emergence are based on strong community ties, small groups organized locally, a willingness to volunteer, and the urgency of the issues at stake. A more radical approach characterizes the work of King, Feltey, and Susel (1998) who, based on interviews and focus group discussions, develop the concept of authentic participation, that is, deep and continuous involvement in administrative processes with the potential for all involved to have an effect on the situation. The key elements of this concept are defined as focus, commitment, trust, and open and honest discussion. It requires that administrators focus on both process and outcome, meaning that participation is an integral part of administration, rather than an add-on to existing practices. The public is part of the deliberation process from issue framing to decision making. Authentic participation places the citizen next to the issue and the administrative structures and processes furthest away while the administrator is the bridge between the two. Despite criticism of intensive citizen involvement in administrative decision making that has been voiced by other researchers, this study

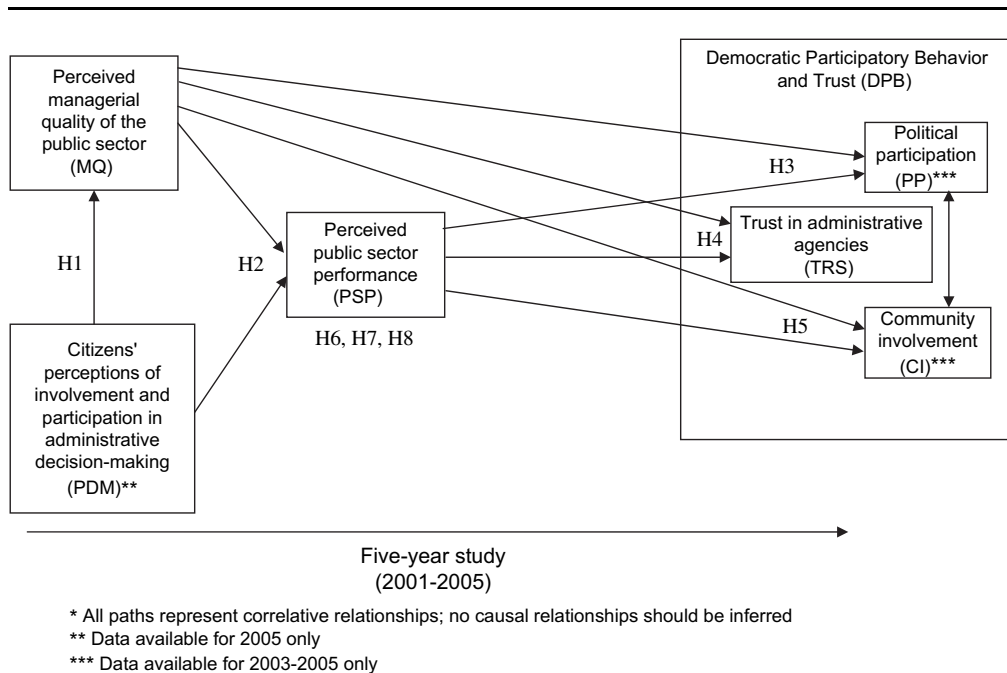
considers such involvement an essential stage for building healthy and balanced administrative systems. Furthermore, the study characterizes this involvement as a crucial step for building a stronger democracy. It seeks to demonstrate how such involvement may have an effect on positive attitudes toward government and toward public administration as well as encourage higher levels of democratic participatory behaviors (i.e., political participation and community involvement). The next section will therefore expand on the meaning of democratic participatory behavior and trust in modern nations.

Brady (1999, 737) argues that participation is “surely one of the central concepts in the study of mass politics” and that all definitions include four basic concepts: activities or actions, citizens, politics, and influence. The classic definition by Verba and Nie (1972, 2) suggests that political participation refers to “those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the decisions they take.” However, more recent definitions have extended this scope somewhat. For example, Nagel (1987, 1) described participation as “actions through which ordinary members of a political system influence or attempt to influence outcomes,” and Kaase and Marsh (1979, 42) suggest that participation includes “all voluntary activities by individual citizens intended to influence either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels of the political system.” These later definitions extend the meaning of participation beyond the conventional electoral system to the executive level of government and administration. Thus, a definition of participatory behavior in a democratic system that is both suitable and balanced for our purposes may be termed “democratic participatory behavior” and be characterized by the level of active and passive involvement of citizens in various social activities directed at making the political or communal systems function more effectively.

With respect to the above description of citizens’ participation, trust in government and in administrative agencies represents a different aspect of the democratic machinery. Coulson (1998) describes it as an essential ingredient for building the “contract” between citizens and governance in the public sector management era. Thus, trust is a less active but still essential dimension that enables legitimization of democratic actions and institutions. Open societies rely on citizens’ trust. The failure of that trust to reach a critical level signals the desire for political change. In fact, recent years have witnessed a massive proliferation of the concept of trust both in public administration and in the social sciences. There are also numerous definitions of the term “trust” (Bouckaert et al. 2002; Luhmann 1988). Among these definitions, the one that views trust as the “faith people have in their government” (Citrin and Muste 1999) has been adopted by public administration studies and applied to the administrative agencies that are an indispensable and central part of government. Notwithstanding, like participation and involvement, trust as well may have a negative aspect. Studies note that overly trusting attitudes toward the government lead to a decline in the healthy criticism of the government and its policies. Although a certain level of trust is essential for the legitimization of democratic institutions, overly trusting attitudes may reflect the stagnation of the citizenry, a situation that endangers the basic elements of a democratic system (Citrin and Muste 1999; Coulson 1998; Luhmann 1988).

Levels of trust are generally measured by surveys and interviews using several indicators. As the literature proves, trust may be studied and measured at the macro and/or at the micro level. At the macro level, it is considered acceptable to look at trust in the government as a whole, which is a relative and vague concept. At the micro level, one may look at trust in the governmental and administrative agencies that represent modern

Figure 1
Research Model*



bureaucracy, which is much easier to conceptualize and measure (Bouckaert and Van de Walle 2003). This study focuses on the micro-level meaning of trust. However, the core assumption is that the micro and macro levels are mutually related, and thus, as the trust of citizens in administrative agencies increases, their confidence in democracy and in other governmental institutions increases commensurately.

The common explanation of trust at the micro level is the micro-performance hypothesis about trust in government (Bouckaert and Van de Walle 2003; Bouckaert et al. 2002). This hypothesis simply states that as citizens grow more satisfied with public sector performance, their level of trust in the government increases. A recent study in the Israeli setting found empirical evidence that supports this claim (Vigoda 2002). Although this hypothesis may be less theoretically valid when the general term “trust in government” is used, it is much more theoretically valid when referring to trust in a specific administrative agency based on its performance. Therefore, this study will refer to specific administrative agencies when evaluating the level of citizen trust.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUREAUCRACY AND DEMOCRACY: RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Figure 1 is based on the theoretical development suggested so far. It presents a model of the hypothesized relationships among the research variables. The model has several goals. First, it examines the effect of citizens’ involvement and participation in administrative decision making on perceived managerial quality and on the perceived performance of the public sector. Second, it tests the effect of perceived performance on trust in administrative

agencies. Third, it explores the relationship of perceived performance with political participation and with community involvement as part of democratic participatory behavior. Finally, the model suggests that perceived performance mediates the relationship between perceived managerial quality and participation in decision making on one hand and trust and democratic participatory behavior on the other.

Several hypotheses emerge from this model. First, based on the theory of the relationship between bureaucracy and democracy (Mosher 1982; Waldo 1977), it is suggested that citizens' involvement and participation in decision making at the administrative level is positively related to the managerial quality of the public sector as perceived by citizens. This hypothesis is also based on the idea of authentic participation and the work of Irvin and Stansbury (2004) and King, Feltey, and Susel (1998). It is argued that when people are deeply involved in practical administrative processes of any kind, they acquire a better understanding and more realistic perspective of specific processes, difficulties, and dilemmas that the public sector and its officials face in daily activities. As a result, these citizens will tend to have more positive perceptions about the quality of services and goods with which they are provided by the public sector. Whereas distancing citizens from decision-making centers may lead to higher levels of alienation from and disaffection with public administration, bringing the customers closer to public institutions enables them to have a more realistic understanding of and appreciation for the complexity and efforts invested in making bureaucracy work properly. Hence, the first hypothesis is proposed:

H₁ Perceived managerial quality of the public sector is positively related to citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making.

Citizenry participatory theory and democratic theory further suggest that participation in decision-making processes increases the players' responsibility for the outcomes, so that players tend to accept and cooperate with the system (Dahl 1971; Pateman 1970; Putnam 1993). Moreover, participation in decision-making processes may strengthen the sense of group identity and correspondingly loyalty to the group or organization (Osterman 1999; Rose 1999). Thus, increased citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making may lead to positive evaluations of performance in administrative agencies. Fornell et al. (1996) show, for example, that monopolist companies receive lower client satisfaction ratings than nonmonopolists because the use of the latter companies depends on free choice. Therefore, the monopolistic, nonparticipatory nature of many government services alone could explain part of the public's dissatisfaction with them.

Furthermore, an engaged citizenry might become more appreciative of the tough decisions that government administrators have to make, and the improved support from the public might create a less divisive, combative populace to govern and regulate (King, Feltey, and Susel 1998; King and Stivers 1998; Putnam 1993). Irvin and Stansbury (2004) explain the various advantages of citizen participation in terms of education, building trust and legitimacy, breaking gridlocks, making better policy and implementation decisions, and avoiding litigation costs. Yet, they also point to the disadvantages of citizen participation in terms of costly processes; time-consuming, budget-consuming demands from strong interest groups that participate the most; and the possibility of poor decisions that are politically impossible to ignore.

From a social choice perspective, Mizrahi (2002) shows that participatory or democratic rules provide sufficient opportunities for players to change outcomes and improve

their payoffs because they incorporate many players and interests. Furthermore, participatory and democratic rules are also more stable than nonparticipatory or less democratic rules because of the vagueness they create regarding the true connection between rules and outcomes. That is, under a complex structure of rules, a player cannot be sure what rules or norms need to be changed in order to improve outcomes, and he/she will therefore attempt to change policy within the rules and norms. The more people, interests, and alternatives involved in the decision-making processes and the higher the perceptions of participation in decision making in one's environment, the more stable the set of rules. Moreover, as rules become more participatory and give players the opportunity to express their preferences, the more players will feel committed to the democratic/participatory process and will be more satisfied with the outcomes. In line with these arguments, a second hypothesis is suggested:

- H₂ Perceived public sector performance is positively related to perceived managerial quality and to citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making.

It may be further suggested that a high-quality managerial system, smoothly functioning public administration, and a strong democracy are factors tightly bounded together, as they all rely on productive and widespread citizenship involvement. According to some, among the advantages of the democratic system are the enhancement of individual and collective competences, the increase in self-motivation, and the expansion of equal opportunities for social mobility (which is described as the "democratic ethos"). Woller (1998) indicated that no bureaucracy or democracy can function properly without a minimal input of citizenship activity. Moreover, modern public administration, as well the NPM approach with its strong market-based orientation, is deeply rooted in a democratic heritage. It is democracy that grants legitimacy to the decisions and actions of public service, and it is democracy again that must hold the tyrannical nature of bureaucracies in check (Mosher 1982; Waldo 1977). Thus, our next three hypotheses try to establish a linkage between the nature of modern public administration and certain citizenry values of participation and trust. The core assumption is that quality management and a better functioning public administration will enhance trust in administrative agencies, but will be negatively related with active participation both on the national and communal levels. This latter expectation is based on the idea that higher levels of political participation, community involvement, and other forms of protest are needed when the administrative system does not perform properly. Alternatively, when public administration is meeting the expectations of the citizens, lower levels of participation and involvement are needed both on the national and communal levels.

- H₃ Trust in administrative agencies is positively related to perceived public sector performance and to the perceived managerial quality of the public sector.
- H₄ Political participation is negatively related to perceived public sector performance and to the perceived managerial quality of the public sector.
- H₅ Community involvement is negatively related to perceived public sector performance and to the perceived managerial quality of the public sector.

According to figure 1, a thorough examination of our model necessitates a test of mediation. In line with the reasoning suggested thus far, perceived public sector performance

is expected to mediate the relationship between perceived managerial quality and perceived participation in decision making on one hand and trust and democratic participatory behavior on the other. This expectation is based on the assumption that citizens in modern democracies place a growing emphasis on the outcomes of public service and measure it by results. The NPM paradigm and the overall orientation toward measuring services, developing PIs, and looking for tangible outputs of the public system (Halachmi 2002; Pollitt 1988) suggest that the improvement of effectiveness and efficiency in those systems may have a mediating effect between the objective evaluations of inputs (i.e., perceived managerial quality and perceived participation in decision making) and democratic outcomes (i.e., democratic participatory behavior). Hence, it may be argued that perceived public sector performance will make an independent and significant contribution to the explanation of trust and the democratic participatory behavior variables, beyond the contribution of perceived managerial quality and the control variables. In addition, two additional hypotheses predict a mediating effect of perceived public sector performance. H₇ refers to perceived managerial quality, and H₈ refers to perceived participation in decision making. Thus, the following three hypotheses are suggested:

- H₆ Perceived public sector performance makes an independent and significant contribution to the explanation of trust in administrative agencies, political participation, and community involvement beyond the contribution of perceived managerial quality, citizens' perceptions of involvement, and participation in administrative decision making and the control variables.
- H₇ In the eyes of the public, perceived public sector performance mediates the relationship between perceived managerial quality and democratic participatory behavior.
- H₈ In the eyes of the public, perceived public sector performance mediates the relationship between perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making and democratic participatory behavior.

Finally, several control variables were used in order to examine the generalization of the model. Gender, education, and age were used in the final analysis, based on previous knowledge about their relationship with democratic values (i.e., Almond and Verba 1963; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). From these studies, it may be inferred that highly educated men and older individuals will demonstrate higher levels of political participation and community involvement due to their higher socioeconomic status. However, no strong rationale exists for the relationships between these variables and trust in administrative agencies, especially in the Israeli setting. Therefore, as noted above, these variables were chosen mainly as control variables.

METHOD

Sample

The model was examined with data gathered in Israel over five successive years, from 2001 until 2005. The data were collected using questionnaires distributed to citizens nationwide. The questionnaire was designed to examine citizens' perceptions toward government and toward public administration, as well as various democratic values and participatory

behavior. All together, 2,281 individuals participated in the study—345 in 2001, 502 in 2002, 490 in 2003, 446 in 2004, and 498 in 2005. Response rate for these years ranged between 80% and 85% due to our direct sampling method. According to this method, citizens were approached by one of the research assistants and were asked if they are willing to take part in the study. The response rate was calculated as the ratio between those participants who ultimately took part in the study and those who agreed to listen to our basic explanation of the study and reviewed the questions. Citizens were asked to provide their perceptions and attitudes toward public administration, public services, and public officials on the national and local levels. Data were collected between May and July of each year by a random sampling method. Various cities and other population areas were sampled based on geographic location and the size and structure of the population. Representative samplings were included from larger and smaller cities; rural settlements; the northern, southern, and central areas of the country; as well as from individuals from a variety of socioeconomic levels. Interviewers met the participants in various locations such as public venues, governmental institutions, and private homes. Participants were asked to provide information about their attitudes regarding the managerial quality and responsiveness of public sector agencies, satisfaction with services, and trust in various administrative and governmental institutions. Participants also provided information about their democratic participatory behaviors. However, these data were available for only some of the years (i.e., data on citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making were available only for 2005 and data about political participation and community involvement were available only for the years 2003–05).

Of the total sample, 51% were men and 49% women, 50% were married, and 17.2% were new immigrants (10 years or less in Israel). Average age was 34.1 years ($SD = 12.2$) and average years of education was 10.1 ($SD = 5.6$). With regard to socioeconomic level, 81% were Jews, and a breakdown by income showed that 40.8% had a low monthly net income (up to NIS 4,000/\$900), 38.5% had an average income (NIS 4,000–7,000/\$900–\$1,600), and 20.7% had a high income (above NIS 7,000/\$1,600). Note that the research sample was highly representative of the overall Israeli population. The demographic characteristics of the sample were quite similar to those of the total population in Israel as reported in the Statistical Yearbook for each of the tested years.

Measures

Perceived Managerial Quality of the Public Sector (MQ)

This variable was measured with four latent measures and 15 items, based on Vigoda-Gadot and Yuval (2003). The four measures included human quality, transparency and accountability, morality and ethics, and innovativeness. Human quality refers to the professionalism and quality of public personnel and the administrative leadership (Vigoda 2002) and was measured by four items. Transparency and accountability refers to the acceptance of criticism, a sincere desire to improve poorly functioning programs or performance in state services, and a willingness to be exposed to outside evaluators in order to improve future results (Finkelstein 2000; Halachmi 2002) and was measured by five items. Morality and ethics refer to general attitudes toward ethics and the fairness of civil servants (DeLeon 1996; Gawthrop 1976) and consists of three items. Innovativeness reflects entrepreneurial actions, flexibility, the willingness to adopt new ideas, and the initiation of original enterprises by public servants in order to improve services to the people (DeLeon

1996) and was measured by a three-item scale. Full details on the items comprising this variable can be found in Appendix. For all subscales, respondents were asked to report the degree to which they agreed with the items on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Internal reliability of this integrative scale was 0.91, which was higher than any reliability score of the independent subscales.

Citizens' Perceptions of Involvement and Participation in Administrative Decision Making (PDM)

This variable was based on previous measures of involvement and participation in decision making that have been applied in the discipline of organizational behavior and management (i.e., Aiken and Hage 1966). It was defined as the degree of input and participation in administrative processes aimed at determining policies, strategies, plans, or actions of public agencies and was measured by two items (see Appendix). Respondents were asked to report the degree to which they agreed with the items on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Internal reliability of this scale was 0.80. One should note that data for this variable were available only for the year 2005, as this was a new variable in the cross-national study.

Perceived Public Sector Performance (PSP)

Based on Vigoda-Gadot and Yuval (2003), this variable was measured with two latent measures—responsiveness and satisfaction with services. Responsiveness refers to the accuracy and speed of public sector reaction to citizens' demands. Relying on the theoretical conception of Thomas and Palfrey (1996), this variable was measured by four items aimed at evaluating the speed and accuracy of public services provided to the citizens by the authorities. The subscale on satisfaction assembled detailed information regarding citizens' satisfaction with various public services on the national and communal level. Respondents were given a list of public institutions and organizations that deliver various services. They were asked to report how satisfied they were with the treatment they received either when they came personally to the public offices or contacted them by phone. The response scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree/very dissatisfied) to 5 (strongly agree/very satisfied) for the responsiveness and satisfaction items. Internal reliability of the scale was 0.86, which was higher than the independent reliability for each of the latent factors.

Trust in Administrative Agencies (TRS)

Trust in government and in public administration refers to the level of faith or confidence citizens have in state authorities and in administrative branches of various kinds (Citrin and Muste 1999). It was measured using an 18-item scale. Respondents were provided with a list of various state agencies and public organizations and were asked to indicate how much trust they had in each of them on a five-point scale from 1 (very low trust) to 5 (very high trust). Internal reliability of this scale was 0.88.

Political Participation (PP)

This variable refers to "those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they make" (Verba and Nie 1972, 2) or actions through which ordinary members of a political system influence or attempt to influence outcomes (Nagel 1987). An eight-item scale was used, based on similar measures developed elsewhere (Almond and Verba 1963;

Brady 1999; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Respondents were asked to report the frequency of their involvement in various activities on a three-level scale: (1) never was active, (2) was active in the past, (3) am active today. The total score for each respondent was calculated by summing the responses for each item. Internal reliability of this scale was .72. Finally, one should note that data for this variable were available only for the years 2003–05.

Community Involvement (CI)

This variable represents one's attempts to influence and contribute to the community. It was developed following a logic similar to the political participation scale, and it included six items (see Appendix). The scale for each item was the same as for the political participation variable, and the internal reliability was .68. Here again, data for this variable were available only for the years 2003–05.

Democratic Participatory Behavior (DPB)

In addition to the separate examination of trust in administrative agencies, political participation, and community involvement, an integrative measure of DPB was also tested. It was based on the average score of these three independent scales. A test of reliability yielded a Cronbach's α of .85, which was satisfactory for our purposes.

Data Analysis and the Test of Mediation

Prior to testing the research hypotheses, a preliminary analysis of validity and reliability was performed to support distinction among the research variables. For example, a confirmatory factor analysis was used to support the validity of (1) the independent and mediating variables (PDM, MQ, and PSP), (2) the mediating variable and trust in administrative agencies (PSP and TRS), and (3) the dependent variables (PP and CI). In all cases, the independent-measures models, where each variable demonstrated a stand-alone position, were superior to the integrative-measures models¹ of one or two factors. This analysis encouraged us to examine the theoretical model as is and helped in establishing the paths among the variables of the model.

To support the research hypotheses, four major strategies were employed. First, a zero-order correlation was analyzed to examine internal relationships among the research variables. Second, a standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to test for the effect of the independent variables on public sector performance and on the DPB variables (trust, political participation, and CI). Such an examination of direct relationships is suggested in hypotheses H₁–H₅. This was followed by multiple hierarchical regression analysis to assess H₆. This hypothesis examined the relative impact of each of the independent variables on the dependent variables and thus provides preliminary support for a mediating effect of perceived public sector performance. Finally, the last stage of the hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine the effect of the independent variables on democratic participatory behavior and trust, controlling for the mediating variable (PSP). The test of mediation was conducted following the studies of Baron and Kenny (1986), Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1998), and Kenny's Web page on mediation (<http://davidakenny.net/cm/mediate.htm>). According to these sources, to test for mediation, one should calculate

¹ Full details on the confirmatory factor analysis are available upon request directly from the authors.

the following three regression equations. First, the dependent variable is regressed on the independent variable, whereby the independent variable must affect the dependent variable to establish that there is an effect that may be mediated. Second, the mediator is regressed on the independent variable, whereby the independent variable must affect the mediator. Third, the dependent variable is regressed on both the independent variable and the mediator, whereby the mediator must affect the dependent variable while controlling for the independent variable. If these conditions all hold in the predicted direction, a certain level of mediation exists. An additional fourth condition concerns a case of full mediation. Here the effect of the independent variable on the outcome variable controlling for the mediator should be zero. If this effect is anything other than zero (i.e., only the first three equations hold), a partial mediation is indicated.

FINDINGS

Table 1 presents the psychometric characteristics of the research variables across the sample years. This table demonstrates that the psychometric values are reasonable across the board, with fairly normal distributions and acceptable Cronbach α ratios for all the variables included. The table also shows the sample size for each year and illustrates which variable was measured in which year. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics, zero-order correlations, and reliabilities for the research variables. As can be seen, most of the intercorrelations hold in the expected directions and none of them exceeds the maximum level of .70, which is a good indication for the absence of multicollinearity among the variables.

Table 3 presents the results of two multiple regression analyses where perceived managerial quality and perceived public sector performance were separately regressed on the independent and control variables. According to table 3, citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making were positively related with perceived managerial quality ($\beta = .59, p < .001$) and had no relationship with perceived public sector performance. Perceived managerial quality had a positive relationship with perceived public sector performance ($\beta = .61, p < .001$). These findings support H_1 but only partially support H_2 . That is, H_2 is supported for the variable perceived managerial quality but not for citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making. In addition, according to the conditions for mediation as specified by Baron and Kenny (1986), Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1998), and Kenny's Web page, the suspected mediating variable (PSP) was positively related with the independent variable perceived managerial quality. Thus, it was concluded that the first condition for mediation holds for the variable perceived managerial quality but not for citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making. Our further analyses will therefore continue to examine a mediation effect for perceived managerial quality as an independent variable, but not for citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making because it did not fulfill the first condition of mediation.

To examine the additional two conditions for mediation, let us turn to table 4. This table presents the results of four multiple hierarchical regressions in which the dependent variables are trust in administrative agencies, political participation, community involvement, and democratic participatory behavior. First, each of these variables was regressed on the control variables (step 1). Second, perceived managerial quality was added to the

Table 1
Psychometric Characteristics of the Variable in Each of the Yearly Samples (2001–05)

Year variable	2001 (<i>N</i> = 345)			2002 (<i>N</i> = 502)			2003 (<i>N</i> = 490)			2004 (<i>N</i> = 446)			2005 (<i>N</i> = 498)			2001–05 (<i>N</i> = 2,281)		
	Mean	SD	α	Mean	SD	α	Mean	SD	α	Mean	SD	α	Mean	SD	α	Mean	SD	α
Perceived managerial quality of the public sector (MQ)	2.73	.66	.83	2.46	.66	.90	2.36	.69	.90	2.48	.73	.91	2.41	.72	.91	2.47	.70	.91
Citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making (PDM)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.22	.98	.80	2.22	.98	.80
Perceived public sector performance (PSP)	2.98	.51	.85	2.85	.48	.84	2.94	.48	.83	2.92	.51	.85	2.76	.61	.89	2.89	.52	.86
Trust in administrative agencies (TRS)	3.01	.55	.86	2.86	.59	.87	2.96	.53	.85	2.95	.60	.89	2.84	.63	.89	2.92	.59	.88
Political participation (PP)	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.84	.39	.69	1.80	.41	.74	1.81	.42	.74	1.82	.41	.72
Community involvement (CI)	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.63	.46	.65	1.65	.45	.68	1.70	.49	.70	1.66	.47	.68

Table 2
Correlation Matrix (Pairwise Deletion) for the Research Variables (Reliabilities in Parentheses)

	Mean	SD	<i>N</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Perceived managerial quality of the public sector (MQ)	2.47	.70	2,257	.91								
2. Citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making (PDM) ^a	2.22	.98	494	.60***	.80							
3. Perceived public sector performance (PSP)	2.89	.52	2,281	.59***	.34***	.86						
4. Trust in administrative agencies (TRS)	2.92	.59	2,279	.49***	.25***	.69***	.88					
5. Political participation (PP) ^b	1.82	.41	1,429	.12***	.13***	NS	NS	.72				
6. Community involvement (CI) ^b	1.66	.47	1,429	.14***	.09*	NS	NS	.57***	.68			
7. Democratic participatory behavior (DPB)	2.42	.58	2,279	.39***	.25***	.41***	.58***	.69***	.70***	.85		
8. Gender (1 = female)	—	—	2,204	NS	NS	.09***	.06**	-.10***	NS	NS	—	
9. Education	10.10	5.61	2,209	-.11***	NS	NS	NS	.15***	.09***	.15***	.06***	—
10. Age	34.10	12.22	2,204	NS	NS	NS	NS	.16***	.26***	.12**	-.09***	.18***

Note: *N* = 494–2,279; NS = not significant.

^aData available for 2005 only.

^bData available for 2003–05 only.

p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .001.

Table 3
Multiple Regression Analysis (Standardized Coefficients) for the Effect of Independent Variables on Perceived Managerial Quality of the Public Sector (MQ) and on Perceived Public Sector Performance (PSP)

Variables	Perceived Managerial Quality of the Public Sector (MQ) (Results for 2005, $N = 498$), β (t)	Public Sector Performance (PSP) (Integrative Results: 2001–05, $N = 2,281$), β (t)
Perceived managerial quality of the public sector (MQ)	—	.61 (13.30***)
Citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making (PDM)	.59 (16.30***)	-.02 (-0.36)
Gender (female)	.03 (0.83)	.08 (2.19*)
Education	-.07 (-1.99*)	.05 (1.32)
Age	.02 (0.65)	.01 (0.23)
R^2	.37	.37
Adjusted R^2	.36	.36
F	68.57***	54.57***

* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

equations (step 2), and finally, perceived performance was added (step 3) to examine the independent contribution of each of these variables to the overall explained variance of the dependent variables. According to the first equation, trust in administrative agencies was positively related with perceived managerial quality and with perceived performance ($\beta = .13$, $p < .001$, and $\beta = .61$, $p < .001$, respectively). The inclusion of perceived managerial quality in step 2 contributed 24% of the explained variance and the inclusion of perceived performance in step 3 of the equation added 25% to the overall explained variance, which was 50%. These findings quite strongly support H_3 , which had expected a positive relationship among trust in administrative agencies, perceived public sector performance, and perceived managerial quality. They also provide partial support for H_6 , for the variable trust in administrative agencies. According to the second equation, political participation was positively related with perceived managerial quality ($\beta = .20$, $p < .001$) and negatively related with perceived performance ($\beta = -.10$, $p < .001$). The inclusion of perceived managerial quality in step 2 contributed 7% of the explained variance and the inclusion of perceived performance in step 3 of the equation added only 1% to the overall explained variance, which was 8%. These findings support H_4 for the variable perceived performance but not for perceived managerial quality. They further provide only marginal support for H_6 as far as political participation is concerned because of the small increase in the explained variance caused by perceived performance. In the third equation, community involvement was positively related with perceived managerial quality ($\beta = .20$, $p < .001$) and negatively related with perceived performance ($\beta = -.09$, $p < .01$). The inclusion of perceived managerial quality in step 2 contributed 9% of the explained variance and the inclusion of perceived performance in step 3 of the equation added 1% to the overall explained variance, which was 10%. Again, these findings support H_5 for the variable perceived performance but not for perceived managerial quality. Similarly, they provide only marginal support for H_6 as far as community involvement is

Table 4
Multiple Hierarchical Regression Analysis (Standardized Coefficients) for the Relationship Between the Independent Variables, Trust in Administrative Agencies, and Democratic Participatory Behavior

Variables	β (<i>t</i>)			β (<i>t</i>)		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
	Trust in Administrative Agencies (TRS)			Political Participation (PP)		
Gender (female)	.06 (2.87**)	.06 (3.05**)	.01 (.44)	-.10 (-3.70***)	-.10 (-3.79***)	-.09 (-3.46***)
Education	.00 (-.03)	.05 (2.84**)	.02 (1.51)	.14 (5.10***)	.15 (5.70***)	.16 (5.90***)
Age	.01 (.44)	.00 (.02)	-.01 (-.33)	.13 (4.79***)	.13 (4.74***)	.13 (4.79***)
Perceived managerial quality of the public sector (MQ)		.50 (26.71***)	.13 (6.67***)		.14 (5.38***)	.20 (6.25***)
Public sector performance (PSP)			.61 (32.22***)			-.10 (-3.22***)
R^2	.01	.25	.50	.05	.07	.08
Adjusted R^2	.01	.25	.49	.05	.07	.08
ΔR^2	—	.24	.25	—	.02	.01
F	2.77*	181.21***	422.42***	24.96***	26.32***	23.28***
F for ΔR^2	—	713.76***	1038.24***	—	28.91***	10.41***
	Community Involvement (CI)			Democratic Participatory Behavior (DPB)		
Gender (female)	.01 (.54)	.01 (.49)	.02 (.77)	-.01 (-.32)	-.01 (-1.61)	-.04 (-1.61)
Education	.05 (1.82)	.06 (2.43*)	.07 (2.60**)	.10 (3.71***)	.15 (6.00***)	.13 (5.59***)
Age	.26 (9.75***)	.26 (9.75***)	.26 (9.81***)	.17 (6.16***)	.16 (6.49***)	.15 (6.63***)
Perceived managerial quality of the public sector (MQ)		.14 (5.57***)	.20 (6.16***)		.42 (17.74***)	.24 (8.44***)
Public sector performance (PSP)			-.09 (-2.81**)			.30 (10.55***)
R^2	.07	.09	.10	.04	.22	.28
Adjusted R^2	.07	.09	.10	.04	.22	.28
ΔR^2	—	.02	.01	—	.18	.06
F	36.17***	35.48***	30.11***	20.83***	98.14***	106.99***
F for ΔR^2	—	31.07***	7.89**	—	315.91***	111.27***

Note: $N = 1,389-1,429$.

Due to missing values: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

concerned because of the small increase in the explained variance caused by perceived public sector performance.

Finally, in the fourth equation, democratic participatory behavior was positively related with perceived managerial quality and with perceived performance ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$, and $\beta = .30$, $p < .001$, respectively). Obviously, this positive relationship is due in large measure to the strong effect of trust on DPB. The inclusion of perceived managerial quality in step 2 contributed 22% of the explained variance and the inclusion of perceived performance in step 3 of the equation added 6% to the overall explained variance, which was 28%. These findings provide partial support for H₃, H₄, and H₅, specifically verifying the relationships between perceived managerial quality, trust, political participation, and community involvement. They do not, however, provide evidence for the relationships between perceived performance, political participation, and community involvement. In addition, in accordance with H₇ and H₈, the findings met the conditions for mediation that require a relationship between the dependent and the independent variables as well as the mediators and the dependent variables. As can be seen, these relationships also worked in the expected directions.

Notwithstanding, it may also be concluded that the mediation effect was far from complete. The fourth condition for mediation by Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1998) requires that for full mediation, the effect of the independent variables on the outcome variables controlling for the mediator must be zero, which was not the case here in any of the four equations. Indeed, the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables controlling for the mediator decreased for trust in administrative agencies and for democratic participatory behavior (from .50 to .13 and from .42 to .24), but for political participation and community involvement it increased (from .14 to .20 in both cases). These findings imply that perceived performance is a partial mediator for the relationship between perceived managerial quality and trust in administrative agencies as well as between perceived managerial quality and democratic participatory behavior, but not for the relationship between perceived managerial quality and political participation or for that between perceived managerial quality and community involvement. In the latter case, a direct relationship (main effect) is more dominant than the mediating relationship (side effect). In other words, it may be concluded that H₇ is partially supported for the variables trust in administrative agencies and democratic participatory behavior and is not supported for political participation and community involvement. We further concluded that H₈ is not supported, as perceived participation in decision making demonstrated no direct or indirect relationship with any of the dependent variables. Thus, one may argue that perceived public sector performance significantly but partially mediated the relationship between perceived managerial quality and the dependent variables. Nonetheless, a direct effect is still dominant in the model.

Finally, some additional noteworthy relationships emerged from our analysis. At the beginning of the analysis, a broad range of demographic variables was examined that may have affected the results reported thus far. These variables included income, religion, place of birth, ethnicity, and the marital status of the participants. In the pre-hoc analysis, all these variables proved insignificant. Only the variables of age, education, and gender had any significant effect. For example, political participation was positively related to education and age ($\beta = .16$, $p < .001$, and $\beta = .13$, $p < .001$, respectively), and men more than women tended to demonstrate higher levels of political participation ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .001$). In line with this, community involvement was positively related with education and age

($\beta = .07, p < .01$, and $\beta = .26, p < .001$, respectively) but not with gender. Finally, democratic participatory behavior was positively related with education and age ($\beta = .13, p < .001$, and $\beta = .15, p < .001$, respectively). These relationships were very stable across the various steps of the hierarchical procedure and are also in line with previous literature on political participation and community involvement (i.e., Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), which further strengthen the validity of our measures and research design.

MANAGING THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN DEMOCRACIES AND MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: A DISCUSSION

This article deals with the emerging role of public administration as a key player in socialization processes and in building the political culture and public policy of modern nations. The major goal of the study was to examine the relationships between the managerial quality and performance of the public sector and various types of participatory democratic behavior and trust in administrative agencies. To this end, classic ideas previously suggested by Mosher (1982), Waldo (1977), and Thompson (1983) were employed. These scholars noted insightfully some paradoxes in the bureaucracy–democracy nexus. Our contribution follows the more recent theory of NPM, which has pointed to the need to expand our knowledge about the meaning of managerial reforms in public administration (Hill and Lynn 2005; Peters 2001; Ridder, Bruns, and Spier 2005) and about the next steps in the field. The effect of such trends on the state of democracy and on democratic values, attitudes, and behaviors in modern nations is discussed in numerous studies (Box 1999; Rimmerman 1997; Yankelovich 1991). The findings support the major relationships in our model, with the exception of one: citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making at the organizational level were found to have no relationship with the mediating and the dependent variables. Although the intercorrelations between citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making and some of the dependent variables were significant, a subsequent multivariate analysis showed that these relationships were unstable and did not hold in multiple regression analysis. Furthermore, the mediation effects were only partially supported and worked for only some of the dependent variables.

In our view, the most important findings of this study are the relationships found between perceived managerial quality and perceived public sector performance on one hand and the three elements of democratic participatory behavior on the other. Despite criticism about the need for trust and participation in democracies, most studies in political theory suggest that participatory behavior is an essential component of good citizenship and prosperous, open societies. Advanced, modern democracy consists of three citizenry principles: obedience to the law, loyalty to the state and the society, and involvement and participation in the political process (Marshall 1965). The current study focused on the two latter principles and examined trust in administrative agencies (and thus in government), political participation, and community involvement. Our goal was not to assess their interrelations (they were all treated as building blocks in the construction of the democratic participatory behavior), but rather how they are affected by bureaucratic actions and citizens' perceptions of the actions of public administration.

The findings show that whereas explained variance for trust was high (50%), the model's contribution for the explained variance in the other two active participatory

behaviors (political participation and community involvement) was modest and did not rise above 10%. This is a rather low level of explained variance. Putting it another way, variables focusing on perceived managerial quality and perceived performance help in explaining trust in administrative agencies and have an additional, although lower, explanatory power for active participatory behaviors. These findings are in line with the existing literature on political participation and community involvement (Almond and Verba 1963; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). In our view, they also emphasize the need to explore other potential predictors of democratic participatory behavior, beyond those suggested here.

In the same vein, a stronger relationship has also been established between citizens' evaluations of perceived managerial quality, perceived public sector performance, and various types of trust and participatory behavior. This latter relationship is very much in keeping with the positive spillover theory (Peterson 1990; Sobel 1993). The findings may thus imply that actions and decisions made at the bureaucratic level by public officers leave their imprints on the social and political spheres. If citizens feel that public administration is characterized by quality managerial procedures and professional staff, as well as higher levels of ethics and morality and enhanced innovativeness, the evaluations of performance and outcomes increase accordingly. Moreover, the quality and performance of the public administration machinery is transferable and can be translated into democratic "coins", that is, greater trust in administrative agencies.

However, as the findings clearly show, it can also be translated into the more negative result of reduced levels of political participation and community involvement. When the bureaucratic system delivers high-quality goods and services and meets the expectations of the people, it seems that citizenry involvement and participation are less needed. Consequently, the "cozy chair" effect may emerge (Vigoda 2002), whereby the public becomes less interested in government because it is confident that its essential needs are being met by the bureaucracy. This effect may explain why a high level of perceived performance can result in lower levels of political participation and community involvement. In some respects, this outcome contradicts the basic democratic principles that call for public engagement in the political process. The findings thus only partially support Thompson's (1983, 235) idea that "democracy does not suffer bureaucracy gladly" and that "many of the values we associate with democracy such as criticism, trust, participation, and individuality stand sharply opposed to hierarchy, specialization, and impersonality we ascribe to modern bureaucracy." Our view is somewhat different and describes a more complex reality. Good governance and a well-performing public administration add to democracy by increasing the public's trust, but at the same time may reduce the public's political participation and involvement in the community.

The findings of this study may also have implications for the new approaches to the study of public administration. First, if public sector performance has direct and mediating effects on democratic participatory behavior and on trust in administrative agencies, the new reforms in public administration that call for a more business-like approach to serving the people are clearly relevant and valuable. For example, the NPM approach, which emphasizes the role of citizens as clients or customers, is further supported by this study. The findings suggest that greater acceptance and implementation of NPM reforms should lead to increased trust in government. Hence, the article provides additional support for advocates of the NPM paradigm who seek to improve the performance of public administration with the expectation of safeguarding the principles and foundations of our democracy. The article further implies that improving managerial quality by increasing

citizens' perceptions of involvement and participation in administrative decision making is possible and, under some conditions, may lead to more positive evaluations of public sector performance. In the long run, it may also have a direct and indirect effect on trust and democratic participatory behavior.

The findings of the article should also be interpreted based on the unique characteristics of Israeli democracy and its public administration agencies. Israeli society is a multicultural society composed of immigrants from around the globe. The foundations of this democracy were laid under the rule of the British mandate during 1917–48. In the first years of independence, during the 1950s and 1960s, Israel's political, administrative, and economic systems were highly centralized. This centralism prevented the development of strong interest groups and significantly slowed down the development of a civil society based on liberal values. During these years, Israeli society did not exert significant pressure for change, even though political participation through voting was intense. Public administration was strongly associated with the ruling Labor Party and its institutions, and citizen involvement in government was minimal. The public developed informal routes to bypass the highly centralized bureaucracy, thus partially implementing a "do-it-yourself" strategy (Shprinzak 1986).

Sociopolitical processes in the 1970s and 1980s increased political fragmentation, intensified social divisions, and downgraded the rule of law as well as the functioning of public administration. These dynamics represented a crisis in the political system and the government's inability to govern efficiently and provide public services (Horowitz and Lissak 1989). This crisis was coupled with a lack of effective channels through which citizens could influence the government. Furthermore, although the first seeds of reform and change in the management of the public sector were planted at the end of the 1970s with the political revolution that brought the conservative Likud Party to power, these seeds did not blossom into widespread systemic change and were not sufficiently nurtured by the major political parties (Galnoor, Rosenbloom, and Yeroni 1999). Consequently, large sectors of Israeli society attempted to find alternative means of solving social problems. Specifically, during the 1980s and 1990s many groups and individuals in Israeli society employed noninstitutionalized initiatives to create alternatives, often illegal or semilegal, to governmental services. Several examples from the 1980s included (1) a significant growth in the "black-market economy", particularly the illegal trade in foreign currency; (2) "gray-market medicine", particularly the semilegal, private supply of health services using public facilities; and (3) "gray-market education", particularly the employment of privately paid teachers and the evolution of independent private schools. In the 1990s, this mode of behavior spread to other policy areas such as internal security, social welfare, and communications, all of which expressed people's dissatisfaction with governmental services. Ultimately, the Israeli government responded positively to these initiatives by changing its policies in the direction demanded by these citizenry groups. The rules became more decentralized, and a variety of NPM style reforms in education, medicine, welfare, and communication services were initiated. Another channel of governmental response has been strengthening the ombudsman offices where complaints against various public agencies are recorded and published (Galnoor, Rosenbloom, and Yeroni 1999). This process also emphasized the central role of the Supreme Court, which enjoyed the public's trust.

Thus, as demonstrated above, Israeli society developed complex methods to overcome significant failures of the political, administrative, and democratic systems. These

unique characteristics of Israel's democracy can explain the problem of predicting participatory behaviors in this study. However, Israeli citizens still prefer democratic mechanisms to nondemocratic ones. The potential of strengthening such mechanisms and values, by means of "good governance" and "effective administration" are at the heart of this study. Furthermore, similar processes have been observed in other democracies such as the United States (Hacker 2004; Pierson 1995), meaning that the framework described in this article can be applied to other societies.

Limitations of the Study

Finally, even with its advantages, this study still suffers from some limitations that should be briefly noted. First, certain parts of the theoretical model were tested with only part of the 5 years worth of data, as some variables were measured only in some of the years (i.e., PDM, PP, and CI). Moreover, other variables that might have been relevant for the model, such as the level of citizens' information and knowledge about governance, were not included in our analysis for reasons of brevity. Such variables might prove to be promising avenues for future research. In the same vein, we agree that some convergence may exist between the satisfaction and the trust variables. Whereas this convergence is still limited and there is much consensus that both variables deserve independent attention, future studies are encouraged to replicate our method and test for rational for treating these constructs independently. Second, the model was not compared with other alternative models, and thus no conclusions may be drawn about the quality of the relations proposed here or about alternative relationships that might have given rise to other models. In this context, it is possible, for example, that some of the relationships suggested here (i.e., $MQ \rightarrow PSP$ or $PDM \rightarrow PSP$) also work in the opposite direction. Nonetheless, the fact that our study drew no causal conclusions leaves this possibility open as an intriguing option for future studies. This problem can be resolved with structural equation modeling, if and when the model is applied in future studies. Based on the above, the results of this study cannot and should not be interpreted in a causal way. Although data were collected over time, we have used a trend study approach and not a panel study (Baker 1998, 92–3). Third, our findings are based on cross-sectional and self-report data. This technique may result in source bias (e.g., the social desirability effect) or common method error. It may also be affected by some external bias caused by events in the international, national, and even regional environment. Nevertheless, these are quite common problems when dealing with survey data. The study demonstrated sound psychometric properties in terms of the reliabilities of the research variables across all years, which testifies to the solid structure of our measures and their construct validity. Finally, our data and model apply to only one culture, the Israeli one. Until similar measures are used in a different cultures, our findings cannot be compared synchronically. Thus, further studies are needed to support our findings in other sociopolitical environments.

Concluding Remarks

All in all, this study tried to advance in the attempt to uncover the links between administrative and managerial variables and political variables in the democratic realm. Gawthrop (1997) argued that there might be a great deal of confusion and hypocrisy associated with the concepts of democracy and bureaucracy. According to Waldo

(1977, 16), “when both are studied together the opportunities for confusion and delusion are multiplied, given the human capacity for irrationality and ego-serving views of the world.” Nevertheless, despite this complexity, one may continue to argue that democracy and bureaucracy can and should be studied in relation to each other. This is an underdeveloped field of knowledge that should be related with emerging trends in the NPM paradigm. Doing so will make a serious contribution to the understanding of contemporary public policy, and our empirical findings may guide other studies in this field.

APPENDIX: OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE RESEARCH VARIABLES

Perceived Managerial Quality (MQ)

Human quality, transparency and accountability, morality and ethics, and innovativeness.

1. “Employees of the Israeli public service are professionals and highly qualified” (human quality).
2. “The leaders of the Israeli public service have a clear vision and long range view as to where we are going” (human quality).
3. “The Israeli public service employs only high-quality individuals” (human quality).
4. “Public leadership and senior management in the Israeli public service are well qualified and have high professional standards” (human quality).
5. “Israeli public administration takes public criticism and suggestions for improvement seriously” (transparency and accountability).
6. “Today, more than ever before, the public system is willing to be exposed to the public and to the media” (transparency and accountability).
7. “Public administration treats defects found by the state comptroller seriously” (transparency and accountability).
8. “Public administration sees criticism as an important tool for future service improvement” (transparency and accountability).
9. “Israeli public administration encourages public employees to accept criticism and use it to improve services for citizens” (transparency and accountability).
10. “In Israeli public administration, most civil servants are impartial and honest” (morality and ethics).
11. “Citizens of this country receive equal and fair treatment from public officials” (morality and ethics).
12. “In Israeli public administration, deviations from good moral norms are rare” (morality and ethics).
13. “Israeli public administration formulates promising new ideas that improve citizens’ quality of life” (innovativeness).
14. “Compared with other countries, Israel occupies a leading position in developing useful projects for the public” (innovativeness).

15. "Advanced technology is involved in improving quality of service in this country" (innovativeness).

CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS OF INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION MAKING (PDM)

1. "The public administration is interested in involving the public in important decision-making processes."
2. "The public administration treats citizens as a central partner in decision-making processes aimed at improved public performance and efficiency."

Perceived Public Sector Performance (PSP)

1. "Israeli public administration responds to public requests quickly" (responsiveness).
2. "Israeli public administration is efficient and provides quality solutions for public needs" (responsiveness).

The services that were studied for the satisfaction facet were as follows: (1) hospitals and public clinics; (2) public schools; (3) courts; (4) the Ministry of The Interior; (5) the Labor Ministry and employment services; (6) police; (7) the Transportation Ministry; (8) public transport/buses; (9) public transport/rails; (10) public transport/El Al, Israel's national airlines; (11) public transport/airport authority; (12) public postal system; (13) local municipality; (14) electricity company; (15) the Ministry of Religious Affairs; (16) welfare system and national insurance; (17) telecommunication services; and (18) tax system.

TRUST IN ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES (TRS)

The administrative agencies that were studied were as follows: (1) Ministry of Health, (2) public hospitals, (3) public clinics, (4) public kindergartens and schools, (5) higher education (colleges and universities), (6) judiciary system, (7) Israel Defense Forces, (8) secret security services, (9) police and prisons, (10) public broadcasting system, (11) Ministry of Transportation, (12) Ministry of National Infrastructures, (13) authorities for the management of water system and national lands, (14) Ministry of the Environment, (15) State Comptroller's office, (16) religious services system, (17) State Treasury and tax system, and (18) the central bank (Bank of Israel).

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION (PP)

1. being a member of a political party;
2. keeping informed about politics;
3. voting regularly in general elections;
4. sending support/protest letters to politicians or to different newspapers;
5. being an active member of a public organization (public committee, political party, etc.);

6. taking part in demonstrations or political meetings;
7. engaging in political discussions; and
8. being a candidate for public office, signing petitions on political issues.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (CI)

1. being a member of a voluntary organization in the community;
2. being a member of a tenants' committee;
3. being a member of a parents' school committee;
4. taking part in community cultural activities;
5. writing letters to the mayor or to other local officials about different issues; and
6. writing letters to the local newspaper regarding community affairs.

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