

CHAPTER 3

COLLABORATION MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

**A Theoretical and Empirical Exploration of
Mutual Challenges for Governance, Citizens,
and Businesses in Modern Network Societies**

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INTRODUCTION

Two of humankind's oldest scourges—terrorism and disease—have recently brought the idea of collaboration to the forefront of public debate. For example, the lack of collaboration among various government agencies prior to the attacks of September 11, 2001 was of such an egregious nature that a new Homeland Security umbrella department was formed to ensure a higher degree of cooperation. In China in early 2003, SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) was found to have spread far beyond initial reports, a discovery that led in April of that year to the unprecedented step of firing the mayor of Beijing for mishandling the sit-

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uation. Moreover, experts have said that it is no longer a case of *if* but *when* a pandemic of avian flu will hit the human population. The World Health Organization (WHO) recently urged all countries to develop or update their influenza “pandemic preparedness plans” after experts estimated anywhere between 2 and 50 million people could die if a pandemic hits and the world is not prepared.

These examples, together with several natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and the tsunami that caused an immense environmental disaster in various countries during 2005, are illustrative of emerging threats to modern societies that necessitate collaboration among various parties in the local, national, and international arenas. This chapter follows several calls for the interdisciplinary study of public administration (Goodwin, 1998; Kettl & Milward, 1996; Rosenbloom, 1998; Vigoda, 2002b) and suggests that collaboration must start by sharing knowledge and experience among everyone who would play a role in preventing and/or responding to such disasters. Therefore, one of the major foci of this study is the network society in which we all live. To handle future terror attacks and outbreaks of disease or other natural disasters, as well as to maximize the results of collaboration when times are good, it is imperative for citizens, the private sector, and government agencies to learn how, when, and why they should share information, knowledge, and resources (Shui-Yan, 2005; Thomas, 2003). Furthermore, it is suggested that the power of citizens as individuals and within groups in the civic society is expected to increase dramatically and reinforce the calls for more authentic involvement and participation in decisions on which effective managerial collaboration depends (Box, 1998).

The chapter progresses on several tracks. Based on recent calls for reforms and change in public administration, especially in public management (i.e., Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000), I first develop a theory of collaboration management in and around public institutions that is rooted in an interdisciplinary perspective (Rosenbloom, 1998; Vigoda, 2000). In this context, collaboration between citizens and the third sector, as well as with the private sector is suggested as the most fruitful way to move forward. Next, we suggest a theoretical typology among closely related concepts such as integration (i.e., Li & Hambrik, 2005), partnership (i.e., Bassett, 1996; Cloke, Milbourne, & Widdowfield, 2000), cooperation (Tang, 2005; Thomas, 2003), coordination (Nicol, 1998), and association, as well as negotiation and empowerment (i.e., Berman, 1995; Weber & Khademian, 1997). This typology leads to an empirical exploration of the need for and the potential of collaboration as perceived by 244 senior managers from both the profit and the nonprofit sectors. The findings of the survey further support our argument about the need for and feasibility of managerial collaboration across sectors and players. While current thinking in

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the field is rather pessimistic about the actual willingness of the concerned parties to cooperate, this chapter offers a more realistic approach to making these joint ventures a reality. Finally, the chapter concludes that cross-sectoral collaboration management is one of the greatest challenges facing free democracies. Collaboration and civic engagement in a modern network society will hinge on our ability to meet this challenge.

COLLABORATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: THE SEPTEMBER 11 EFFECT AND THE THREATS FROM MOTHER NATURE

The simultaneous terrorist attacks on New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC on the morning of September 11, 2001 signaled the emergence of several striking changes in the United States and throughout the world. Perhaps one of the most interesting results of these terror actions was the sharp change in American public opinion about the role of government in day-to-day life and about its size, responsibilities, and challenges. The American nation, which in times of peace is reluctant to give too much power to governmental and administrative institutions at any level, was suddenly much more willing to consider a significant expansion of these institutions' authority and power if doing so would prevent similar threats in the future. There is no doubt that that such a major change of heart was the direct effect of a serious threat to the public's sense of security and well-being. Just as the success of the attacks stemmed from the high degree of collaboration among many terrorist organizations and countries that support terrorism, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, so too people and governments worldwide suddenly realized that comparable collaboration among free nations was needed to counter these threats.

In a similar manner, Mother Nature poses threats to the world's population that can be countered only through coordinated international efforts. Pandemics and natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis are too powerful and extensive for one community or even one nation to handle by itself. Public administrations in the affected areas must rise to the challenge of dealing with these problems. While we have always expected national institutions to perform this duty, the global nature of many of these events makes government involvement all the more necessary.

There are several reasons for our strong reliance on the government to deal with such crisis management. First, we simply have no other institution or body to turn to when our basic rights and needs are endangered. Second, in the last century governments and the public sector have grown

larger than at any other time in the past, increasing the public's dependence on the goods and services they provide. Third, the public sector provides more goods and services for a larger, more heterogeneous population with greater demands and higher expectations than ever before (Peters, 1996b; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000). In sum, we depend on governments and on public administrative bodies because we believe that they can cure society's ills and meet the needs of their citizens. Put another way, citizens of modern states feel that, limited as they are, governments and public administration are the major gatekeepers of social and political order, and only they can address large-scale social pandemics and provide essential services. While these expectations are not new, what is new is the realization that doing better also means doing things together, based on growing knowledge of our societies. The crises mentioned above are not likely to be solved by competition among sectors, but rather through collaborative efforts, and especially through collaboration of knowledge.

COLLABORATION VERSUS COMPETITION: THE CALL FOR A MINDSET CHANGE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Dreadful as they are, terrorist attacks, diseases, and natural disasters are only symptoms of the problem. As Bardach (1998) noted, getting agencies to work together is an ambitious task that calls for an extensive change in mindset by all of the concerned parties. Historically, democracies of various types have encouraged a tradition of competition for available resources. Competitive jargon is commonly used by politicians, public sector officials, and business leaders alike. Consequently, this language has also become the most common terminology to explain public policy and governmental decision making (i.e., Farnham & Horton, 1995; Weimer, 2005). In a world where competition is the "name of the game," governments are expected to fight more vigorously for their piece of the action by responding better to the public's demands and reducing the costs of services (Rouke, 1992; Vigoda, 2000). Hence, in recent decades, we have become familiar with privatization, outsourcing, contracting out, and new public management (NPM) strategies that represent a desire by policy makers to make public agencies fiscally prudent, efficient, and effective (Hood, 1991; Rainey, 1990). The transformation of old-style bureaucracies into more flexible, responsive, effective, efficient, and knowledge-based bodies has left room for other players, such as the private sector and the third sector, to move in. However, these transitions generally involved competition among these players, rather than cooperation.

While the contribution of competitive strategies, methods, and actions to our societies' well-being is not disputed, concerns have been raised about the next stage of bureaucratic reform (i.e., Peters, 1996a). Are we headed toward greater fragmentation of our societies and communities, or is there an alternative to the rising level of competition and conflict? In many respects, the terms competition and conflict are the antithesis of collaboration. In any situation where more than one person is involved, people may choose to compete or to collaborate in order to accomplish a certain goal or to fulfill a need (Nash, 1953). For example, rational-choice and game-theory approaches use elements of rational thinking, competition, and maximization of self-interests by social players as the basis for explaining human behavior and policy decisions (i.e., Axelrod, 1984; O'Toole, 1995). Other theories of conflict, power, and politics use the same rationale (i.e., Pfeffer, 1992). Thus, it seems that we know more and more about patterns and strategies of competition and conflict in public affairs but we remain unclear about the potential power of collaboration in that regard. Whereas recent essays have paid some attention to collaboration in public administration (i.e., a special issue of *Public Administration Review*, 2006, Vol 66), collaboration has remained an underdeveloped area in managerial and public administration thinking, and the literature that has developed it theoretically and empirically is to date insufficient. In a world of dominant capitalistic values, competition takes the lead, and collaboration across sectors, at least with regard to public affairs, is seen as less significant and more problematic.

Therefore, a gap must be filled in public administration thinking. What does collaboration in the public sector arena actually mean? What implications does it have for managerial concepts? Is it a reasonable solution to the ills of our societies and bureaucracies? If so, how can it be implemented wisely and what strategies will ensure its success? Where should we start applying collaborative ventures and who are the partners in this process? Indeed, we have many questions and very few answers. However, as with every scientific journey, a return to knowledge sources and to disciplinary origins can prove beneficial.

DISCIPLINARY ORIENTATIONS: KNOWLEDGE ABOUT COLLABORATION AND THE COLLABORATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The eclectic nature of public administration as a science and as a profession (Lynn, 1996; Rosenbloom, 1998), its theoretical fragility and instability, together with people's mistrust of governmental services and institutions (Berman, 1997; Nye, Zelikow, & King, 1997) are major indications of the need for change in public service. In keeping with Fredrick-

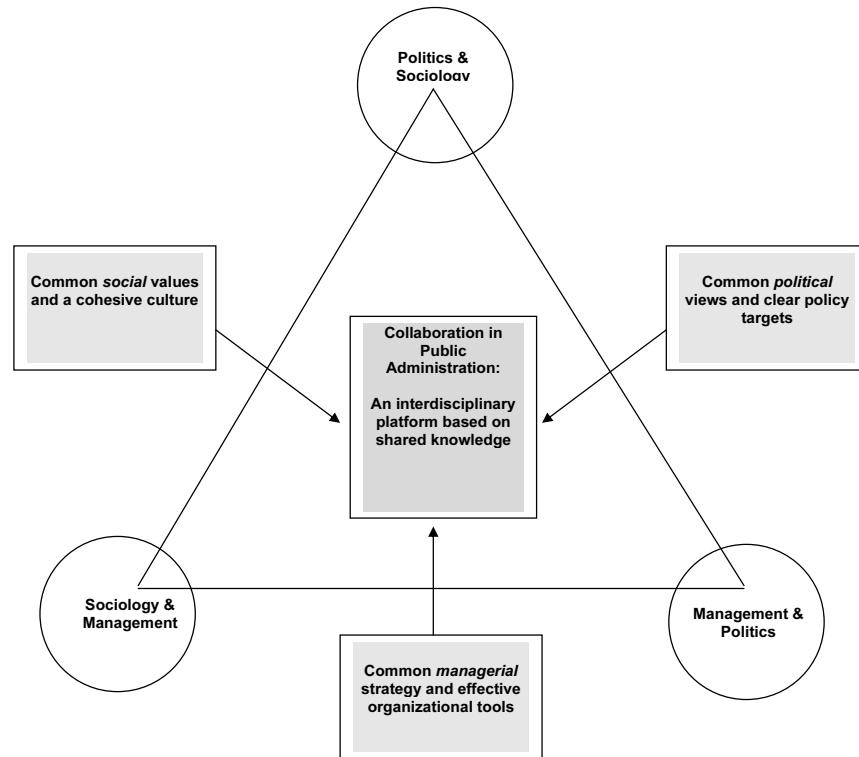


Figure 3.1. An interdisciplinary spectrum of collaboration perspectives.

son (1997), I suggest that there is a demand for better management of public assets, values, and needs, and for advancing the collective idea of accomplishing these goals together rather than going it alone. Such a spirit of collaboration in no way contradicts the liberal values of pluralism or the free-market principles of self-motivation and individual entrepreneurship. It is merely an extension of its boundaries that is necessary to meet the complex challenges of modern times. The answer to environmental and manmade threats lies in entrepreneurial innovation that thrives in collaborative rather than competitive situations.

Figure 3.1 suggests a triangle of disciplines that depicts the basic essence of collaboration in public administration. Following Goodwin (1998), I believe that there is a growing need for research to reexamine the old distinctions among markets, state, and civil society. According to this view, to achieve collaboration in public administration an interdisciplinary platform should be developed, based on shared knowledge and

experiences. The fields of knowledge that are most relevant are political science and policy studies (i.e., Guy, 2003), social and cultural understanding (i.e., Yanow, 2003) and managerial and organizational wisdom (i.e., Hood, 1991).

The science and craft of public administration integrates various scholarly fields (Kettl & Milward, 1996; Vigoda, 2002b). It involves politics, but not only politics. It deals with policy, but reaches much farther and deeper than policy questions. It incorporates sociological and cultural factors but it goes beyond these issues. It deals with people as workers, citizens, clients, and consumers, as leaders and managers, as well as with a variety of other human constructs that merge into a unique branch of knowledge. A multidisciplinary collaborative approach is evidently required to explain better what every scholar already knows from his or her personal perspective: that the truth about public administration has many faces.

Moreover, the application of multidisciplinary and collaborative knowledge (political, social, and managerial) to public services is essential before further practical advances can be made. I argue that some tenets of administrative culture and democratic values need to be explored in order to synthesize theory and practice and maximize the collaboration between national leaders, public officials, and the citizenry. The major challenge facing public administration in the coming years is the need to create a revitalized generation of administrators that is appreciative of creative participatory democracy, as suggested by Putnam (1993), and willing to join forces with other social players such as the private sector to advance the public good.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF COLLABORATION

Beyond the interdisciplinary ideology lies a need to clarify the concept of collaboration in public administration. Comparing similar concepts frequently used by scholars from three disciplines may be helpful in this regard. Figure 3.2 presents a suggested typology of criteria by disciplinary origin and a theoretical perspective that can contribute to our understanding of the meaning of collaboration. Beyond the disciplines and perspectives already mentioned in the previous sections, I have used two additional criteria: (1) old-style structure and, (2) new dynamics and interactions. The old-style structure refers to the classical arrangement and formation of power relations while new dynamics and interactions refer to the modern type of contacts, interfaces, and relations among units. Examining these two criteria in the light of the theoretical perspec-

| Discipline and Perspective | Politics and policy: State level analysis | Organization and Management: Business level analysis | | | Social and Cultural: Community level analysis |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Criterion | | Management focused | Labor focused | Business focused | |
| 1. Old style structure | Bureaucracy | Centralization | Cohesion of work | Private money and ownership | Social power and stratification |
| 2. New dynamics and interactions | Democracy | Decentralization, Participation in Decision Making, and empowerment | Division of work | Public money and ownership | Pluralism and communitarianism |
| 3. Collaboration | Cooperation | Coordination | Integration | Partnership | Association |

Figure 3.2. An analysis of the meaning of collaboration using three disciplinary perspectives.

tives of political, managerial, and social disciplines should give us a better insight into the meaning of collaboration.

First, a conceptual and practical conflict exists between public administration in its classic bureaucratic form and the nature of democracy in which it should operate. Some will say that this is actually an inevitable conflict between administration and politics in free societies (Gawthrop, 1996; Guy, 2003; Thompson, 1983). Others will note that bureaucracy does not necessarily contradict the democratic ethos. On the contrary, it guards democracy and makes it work (Box, Marshall, Reed, & Reed, 2001; Vigoda, 2002a). Unless a strong bureaucracy is present, democracy may lose its essence and be perceived as a weak and ineffective governance mechanism. When collaboration is brought into the discussion, things become even vaguer. Democracy proudly encourages freedom of choice, which can be used by social players in many ways, only some of which are collaborative. Yet, to guard against centrifugal forces, social players also need to cooperate in order to achieve the best political outcomes. Therefore, *cooperation* (Tang, 2005; Thomas, 2003) reflects a mutual effort by all players based on the assumption that there are similar political interests that can be realized through collective action.

The sociocultural view is depicted on the extreme right of Figure 3.2. It illuminates how the bureaucratic-democratic conflict is implemented in the social arena. Social power and stratification, as well as traditional and less liberal views of race and ethnicity, are at the heart of our communities' old style structure. These are also core concepts used by sociologists to explain social structure and mobilization (Yanow, 2003), and they play a major role in policymaking and implementation. As new dynamics and types of interactions emerge in our societies, pre-modern social power and stratification are thus confronted with ideas of pluralism or liberalism (Etzioni, 1994, 1995). Modern societies generally seek increased pluralism and input from a broad range of citizens and ethnic groups. Social leaders also point to the key role played by the involvement of individuals, voluntarism, and social responsibility in the development of healthy communities (Box, 1998; Rimmerman, 1997). However, modern societies simultaneously need to struggle against conservative, old style forms of stratification, traditional norms, and rigid social clusters. Frequently, the power of economic, cultural, and political elites inhibits pluralistic processes and preserves old structures of governance and mobilization. The term *association* thus reflects a need for compromises among various social players and the search for mutual interests or alliances that can work on behalf of citizens and communities even in the face of old style conservative structures.

Finally, when we look at the situation from a business organization-management perspective, we see a more complex picture. The conflict

between democracy and bureaucracy is close in type and in nature to the conflict between social power and stratification on the one hand, and pluralism and communitarianism on the other (Dominelli, 1999). The striving for (political) cooperation and (social) association echoes other terms from the organization-management world, such as (organizational) *coordination*, (work) *integration*, and (business) *partnership*. Whereas centralization is an old style structure aimed at safeguarding authority and governments' ability to rule, decentralization in bureaucracies ultimately means delegating power to other stakeholders and limiting the power of public agencies (Kincaid & Cole, 2002). Organizational management theory usually denotes such processes as participation in decision making (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004), or better, empowerment (Sanderson, 1999). In fact, this sharing of power is another critical obstacle to increased collaboration in government. As bureaucratic theory suggests, rulers and public administrators do not graciously yield power and authority to others due to the fear of losing control and weakening the government's ability to rule. Thus, the managerial task of coordination (i.e., Nicol, 1998) must balance the forces of centralization and decentralization. It may therefore be considered a managerial tool for intraorganizational collaboration. From the point of view of the labor market and labor studies, the same challenge exists when trying to balance the old style's notion of the cohesion of work with the need for the division of labor, specialization, and expertise in complex organizations. Collaboration in the labor market is based on the craft of bringing together the need for both the segregation and integration of tasks. Reconciling these contradictory forces is essential in every successful organization and is thus an indispensable phase of collaboration at the organizational/managerial level (i.e., Li & Hambrik, 2005). Last, in terms of business and financial management, the old style structure of organizations was based, for many years, on private money and ownership. The state and the interests of the public have become relevant in the modern economy only with the evolution of the welfare state (Peter, 1997). Thus, the new dynamics and interaction between states and the people has depended on the growing investment of public money and a greater involvement in and ownership by the state of projects designed for the public welfare. The type of collaboration that arises in this context may be termed a partnership (i.e., Bassett, 1996; Cloke et al., 2000), as it is based on the shared business interests of the private sector, the public sector, and their interactions as partners. Hence, the ideas of coordination, integration, and partnership, together with the political idea of cooperation and the social idea of association, may build a more inclusive interdisciplinary vocabulary of collaboration for public administration.

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PLAYERS IN THE COLLABORATIVE GAME: CROSS-SECTORAL TRADEOFFS

The interdisciplinary approach of sharing knowledge and the clarification of the concept of collaboration lead to the next step of this chapter. Here we followed Thomas (2003) and Shui-Yan (2005) who recently advocated the idea of cross-sectoral governance based on the recognition that most public problems are solved through the cooperation or collaboration of organizations from multiple sectors—public, nonprofit, and business. Thus, we try to identify some of the key stakeholders who take part in any collaborative process, be it on the local community, state, national, or even international level, and define their role in the collaborative process. According to the framework suggested thus far, and based on Thomas (2003), we have identified three major players in the cross-sectoral collaborative process: (1) governments and public administration; (2) businesses and the private sector; (3) citizens, communities, and the third sector.

1. Government and Public Administration (G&PA): G&PA is the major player in the public sector arena. This category refers to all formal agencies at the local, state, or federal levels with constitutive public standing and authority. These agencies are fully or partly governmental or government owned and include all government ministries, government authorities, public companies that are government owned, or other institutions where the government holds a major share in the budget or in the management. G&PA also includes local authorities and agencies that work under the supervision and control of these bodies (Nalbandian, 1999). In addition, the category covers the management boards of national projects created ad hoc for local-level or state-level tasks (e.g., in the fields of transportation, energy, infrastructures, welfare, etc.). G&PA also represents all individuals who work for these bodies and are paid by them directly.

2. Businesses and the Private Sector: The next category of social players that deserves special attention when studying collaboration is the powerful business/private sector. This is perhaps the largest and most influential sector in every open democracy and free-market society. It accounts for most of the economic activity and growth on the national and federal level and serves as a laboratory for many organizational and managerial experiments and reforms later applied in other organizations and in the public sector. Included in this sector are all firms, companies, and businesses that are primarily privately owned, privately sponsored, and privately managed and transact business based on the profit motive. Furthermore, it refers to individuals who work in such bodies. This sector, like the public one, is also highly structured and formal, but it is much less

centralized and thus is more open to innovative entrepreneurial approaches.

3. *Citizens, Communities, and the "Third Sector"*: The public and the third sector represent a third important player in this mix. In many respects, this group is more complex than the group of governments and public administration due to its lack of formal structure and its mass orientation. Three sections or subgroups should be distinguished in this context: (1) citizens as individuals; (2) citizens in small and unorganized groups; and (3) citizens who are part of larger groups or communities that are usually more formal, long lasting, and may be defined as third sector bodies or the civic society (Gidron, Kramer, & Salamon, 1992). While the civic society has some characteristics of a formal, organized group, the other two subgroups represent short term, ad hoc actions by individuals or small, informal groups of individuals that are more difficult to study and examine.

KNOWLEDGE COLLABORATION IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

Thus far, our discussion suggests an interdisciplinary approach to collaboration, an extension of relevant concepts, and an identification of key players in the collaborative game. Using these analytic tools, we can move forward toward an integrative approach to collaboration in public administration.

We argue that each disciplinary approach highlights the role of a different player in the mutual collaborative effort. Figure 3.3 presents this idea graphically. According to this design, three types of analysis exist that enhance our understanding of collaboration management in public administration. (1) Political, national and international-level analysis; (2) Community-level analysis; and (3) Managerial-level analysis. Our progress as societies is based on moving from a conservative format to a modern format on the evolutionary continuum of collaboration.

Political, National, and International-Level Analysis of Collaboration

The most conservative approach to collaboration is evident in the political ethos of putting the state and the bureaucracy at the center (Guy, 2003; Rosenbloom, 1998). The political-level analysis of collaboration will stress the G&PA branches as the prime initiators and leaders of collaborative ventures. The focus here is on what the state wants to do, can do, and

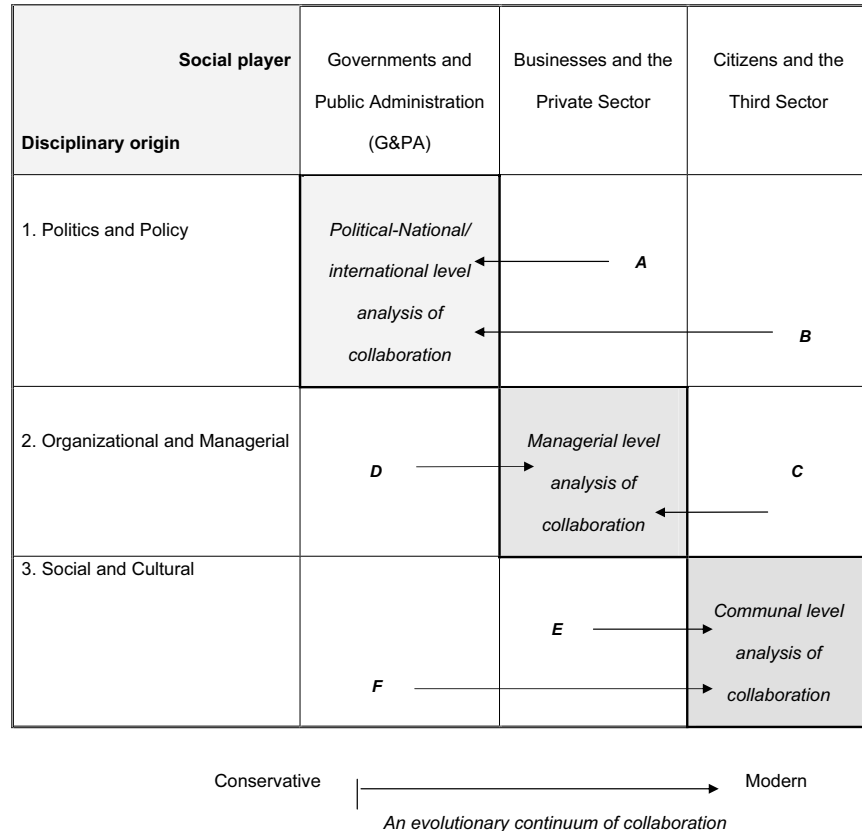


Figure 3.3. An interdisciplinary spectrum of collaboration perspectives.

does do in practice to advance the idea of collaboration among various players. Naturally, each of these questions deserves separate consideration. Leading national legislators and senior public officials to the conclusion that collaboration is needed is a first stage. It should be followed by the actual recognition that these institutions have the power to change. Finally, it is in the hands of public administration officials to allocate resources and make them available for the process. According to this analysis, governments and their executive branches coordinate the actions of other social players such as businesses and the private sector (line A) and citizens and the third sector (line B). In fact, this is today’s most typical method of collaboration among sectors, where G&PA lead the collaborative ventures and are the “conductors of the orchestra.”

Business-Level Analysis of Collaboration

According to our view, a more modern approach to collaboration would transfer some power of “conducting” to the private sector. Here, collaborative ventures of partnership, integration, and coordination are controlled and directed by business-oriented bodies. The management level of analysis makes use of current organizational theory and business experience to discuss issues of conflict management, allocating business potential for growth and innovation, and wisely handling human resources in both the private and the public sectors. While the private sector serves as a benchmark for public organizations, there are still mutual benefits for both parties. The idea of a public-private partnership (PPP) (Kanter, 1989; Kennedy & Rosentraub, 1999) imparts practical meaning to the symbolic slogans of collaboration. These models of alliance allow the transfer of resources from one sector to the other and improve both parties’ flexibility and responsiveness to customers and citizens. However, the philosophy of PPPs is mostly economic in nature. An alternative pattern of collaboration has emerged in the last few years with the creation of businesses for the community (BFC) projects (Khoury, 1993; Vigoda-Gadot, 2003). This alternative is a more authentic one that correlates best with the social movement of communitarianism and voluntarism. It is based on a spontaneous display of good citizenship that partly derives from economic considerations, but is mostly community rooted. Obviously, this pattern is advocated by the NPM approach, and by ideas such as running governments like a business and improving responsiveness to citizens. Thus, they are very typical of some of today’s collaborative projects in many fields of service to the public. According to the organizational and managerial level of analysis, businesses and the private sector are the central engines for collaboration, supported by citizens and the third sector (line C) and by governments and public administration (line D) as secondary players.

Communal-Level Analysis of Collaboration

This is probably the most liberal and decentralized pattern of collaboration. In this approach, much of the power of “conducting” is transferred to citizens and to communities with the expectation that they will lead collaborative ventures (Fredrickson, 1982). Community level collaboration incorporates a less rigidly organized structure of activity built on loose contacts among most of the players. While contacts between individual citizens may be close, unless they assume a formal structure of VNPO (voluntary and nonprofit organization) they remain informal and should

be considered ad-hoc voluntary activities. The community-level analysis of collaboration needs to classify the various patterns of citizenry involvement (Rimmerman, 1997). Such activities can take place at the federal or national level, but their most influential impact can be realized at the local level (i.e., neighborhoods and cities). These altruistic orientations (Monroe, 1994) and good citizenship behaviors (Vigoda & Golembiewski, 2001) may flourish only in a collaborative and supportive social environment. The community-level analysis of collaboration implies that business and the private sector (line E) and governments and public administration (line F) support and reinforce grassroots activities that are initiated and monitored by citizens as individuals or groups. This is definitely the most decentralized and modern pattern of collaboration that transfers power and responsibility to the community and to the citizens with the support of public administration on one hand, and the private sector on the other hand (Gidron et al., 1992).

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MOVING BEYOND RESPONSIVENESS: SOME EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ABOUT COLLABORATION

As suggested elsewhere (Vigoda, 2002a), a model of knowledge collaboration may express a step forward that goes beyond responsiveness in public administration. While responsiveness to citizens reflects a core concept in the current NPM approach to reforms in public administration (Crook, 1996; Hood, 1991; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000), collaboration, particularly those efforts led by citizens and communities, may point the way to future reforms in this arena. Thus, if collaboration as a whole, and more specifically collaboration of knowledge, is here to stay, it deserves more than merely theoretical justification and practical illustrations. It will progress only when bolstered by empirical studies conducted among those involved in the daily routine of serving the people. These individuals have already experienced the promises and barriers of collaboration in daily public work. Hence, they are ideal participants in empirical efforts that can enhance knowledge as well as explore some of the hidden domains of collaboration as a possible change agent in public administration doctrine (Box, 1998; Ott, 1998).

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Based on the arguments developed thus far, an empirical approach to the study of collaboration must rely on current knowledge from various disciplines in the social sciences. Most important, it may benefit from the experience in organizational studies, management, politics, sociology, and psychology and from advanced tools that have been developed in these domains. Populations may comprise members of public-, private-, and third-sector organizations that interact with plans or programs of

collaboration and can testify to their potential. Hence, managers in both the for-profit (PRS) and the nonprofit sector (PBS) have the advantage of initiating, participating in, and evaluating collaborative ventures. To empirically assess how collaboration works in reality, I conducted a survey of Israeli managers from the private/for-profit sector and from the public/nonprofit sector. I have tried to obtain information on collaboration by assessing senior managers' views and beliefs from various angles. Managers were asked to share their opinions on the current state of the field and on its potential advancement in the future.

The Managers' Survey

Participants in the survey were managers in various private- and public-sector organizations in Israel. Questionnaires were distributed directly to graduate students of executive programs in a large Israeli university. Of the 244 managers who participated in this survey, 144 were from the public and nonprofit sector (PBS) and 100 from the private sector (PRS). Response rate was 85%. Of the PBS managers, 48.5% were women and 51.5% were men. Their average age was 42.2 ($SD = 8.7$), and their average tenure with the organization was 14.5 years ($SD = 8.3$). The PBS managers were highly educated, with 95.2% of the total sample having an academic degree of some kind—54.4% had a bachelor's degree, and 40.8% had a graduate degree or higher. Jews accounted for 86.5% of the respondents, while 13.5% were non-Jews (Muslims, Christians, and Druze). By type of organization, 31.4% were in local government, 26.3% in education organizations, 11.9% in the security services (army, police, and other services), 8.5% in healthcare organizations, 6.8% in the Ministry of Finance and other economic-oriented authorities, 5.1% in government companies and authorities (aviation, transport, ports), and 10.0% were in welfare services, the Labor Ministry, and environmental agencies. Of the PRS managers, 41.9% were women and 58.1% were men. Their average age was 33.4 ($SD = 6.1$), and their average tenure with the organization was 4.9 years ($SD = 3.8$). The PRS managers were also highly educated, with 95.6% of the total sample having an academic degree of some kind—57.8% had a bachelor's degree and 37.8% had a graduate degree or higher. Of the PRS respondents, 94.8% were Jews and 5.2% non-Jews (Muslims, Christians, and Druze). By type of organization, 61.7% were in industrial and marketing firms, 24.6% in high technology firms, 8.2% in private law offices, and 5.5% were in privately owned firms.

Evidence about the state of current collaboration in and around the Israeli public sector was obtained through several questions targeted at distinguishing collaboration in numerous fields. I was primarily inter-

ested in managers' perceptions regarding the level of collaboration in these arenas: (1) education, (2) health, (3) welfare, (4) culture and sports, (5) employment, (6) other arenas (e.g., transportation, environment, communication).¹ Managers were asked to report separately on the level of collaboration between public administration and (a) private organizations and business firms, and (b) voluntary and nonprofit organizations, and citizens as individuals or groups in each of the above arenas. Next, evidence about the future vision of collaboration between the public-, private-, and third-sector organizations was obtained. Participants were asked to express their feelings about and attitudes toward various statements. Each statement presented a different view measured on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all true*; 5 = *very true*). A sample of 14 core statements is presented in Table 3.1.

First, we found that managers were aware of collaborative ventures in their organizations and their surroundings. Most of the participants indicated that collaboration occurred more intensively in the fields of culture and sports, welfare, and education. However, almost all participants believed that the level of collaboration was not satisfactory and needed to be improved dramatically. Averages across fields ranged from 2.33 (attitudes of PRS managers toward collaboration in environment, transportation, and communication) to 3.18 (attitudes of PBS managers toward collaboration in cultural services). Thus, while there is some indication that the public sector does currently collaborate with private firms and with citizens and the third sector in various fields, managers expressed a desire for more activism in this direction.

In addition, a comparison of views on the current state of cross-sectoral collaboration between PRS managers and PBS managers revealed the existence of some meaningful differences. PRS managers were more skeptical about the current state of collaboration than PBS managers, who expressed a higher level of optimism. A comprehensive statistical analysis based on *t* tests supported the conjecture that these differences were significant. For example, and according to Table 3.1, PBS managers were much more optimistic than PRS managers about statement #7 suggesting that "the public sector is looking for better ways to collaborate with private and third-sector organizations to improve services for citizens." Therefore, an interesting question that will need to be discussed in the future is the reason for such differences. A possible explanation is a social desirability bias (i.e., greater sensitivity among PBS managers to the presence of collaboration and the need to implement it more effectively). However, the relatively small sample size and the uncultural orientation of this study limits generalizations. Further studies need to replicate this one and test the differences among populations more closely.

Table 3.1. Managers' Perceptions of Collaboration With Public Administration: Exploration and Comparison of the Perceptions of PRS and PBS Managers

| | <i>PRS</i> | <i>PBS</i> | <i>t test</i> (<i>t</i>) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| | (<i>N</i> = 100) | (<i>N</i> = 143) | |
| | <i>Mean (SD)</i> | <i>Mean (SD)</i> | |
| 1. Today, more than ever before, government agencies collaborate with each other to improve services for citizens. | 2.53 (1.03) | 2.78 (1.03) | 1.91 |
| 2. Collaboration among public organizations, private firms, and the voluntary sector needs to be improved. | 4.08 (.85) | 4.18 (.64) | .97 |
| 3. Senior managers in the public sector understand the advantages of collaboration with private and voluntary organizations and promote it accordingly. | 2.79 (.84) | 3.16 (.94) | 3.15** |
| 4. Many national ills would be solved if public organizations learned to collaborate with private and voluntary organizations and with citizens. | 4.04 (.76) | 4.06 (.77) | .23 |
| 5. The private sector is interested in collaborating with the public sector. | 3.49 (.93) | 3.71 (1.02) | 1.73 |
| 6. Citizens and the third sector are interested in collaboration with the public sector. | 3.87 (.96) | 4.09 (.72) | 2.06* |
| 7. Today, more than ever before, the public sector is looking for better ways to collaborate with private and voluntary organizations to improve services for citizens. | 2.77 (.81) | 3.47 (.84) | 6.36*** |
| 8. Personally, I am willing to become actively involved in public-sector initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life in our nation. | 3.65 (.88) | 4.24 (.70) | 5.78*** |
| 9. I am willing to spend time on such activities (i.e., join citizens' committees). | 3.36 (1.09) | 3.93 (.87) | 4.51*** |
| 10. I am willing to bring in knowledge and ideas (i.e., suggest new ways to improve quality of life). | 3.78 (.93) | 4.10 (.71) | 3.01** |
| 11. I am willing to bring other people into the collaborative process. | 3.52 (1.05) | 4.04 (.75) | 4.45*** |
| 12. Advanced nations encourage collaboration among public-sector agencies and other private and voluntary organizations. | 4.06 (.83) | 4.27 (.65) | 2.20* |
| 13. In the future, the public sector will have to increase collaboration with private and voluntary organizations in order to achieve its goals. | 3.73 (.82) | 4.12 (.74) | 3.80*** |
| 14. Collaboration between public and private organizations is more important than collaboration between public and voluntary organizations. | 3.22 (.99) | 3.05 (.99) | -1.32 |

Note: * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

It was interesting to find that PBS managers and PRS managers also differed substantially in other perceptions. For example, 83.5% of the PRS managers, but only 44% of the PBS managers, reported that the non-public organization is usually the initiator of collaborative projects. Thus, we concluded that PRS managers believed that the public sector was not doing enough to push collaboration forward and that most of the initiatives for collaboration come from the private or third sectors. PBS managers, however, perceived the current state differently, assuming that the public sector enjoyed just a small advantage over the private sector in the field of innovative collaboration projects. Still, 83% of the PBS managers and 68.6% of the PRS managers generally agreed that collaborative activities benefited the public as a whole, as well as the communities and the organizations involved. Thus, my interpretation is that managers view collaboration in a generally favorable manner. The alternative option of working alone or independently in the competitive world of the free market is balanced by a strong desire to share knowledge and resources to realize valuable social goals. In support of this contention, 80.6% of the PBS managers, but only 54.4% of the PRS managers, described their general understanding of and experiences with collaboration as successful and fruitful.

A further examination of the findings revealed mixed attitudes toward collaboration. Respondents generally believed that government agencies collaborate among themselves, but improvements are needed in cross-sectorial collaboration, and public managers need to enhance their understanding of the advantages of collaboration. Respondents also generally agreed that many national problems would be solved if the public sector could infuse a better culture of collaboration and use it as a strategic tool for policy implementation. Managers thought that the private sector as well as citizens and the third sector were really interested in such a move toward collaboration with public organizations. However, they were also quite critical about the effort invested by public officials in order to achieve a satisfactory level of collaboration. Moreover, PBS managers as well as PRS managers expressed their personal willingness to become involved in collaborative ventures and invest time, knowledge, and effort to promote them. Note, however, that PBS managers expressed a somewhat greater predilection towards such collaborative trends, perhaps due to the potential benefits that such ventures can bring to the public sector and to its leadership. Finally, despite some differences between PRS and PBS managers, all agreed that advanced nations are characterized by higher levels of collaboration among public-, private-, and third-sector bodies. According to their views, which closely conform to my general perception in this chapter, the future necessitates more activism in this direction. Managers across the board see no real difference as to where

this collaboration should take place. In their opinion, it needs to increase in all possible directions and by all possible means.

SUMMARY

During the last century, modern societies made remarkable achievements in different fields, many of them thanks to an advanced public sector. Yet at the dawn of the new millennium, various new social problems still await the consideration and attention of the state and its administrative system. To overcome these problems and create effective remedies for the new challenges we now confront, more collaboration must be infused into the managerial processes of the public sector. The major emphasis of this collaboration leans on sharing knowledge. Models of competition do not deliver all of the necessary solutions, and more serious attention should be given to win-win models such as those reflected in the idea of collaboration. Moreover, various threats such as terror, diseases, and natural disasters have prompted an urgent call for cross-sectoral collaboration in and around modern public administration. The network society is striving for greater collaboration among nations, state agencies, private organizations, and third sector organizations, as well as individual citizens.

This chapter tried to develop a systematic discussion of the theory of collaboration based on integrative and interdisciplinary views. We believe that well structured and comprehensive thinking on collaboration, combined with empirical evidence on its chances of enduring, is a powerful tool for policymakers and for public administrators and managers in developed as well as less developed democracies. Our core assumption is that independent activity by public administration, governments, and other social players is no longer sufficient for our complex and demanding societies. Instead, we propose an integrative model of collaboration designed to stimulate debate among academics and practitioners in this arena and perhaps point to possible “collaborative reform” in public administration in the years to come. While current collaborative projects are dominated by G&PA or by private initiatives such as PPP or BFC, collaboration models of tomorrow are more grassroots oriented. They rely on citizens’ empowerment and involvement in a growing civic culture. The call for and control of future collaborations among sectors in the public sphere is likely to shift, at least to some extent, from G&PA and businesses to the hands of citizens, communities, and especially the more organized form of the third sector and the civic culture. Thus, the third sector will probably remain third in size, but not necessarily in the impact it has on our lives.

Without a doubt, we live in an era of great challenges for public administration and management. As suggested by Peters (1996a) and Rhodes (1996), the twenty-first century will necessitate enormous changes in our conventional perceptions of governmental activities and responsibilities. It will require a similar reformation of the meaning of citizenship and a redefinition of the role of citizens, businesses, and private-sector firms, the third sector, the media, and academia in collaborative ventures. All of these actors, and others, will need to collaborate. Hence, higher level of civic engagement in a modern network society is a necessity. Citizens, as well as other players and sectors will need to collaborate with public administration as its tasks expand, in order to provide people with better services and high quality goods and knowledge. They will have to collaborate, mostly in knowledge and information, because the economic, social, and human potential of working together offers greater rewards than the option of “going it alone.”

NOTE

1. Full details on the scales and the items can be found in Vigoda (2003).

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