DEMOCRACY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

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THE INTERNATIONAL IDEA HANDBOOK ON PARTICIPATION, REPRESENTATION, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE

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Democracy At The Local Level

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The International IDEA Handbook Series aims to present information on a range of democratic institutions, procedures, and issues in an easy-to-use handbook format. Handbooks are primarily aimed at policy-makers and practitioners in the field.

FOREWORD

The forces of change fostering democratization at the local level have gathered so much momentum in recent years that they can only be resisted at one's own peril. Democracy has become the legitimate demand of all local communities. Today more than 70 countries in various parts of the world are in the process of implementing political and administrative reforms aimed at decentralizing and strengthening local governance. In many cases this is being undertaken by young and new democracies that have only recently undergone transitions to popular rule.

As democracy is not an event but a complex and continuous process, it is essential that its inception and development are properly managed and nurtured. It is in this regard that this handbook will be a very useful tool in the process of promoting and developing democracy at the local level. It will be an essential reference document for all those who are involved in the political and administrative processes of democratization. It will enhance people's capacity to manage diversity and to design appropriate systems to suit various levels and degrees of democratization.

At the International Union of Local Authorities, we are convinced that sustainable development in strong as well as in weak economies can only be assured if local government is empowered to play its role based on recognized principles of participation and transparency and in a manner that conforms to basic human rights.

We endorse the comment in the Introduction that this book is designed to help citizens and policy-makers answer key questions about the design and implementation of efficient local democracy. This is not a cookbook with standard recipes for success. With this handbook local authorities can learn about the practices of their colleagues around the world that have worked, those that have not worked very well, and the possibilities and problems associated with

enhanced participation. Civil society leaders can learn how to voice their opinions more effectively about the communities in which they live.

I encourage all those who want to contribute to the empowerment of people to read this handbook. You will be comforted by the fact that many people around the world share your passion for local government. You will see that by creating links with one another as this handbook permits, we are, from our local communities, ensuring that globalization leads to a world where diversity and basic human rights go hand in hand.

With this handbook, International IDEA has made a lasting contribution to our endeavour to govern ourselves with dignity and with respect for our fellow citizens. All those, like me, who greatly value and cherish democracy at the local level owe International IDEA a great debt of gratitude for this contribution.

Maximo MM Ng' andwe
President, *International Union of Local Authorities*
President, *Local Government Association of Zambia*

PREFACE

At the heart of all democracies is an essential trust that the individual places in others to fairly pursue the common affairs of all people. This basic trust, sometimes called "social capital", can only be built from the ground up, from the local level. A vigorous local democratic culture, a vibrant civil society, and an open, inclusive local government, are fundamental to the long-term viability of any democracy.

With this handbook, International IDEA seeks to further its mission of promoting sustainable democracy world-wide. We hope to improve not only democratic institutions and processes, but the very quality of governance as well. The handbook focuses on the tier of governance often ignored, the local level closest to the citizens. It does not purport to offer all the answers to designing a system of local democracy or to managing a complex city. Instead, the goal is to provoke a close reexamination of the purpose, form, and nature of local democracy world-wide and to share common experiences and to offer the best in scholarship in an accessible, clear, and well-organized volume.

This handbook, like other International IDEA projects, recognizes that an essential function of all democracies is the management of social conflict. Civil society groups, public administrators, and international, national, and local policy-makers do not simply reflect broader conflicts in society, but instead they shape and manage social differences and disputes. In especially divided societies around the world, such as East Timor, Guatemala, Kosovo, Nigeria, or Indonesia, civil society groups and policy-makers have learned a key lesson – successful democratization through peace building requires fostering progress toward these objectives at the local level.

There are many people involved in a project of this significance, and International IDEA owes many tributes to those whose work is

By focusing on the level of governance at which citizens and civil society directly interact with governments (and each other), we hope that this handbook will further the development of more vibrant, effective, and meaningful local democracy world-wide. Democracy must be built from within and from below.

Bengt Säve-Söderbergh
Secretary-General

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Figures and Checklists

ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
BOT	build-operate-and-transfer scheme (Philippines)
CBOs	Community-based organizations
CHS	Commission on Human Settlements (UN)
COE	Council of Europe
COLEF	*el Colegio de la Frontera Norte* (San Diego-Tijuana)
CSOs	Civil society organizations
EU	European Union
FD	Fiscal decentralization
GWG	Gender Working Group (SALGA)
HAMIS	Health and Management Information System (Philippines)
ICMA	International City/County Management Association
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems
IO	International organization
IRI	International Republican Institute for International Affairs (US)
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities
LDC	Local Development Council (Philippines)
LDRCs	Local Dispute Resolution Commissions (South Africa)
LGTA	Local Government Transition Act (South Africa)
LGUs	Local Government Units (Philippines)
LIFE	Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment (UNDP)
LPCs	Local Peace Committees (South Africa)
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (US)
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations

NLGF	National Local Government Forum (South Africa)
NPA	National Peace Accord (South Africa)
NPC	National Peace Commission (South Africa)
NPS	National Peace Secretariat (South Africa)
OAS	Organization of American States
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODIHR	Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PAN	*Partido Acción Nacional* (National Action Party, Mexico)
POs	People's Organizations (Philippines)
PR	Proportional representation
RDRCs	Regional Dispute Resolution Commissions (South Africa)
RENAMO	Mozambiquan National Resistance
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SAMWU	South African Municipal Workers Union
SANCO	South African National Civic Organization
SDSU	San Diego State University
SRE	*Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores*, (Mexico)
TGNP	Tanzania Gender Networking Programme
UABC	Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (San Diego-Tijuana)
UCSD	University of California - San Diego
UN	United Nations
UNCHS	United Nations Commission on Human Settlements
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEAD	United Nations Electoral Assistance Division
UNOMSA	United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Administration in Cambodia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

At the start of the twenty-first century, there is a dramatic revival in emphasis on *local* democracy. This renewed interest in the principles and procedures of democratic governance at the level closest to the people is in some ways a return to the very foundations of democratic theory and practice. Direct citizen involvement is the basis of community spirit and health. It is the right of all citizens to voice opinions and grievances, and it is the duty of political leaders to be accountable in regular elections and to respond to public deliberation and dialogue. In local civic arenas, the meaning of democracy – rule by the people – is given life and form.

Around the world, there is a new appreciation that local governance is much more than city administration that collects taxes and delivers essential services such as basic education, clean water, sewers, transportation, or housing. Instead, local democracy is rightly seen as the very foundation of a higher quality and more enduring democracy. Local governance is the level of democracy in which the citizen has the most effective opportunity to participate actively and directly in decisions made for all of society. A vigorous and effective local democracy is the underlying basis for a healthy and strong national-level democracy.

This handbook offers practical tools for strengthening local democracy. It provides citizens and policy-makers with ideas and options to enhance the meaning and quality of local democracy and provides examples of how these ideas and options have been implemented around the world. The book:

- Provides *practical suggestions* for designing systems of local governance through decentralization, autonomy, and building linkages across international borders, and outlines the advantages and disadvantages of these measures;
- Details principles and policies for *managing culturally diverse cities*, and offers tools for managing ethnic conflict and promoting social reconciliation;

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- Provides practical choices for *enhancing local elections and representative democracy* through electoral rules, administrative reform, and political party development;
- Outlines *options for expanding citizen participation* and offers a design model for civic leaders seeking to launch a participatory policy-making process; and
- Provides *recommendations for the international community* to assist the further development of an international policy network for the enhancement of local democracy.

The Need for this Handbook

The call for a revival in local democracy has arisen in many different contexts around the world, for many different reasons. The established or consolidated democracies of the industrialized West, for example, have seen new social pressures in urban settings that emanate from the influence of globalized economic forces, increasing human migration and new cultural diversity, challenges of crime, unemployment, housing and transportation, and the urgent need to protect the natural environment. These changing circumstances have led to a review of the ways in which today's modern, heavily populated mega-cities (that is, with a population of over 10 million), most of which are in the developing world, can be governed better as well as how other towns and communities can cope with these new pressures. Although the content of this handbook is geared primarily towards today's urban areas, many of the issues addressed are also relevant to systems of rural governance.

In this new context there is a growing awareness that elected local authorities and professional municipal administrators cannot tackle social problems and economic imperatives without an extensive, structured role for non-governmental actors in civil society. Civil society groups – businesses and unions, professional associations, churches, charitable groups, and community-based organizations – now work more closely than ever with governments in ongoing, collaborative relationships and partnerships in virtually every part of the world. New emphasis is being placed on the broader concept of *governance* – involving citizens and the many organizations of civil society in the pursuit of the public good, not just on the official processes of government.

Managing Diversity

Today, virtually every urban arena around the world is a diverse mosaic of peoples. The result is that new communities feature a spectrum of ethnic, racial, and religious groups. In many cities there are neighbourhoods with specific identity groups that are quite distinct from other local or national demographics, for example the Muslim neighbourhoods of Paris with many immigrants of North African or Arab origin. A similar phenomenon is in evidence in newly democratizing countries where urbanization and migration have ballooned in recent years, such as in Indonesia where rural-to-urban migration has challenged democratization efforts.

Particularly where a city features diversity and stark differentiation between advantaged or disadvantaged communities, democracy becomes a matter of successfully managing conflicting perceptions and interests through the ballot box and other democratic practice. This is especially true when the distribution of resources is at stake or in the provision of services. Fairness is an essential goal, as is dealing with sensitive cultural issues that often arise, for example, in education policies. Similarly, election contests can also become polarized along lines of ethnicity or religion. This handbook provides ways to consider democracy as a system of community conflict management.

Designing Systems in Emerging Democracies

Local governance is also changing in countries that have recently become more open and democratic. Many countries enjoyed a national-level transition from authoritarian rule to democracy between the 1970s and the 1990s, especially in Latin and Central America, Eastern Europe and the Soviet successor states, and in Africa and Asia. The remarkable transitions to democracy in recent years have featured open elections, new governments, new constitutions, a blossoming of civil society and often, decentralization of power. These countries have the opportunity to design systems of local democracy anew, and many of them have taken such initiatives. The handbook includes detailed case studies of the Philippines and South Africa, where new systems of local governance have been designed; the consequences of such institutional redesign have been strongly felt.

Yet the "democratization" that occurred in recent years is often woefully incomplete. The quality and depth of democratic life is widely perceived to be inadequate, because the benefits of the democratic experiment have yet to be directly felt by many citizens, other than the ceremonial casting of a ballot. In many democratizing countries, the local level has been neglected in a narrowly focused emphasis on national-level reform, on elections for national presidents and parliaments, and the creation of new institutions and political processes in capital cities. Attention is now being turned to taking democratization further through decentralization and improved local governance.

Reconciling Societies

Finally, in all world regions there are countries emerging from protracted periods of violent conflict and war. Where deep-rooted enmities remain, the basis for sustainable peace lies not just in reconstituting a legitimate and inclusive national-level government, but in reconciliation among communities and economic and social reconstruction at the local tier. Long-term, sustainable peace-building must focus on the social basis for peace at a grassroots level, by addressing the need to promote reconciliation and to manage disputes among communities-in-conflict.

Consequently, in established and developing democracies alike, there is an urgent need to reconcile the process of democracy – which can be very conflict-producing by nature – with new forms of conflict management. To face today's challenges, local authorities need to become masters of social mediation, utilizing tools to enhance citizen participation in policy-making and service delivery. Democracy-promotion in the twenty-first century requires a strategy that more deliberately and directly addresses community problem-solving skills at the local level; this handbook suggests the elements for the development of such a strategy.

Enhancing Participation

One element of such a strategy is developing a plan for improving citizen and "stakeholder" (those with a particular interest in the issue) participation. Using this approach, broadly-inclusive and consensus-based decision-making are the keys to resolving conflict. On the other hand, there are those that argue that enhanced participa-

tion can make conflict worse by raising the stakes of the issues and preventing an efficient, binding decision for the community. Participation is clearly a double-edged sword in complex urban arenas; too little and conflict occurs, too much and nothing gets done. Sorting out the methods of enhancing participation and the disadvantages and advantages of various approaches, are critical challenges in urban arenas everywhere.

The Aims of this Handbook

Democracy at the Local Level responds to the need for a more creative, flexible approach to today's challenges by providing a review of key concepts and essential tools for fostering local democracy. The aim is to offer, in an accessible manner, specific choices for improving decentralization, electoral democracy, and direct citizen participation. Through essays from leading specialists, case studies of national and municipal settings, and boxes containing facts, statistics, and options, the handbook describes the choices available to local democracy practitioners and outlines the expected advantages and disadvantages of each option. The handbook does not seek to prescribe what may work best in every setting – sometimes known as "best practices". Such a purpose would be as impossible as it is impractical. What may be "best" in one setting may fail palpably in another.

The experience, knowledge, and judgement of the reader is vital to deciding whether any of the options, recommendations, and suggestions are appropriate for a given community or situation. There are no standard recipes for success in promoting local governance. On the contrary, this book is designed to help citizens and policy-makers answer key questions about the design and implementation of efficient local democracy, such as:

- What objectives should guide our thinking about the meaning and purpose of local democracy?
- What forms of institutions for electoral and direct democracy should we choose and what do they look like?
- What innovative public policies and practices should we consider for handling especially difficult issues?
- How do we evaluate progress in this area?

Specifically, the aims of the handbook are threefold:

- *Education*. To serve as a tool for local practitioners and decision-makers as they seek to learn more about models and practices of local democracy gleaned from around the world.

- *Empowerment*. To assist public officials or civil society leaders as they attempt to build a better quality democracy for their communities.

- *Resources*. To provide practitioners of local governance with practical resources, new options, and methods that they may find useful in evaluating or rethinking their current participation practices.

We hope that the educational value of the handbook will be realized at various levels. *Local authorities* can learn about practices of their counterparts around the world that have worked, those that have not worked very well, and common possibilities and problems associated with enhanced participation. *Civil society leaders* can learn more about opportunities to influence public policy-making and the implementation of decisions. *Citizens* can learn about ways to voice their opinions more effectively in the communities where they live. In concrete terms, we hope that this handbook will be used in professional training programmes and in tertiary and university courses on public administration, public policy, and political science.

It is perhaps also important to point out what the handbook does not seek to do. This is not a technical manual on city management, for example on how to generate municipal revenue through debt or taxation or how to engage in detailed city transportation planning. Yet technical decisions like these do not take place in a vacuum, and they can have an important effect on the viability of democracy. Citizens need to know, and have the chance to help shape, decisions that are technical in nature but will eventually significantly affect their lives. *Democracy at the Local Level* points out not only ideal methods of improving participation, but the practical limitations of these methods as well.

Using the Handbook

Readers bring their own level of expertise to the subject. The handbook is structured to help make its practical resources readily available to busy professionals at a glance. Choices are illustrated by extensive use of examples and case studies drawn from real situations. This allows readers to reflect on other experiences and to compare diag-

noses and designs with their own situations. *Democracy at the Local Level* organizes material in various ways:

- *Case studies* are examples drawn from around the world, often written by a leading authority on the region or topic. The case studies give texture and depth to the broader themes illustrated throughout the handbook;
- *Checklists* are designed to provide a comprehensive look at a particular option or procedure to ensure that readers have the opportunity to consider all the angles of a policy or process;
- *Concepts.* The handbook defines key concepts and offers examples as to how the concepts have been put into operation in various settings around the world. The *Glossary* provides a usable overview of major concepts in local democracy;
- *Essays.* Brief essays by leading specialists provide an overview of the major trends in scholarship and practice of local democracy in various contexts;
- *Figures* highlight a particular theme or topic, using lists, charts, short narratives or summaries of expert opinions.
- *Further Reading.* At the end of each section, a *Further Reading* list guides the reader to additional sources of information.
- *Menus* provide a list of choices or options that might be put into place in various settings, providing a discussion of the expected advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Readers are also encouraged to find additional information on democracy at the local level on the International IDEA website (www.idea.int/ideas_work/11_political_local), including a resource directory on organizations involved in local democracy building. The site also contains an online feedback form, so that readers can share their own insights and lessons learned on the themes covered in this handbook.

Sources and References

Democracy at the Local Level draws on a wide range of sources, including scholarly books and articles, reports of organizations, and the reflections of policy practitioners. To facilitate ease of reading and presentation, the text is not extensively footnoted as in an academic-style publication. Rather, scholarship on local governance has been

synthesized in easy-to-read language. The aim is to make academic materials accessible to busy policy-makers, local authorities, civic leaders, and the broader public. International IDEA is indebted to all the authors whose work has contributed to the creation of the handbook. The *Further Reading* sections at the end of each chapter highlight some of the original sources for the material we have synthesized.

1. Concepts, Challenges, and Trends

1. | CONCEPTS, CHALLENGES, AND TRENDS

The world is experiencing an urban revolution. Today, more than half of the world's population lives in cities; by the year 2025 this proportion is estimated to grow to two-thirds. Such rapid urbanization is placing immense pressure on cities, while at the same time offering opportunities for improved health, education, and environmental management.

Globalization, too, is creating new challenges and opportunities. From increasing refugee flows to the spread of infectious diseases or organized crime, no city remains immune from the effectsof globalization. Chapter One examines the new context in which local governance is taking place, and outlines the key concepts and core characteristics of local democracy. It explores:

— **Principal challenges facing local administrators today;**

— **Recent trends impacting on the quality of local democracy; and**

— **New international norms shaping developments in local democracy.**

1.1 Key Concepts in Local Democracy

■ *Certain concepts are critical to our understanding of local governance, among them: citizenship and community, self-government, deliberation, and civic engagement.*

Central to any meaning of local democratic governance is the concept of self-government and administration closest to the people. The essential notion is that inhabitants of a given area have the right and responsibility to make decisions on those issues that affect them most directly and on which they can make decisions. Although national defence, foreign policy, and security may affect them directly, these matters are

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usually too big to be handled at the level of cities and are almost invariably the purview of national governments.

Local democracy can be understood in two ways:

- in the *institutions* of local government, such as mayors, councils, committees, and administrative services; and

- in the organizations and activities of *civil society*.

Ideally, local authorities and civil society work together in a mutually-reinforcing relationship to identify problems and come up with innovative solutions. Government is only one part of the picture, albeit an important one. The notion of civic engagement – of citizen organizations, associations, businesses, neighbourhood committees and the like – is also central to the concept of local governance.

1.1.1 Definitions of Local Democracy

There are multiple meanings of local democracy in various settings, and there is no single concept or model of the "best" form of democracy. At the same time, there is a general understanding about the essential processes of democratic life that apply universally.

- Democracy means that there should be *periodic (or regular) and genuine elections* and that power can and should change hands through popular suffrage and not coercion and force.

- In democracies, political opponents and minorities have a right to express their views and have *influence* (i.e., more than just achieve representation) in the policy-making process. When minority views cannot be accommodated, *opposition* should be legal and loyal and not extra-institutional and violent.

- There should be the opportunity for *alternation* in governing coalitions; that is, voters should be able to remove certain politicians from office and replace them with new leadership.

- Democracy means that there should be respect and protection for basic *civil and political rights*.

- And, while controversial, many believe that democracy entails certain *development, economic, and environmental rights* such as clean water, housing, and opportunities for employment.

A discussion of the meaning of local democracy should take into account *cultural influences* on the way people think about democracy. Some cultures may have a tradition of citizen participation, whereas in others people may be more deferential to appointed or elected authorities. The concepts explored in this handbook may

mean different things in different cultures. The principal point is that, at the local level, deeply ingrained cultural practices – such as the roles of traditional leaders – must be carefully integrated into democratic governance.

Figure 1	Local Democracy: Key Concepts

Citizenship and community. Local community participation is the corner-stone of modern notions of citizenship because its institutions and deci-sion-making procedures may allow for a more *direct* form of democracy in which the voices of ordinary individuals can be heard most easily.

Deliberation. Democracy is more than elections. It involves meaningful dialogue, debate, and discussion in an effort to solve problems that arise in the community. Deliberation is more than listening to citizen complaints. A truly deliberative democracy is a give-and-take dialogue among all interest groups in a community about the key decisions and actions they face together.

Political education. Local democracy facilitates "political education". That is, citizen participation allows individuals to gain knowledge about community affairs that otherwise resides with elected public officials and professional city administrators. More informed and educated citizens make democracy – decision-making by the people – possible and more effective. Participation is about closing the gap between the political "elite" and members of the community.

Good government and social welfare. John Stuart Mill and other advo-cates of participatory democracy at the local level argued that unlocking the virtue and intelligence of the populace would foster good government and promote social welfare. That is, democracy tends to enhance good relations among the citizens, building a community that is self-reliant and public-spirited.

1.1.2 Direct versus Representative Democracy

There are two philosophical traditions that inform two rather different concepts of local democracy. One school of thought, associated historically with Jean Jacques Rousseau, sees ideal democracy as *direct engagement by the citizen* on virtually all matters before the community. Rousseau believed that participation by all members of the community would reveal the general will of all, and that the best means of determining the general will is simple majority rule. Others suggest that today's units of local government are simply too large for direct participation. The best democracy we can hope for, and indeed the only practical form of democracy, is one

that is representative, where citizens choose among candidates or political parties who make authoritative decisions for the entire community. Some see local democracy as the place where *representative democracy* best operates.

Some wonder in the modern age whether the notion of direct democracy is really possible, yet one sees this theme recur in contemporary philosophy and practice. Former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, for example, advocated a programme of villagization and *ujamaa* (community) for his country. In 1967, in the Arusha Declaration, Nyerere espoused a notion of village socialism based on kinship, community, self-reliance, co-operation, and local self-development. This philosophy envisaged economic and social communities where people live together and work for the good of all. In Nyerere's Tanzania, however, more than 90 per cent of the people lived in rural areas.

The size of a village, town, or city has always been seen as a potentially limiting factor in the realization of direct democracy. The larger the city, the less likely it is to practise direct democracy. As we will see in Chapter Five (section 5.7) advocates of Internet-based "virtual" decision-making have revived the idea of direct democracy even in today's complex social settings.

1.1.3 Adversarial versus Collaborative Democracy

Representative democracy implies an adversarial or competitive approach to determining what is best for society. Potential representatives must stand before the people and compete for support. In doing so, social differences and animosity are sharpened as political leaders seek to delineate their messages. Advocates of representative democracy assert that such competition among potential leaders brings vitality and accountability to political life. Others are sceptical of competitive approaches, especially those that rely on majority decision-making. Instead, they prefer decision-making structures and processes that place a greater emphasis on consensus building rather than on competing for elected offices.

Many believe that the balance has tilted too much in the direction of representative over direct democracy and adversarial versus more collaborative forms of decision-making. The focus on elections and sharp differences between policy platforms among politicians has created a distance between citizens and public officials and created heightened divisions among social groups. The consequence is that the average citizen becomes apathetic and withdraws from political life. Academics studying local governance in today's world have argued that there has been a sharp reduction in the legitimacy of local government institutions, and that there is widespread scepticism about the ability of local political parties to represent and co-ordinate differing social interests.

One indication of this public withdrawal from political life is low voter turnout. According to International IDEA's report on voter turnout, "Overall participation in competitive elections across the globe rose steadily between 1945 and 1990.… But in the 1990s, with the influx of a host of competitive elections in newly democratizing states, the average for elections held since 1990 has dipped back to 64 per cent. While the participation rate of all eligible voters has dropped only marginally, the drop in the participation rate of those actually registered to vote has been more pronounced". Although firm data is not readily available, most experts agree that turnout for local elections is much lower than in national contests. Recently, concern has been raised about the role of public opinion polls, financial contributions, and the use of consultants in shaping the public agenda, diminishing the impact of local citizen preferences and leading to cynicism and apathy.

Local political party structures are also under challenge as effective social institutions, especially in North America and Western Europe. The issues around which parties originally crystallized in Europe, for example along class lines, seem less relevant in today's world of high social mobility. This has led to a crisis of governance at the local level in some societies, and a set of fragmented structures of governance, some of which are imposed from central authorities in response to the inability of local governments to act decisively. This concern about legitimacy leads some to advocate a renewed focus on accessibility, equality, and the reinvigoration of citizen participation. As pressures for decentralization mount, these concerns are central. Inclusion and participation are essential to build the trust and accountability needed for citizen confidence in the quality of local democracy.

1.2 Challenges for Local Governance

■ *Managing the impact of globalization and urbanization, promoting effective service delivery, fostering social peace, and creating opportunities for employment are among the main challenges facing local democracy.*

Local arenas around the world face common problems today:

- Delivering fundamental *social services* – such as water or transportation networks – in a sustainable way;
- *Urbanization*, or the movement of people from rural areas to cities, and the pressures on the environment and on governmental capacity that this migration brings;

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- *Economic vitality*, or creating opportunities for jobs and prosperity in a global marketplace; and
- Fostering *social peace* in increasingly diverse social settings, where a myriad of ethnic and religious groups must live side by side.

1.2.1 Service Delivery

Service delivery is a core function of local government, especially those services that require local co-ordination, networks, infrastructure, or planning. Among the critical challenges for local governance in this area are:

- Crime, public or political violence, policing, and the administration of local justice;
- Education, which often involves sensitive decisions on language or culture in increasingly multi-ethnic societies;
- Environmental management and resource scarcity, especially water and sanitation (garbage collection, sewage treatment);
- Housing, especially low-income dwellings, and managing settlement patterns in a manner conducive to inter-ethnic harmony in multi-ethnic municipalities;
- Joblessness and economic dislocation, and the need to competitively position the city to attract new investment in a globalized economy;
- Health care and hospital management, especially as new forms of infectious diseases challenge the social welfare while many old health concerns persist;
- Migration, often the influx of disadvantaged immigrant communities and refugees or refugees of depressed rural areas;
- Regional issues, such as shared water and air resources; and
- Transportation, traffic congestion, and the way in which people travel from their residence to their employment on a daily basis.

In 1997 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Union of Local Authorities' (IULA) Office of Research & Training surveyed 151 mayors world-wide on the foremost problems they face. Mayors responded that their first priority was *unemployment*; 52 per cent identified this as the most important issue, echoing an earlier poll taken in 1994.

There were regional differences in the findings of the IULA survey. European mayors were concerned about unemployment, and traffic congestion. Few said poverty was a major problem. In Africa, however, poverty, unemployment and rural-to-urban migration were cited as serious problems that place major strains on the ability of municipal authorities to provide basic services. In North America, important concerns were urban crime, joblessness, and traffic congestion. Asian mayors cited traffic congestion, pollution, and the need for better solid waste dis-

posal systems. In Latin America, unemployment and a deterioration of health and education services were considered serious problems. Finally, in the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean region, migration and ethnic differences were important concerns for mayors.

Figure 2 | **Problems Mayors Face World-wide**

Problem	Value
Unemployment	52.0
Insufficient solid waste disposal	42.0
Urban poverty	41.6
Inadequate housing stock	33.8
Insufficient solid waste collection	30.9
Inadequate water/sanitation	28.4
Inadequate public transportation	26.2
Traffic congestion	22.3
Poor health services	21.5
Insufficient civil society participation	20.9
Inadequate education services	20.9
Air pollution	17.4
Urban violence/crime/safety	13.5
Discrimination (women, ethnic, poor)	6.8

Source: IULA Research & Training Survey. 1997. UNDP and the IULA Office of Research & Training. University of Delaware.

1.2.2 Urbanization

Today, more than 3.2 billion people – more than half of the world's population – live in urban settings. This represents a twenty-fold increase in urbanization during the course of the twentieth century; and the trend shows little sign of abating.

Population growth today is occurring most rapidly in cities in the developing world. A Worldwatch Institute publication reports that population increase in developing country cities will be the distinguishing demographic trend of the next century, accounting for nearly 90 per cent of the 2.7 billion people to be added to world population between 1995 and 2030. The most explosive growth is expected in Africa and Asia. Although urbanization has positive dimensions – many great leaps in development have occurred in urban environments – the growing popula-

tion of city-dwellers also poses significant challenges. Today's cities, for example, take up only two per cent of the earth's surface but their inhabitants consume 75 per cent of its resources.

Among the serious problems that urban environments will face in the twenty-first century are improving water supply and quality, mining urban waste, transportation and land use for building better neighbourhoods. Developing countries face problems of unplanned settlement, or squatter communities, in which services and infrastructure are absent. One of the most serious challenges for local governance will be providing low-income housing.

At the same time, many do not see urbanization as a problem, either environmentally or in terms of its social consequences. Arguably, cities make provision of services more efficient, allow for best use of scarce land resources, allow more land to be set aside for conservation, wilderness designation, and agriculture. From this perspective, urbanization will result in more effective governance because it will be easier to design policies that benefit the largest number of people – particularly education, running water, health care, and housing.

Figure 3	**The World's Largest Cities**

Projections for the Year 2000 (in millions)

In 1950, only 30 per cent of the world's population lived in urban areas; by 2000 the number had climbed to 47 per cent; and by 2030 the estimate is for 60 per cent of the population to live in cities.

City	Population
Tokyo	28.0
Mexico City	18.1
Mombai	18.0
São Paulo	17.7
New York	16.6
Shanghai	14.2
Lagos	13.5
Los Angeles	13.5
Seoul	12.9
Beijing	12.4
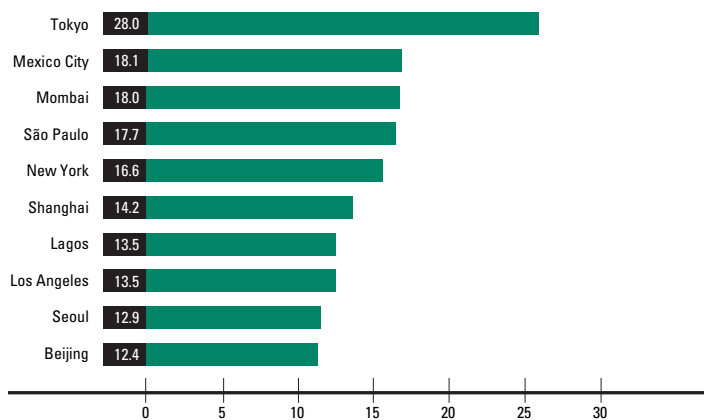
Source: World Urbanization Prospects: The 1996 Revision. 1998. New York: United Nations.
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1.2.3 Globalization

Globalization refers to the ways in which the international system has changed after the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s. The term *globalization* includes several dimensions of systemic change in the world that, among other things, directly affect the ways in which local governance is carried out.

- *Economic change*. Although the international economy is still not fully integrated, and national-level governments continue to have critical importance for economic decision-making, the economic context of local governance has changed dramatically. There is new consensus around market-based economic models, tremendous increases in international capital flows, a rapid expansion of international trade, growing influences of multinational corporations, and new integration into the world economy by countries that had previously not been involved in the global economic system.

- *Political change*. The trend toward democracy in the past 20 years has been remarkable, and it has produced a much broader international consensus on the underlying values of political systems, the processes of democracy such as elections and the importance of civil society, and principles of democracy such as participation and inclusion. Democratization in many countries has resulted in a growth in civil society – if measured in the number of NGOs – which in turn has meant that many non-official actors are involved in policy formulation and implementation.

- *Technological change*. The information and communications revolution of the late twentieth century has touched virtually every country and municipality on the globe. Greater access to information and communications has resulted in fundamental economic, social, and political change. Most importantly, it has created an easier way to share perspectives and information, and to consider direct democracy and citizen input in a manner that simply would not have been possible just a few years ago.

No city or municipal area is immune from some of the effects of globalization, which include new inequalities among and within countries, threats to the environment such as declining biodiversity, increased refugee flows in many parts of the world, the impact of new infectious diseases, and the spread of organized crime and corruption. The increased flow of information and communication, while opening up societies to the free flow of ideas, also puts pressure on long-standing social and cultural traditions. Globalization has produced social dislocation in many parts of the world that has in turn created a rapidly changing context for democracy. As Jonathan Barker asks, "What does it mean to say that a village, a development pro-

ject, or a mosque is self-governing, when the livelihoods of the participants are at the mercy of environmental change, the actions of distant resource companies and change in world market prices that in no way respond to local views or actions?"

Globalization, however, produces more than these global "evils". It offers opportunities for new sustainable economic development, growth and prosperity, and new flows of experience and information on how to manage a rapidly urbanizing context. It also presents new opportunities to improve social relations in societies that have been divided by deep-rooted conflict. Practices and lessons learned from promoting democracy in one part of the world can be adapted and implemented in another. Ways in which some cities have dealt with the problems induced by globalization potentially can be transferred to other settings, too.

Certainly not every decision, policy initiative, or problem faced by municipalities around the world is influenced by globalization. Indeed, the pace and extent of influence on municipalities by global trends is highly uneven. Many long-standing problems and successful solutions to these problems continue without a strong impact from the new global context. Nevertheless, one of the critical challenges facing local governance is to identify innovations and successes that may be adaptable from one setting to enhance the quality of democracy in another. (See the essay on "Globalization and Local Democracy" by Professor Caroline Andrew on International IDEA's website, www.idea.int/ideas_work/11_political_local).

1.2.4 Diversity

Cities around the world are virtually all ethnically diverse. For some, diversity is an age-old historical pattern, as is the case of Jerusalem. Others are newly ethnically diverse as immigration across borders has increased in recent years – for example Oslo, Norway. In the United States the pressures of migration have stemmed from the push effect of the relatively poor Latin American economies and the pull of job opportunities in the United States. The result of years of migration by Hispanics into the US is rapidly changing the face of mid-American cities. From 1990 to 2000, the total Hispanic population in the United States grew from 22.6 million to 31.3 million. Hispanics are now more than 10 per cent of the country's population. In many American cities today, the nature of racial conflict is not simply black-white; Hispanics are a significant majority or minority in most major cities now, too. The challenge of diversity and the methods of conflict management through local democracy are addressed in Chapter Three.

1.3 Trends in Local Governance

■ *Strategic partnerships, decentralization, and the international focus on local governance are current trends shaping local democracy.*

In response to such challenges, local governance structures need to perform differently today. Traditional concerns and functions – defining community values and making public policy choices – remain, but these are shaped by new trends. These trends can be characterized by the following:

■ *Who?* Today, many functions of local governance occur in the form of *strategic partnerships*, or co-operative relationships among elected authorities, the private sector, civil society, community-based organizations, and citizens. Increasingly, local authorities subcontract some functions to firms and non-profit organizations that are better equipped to implement them. This approach of assigning functions of governance to private organizations is arguably more efficient, but it raises questions about democracy.

■ *How?* Increasingly, countries are *decentralizing decision-making* authority to the lowest possible level. Decentralization is led by concerns of central governments to disperse power and responsibilities, and is spurred by policies of international financial institutions, such as the World Bank.

■ *Why?* There is a growing movement to define local self-governance as a *universal right*. At both regional and national levels, international organizations and multilateral groups have adopted standards for national governments to devolve decision-making to the level closest to the people as a means of giving meaning to democratic principles. These norms help shape the international obligations of countries to foster local democracy.

1.3.1 Strategic Partnering

Sometimes public officials and administrators simply are unable, or unsuited, to providing certain services effectively or efficiently. In many instances around the world, local governments are entering into new strategic partnerships with the private sector and with NGOs, civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide critical local services.

In the actual performance of services, there has been a remarkable trend toward privatization, joint public-private partnerships, outsourcing, and corporatizing of utilities such as water, electricity, waste management, housing, health care, and in some situations prison services. Two types of partnerships have rather different purposes:

- Working with *civil society*, such as NGOs, CBOs and CSOs, is one form of partnership. These partnerships are based on the premise that civil society groups have a comparative advantage in implementing policy or managing problems. They are closer to the people to be served. Local officials often serve as a funder, watchdog, co-worker, or specialist in such partnerships.

- Working with the *private sector* also involves a comparative advantage for business firms in delivering local services – such as clean water, transportation management, electricity, or garbage collection. But the foundation of these relationships is one of economics; business firms can deliver services as efficiently and more cheaply than local authorities.

While cities often see efficiency gains from such arrangements – things work much more smoothly – this efficiency may be at a loss of transparency. That means elected officials exercise less oversight over what actually gets done in a community; but, at least the service is provided. In many southern African communities, for example, municipalities rely on a regionally powerful multinational corporation – Eskom, based in Johannesburg – for their power supply. Local authorities and stakeholders may feel relatively powerless in negotiations with such large enterprises. Strategic partnering offers perils for private partners, too. For independent NGOs or CBOs, they may lose their independence and flexibility when their funding is coming from the local government, and may be less willing to take risks and develop innovative solutions to local communities if these somehow contradict local government policies.

Most analysts, however, see these partnerships as a healthy development for democracy. Pratibha Mehta of UNDP's Management and Governance Division summarizes the importance of creating participatory processes that structurally promote the involvement of civic organizations.

> *Community-based organizations play an extremely important role in promoting democratic decision-making, empowering communities, building community capacity to participate, and linking communities to municipalities. There is a need for institutional mechanisms such as policies or laws that promote the formation of new CBOs and their empowerment and that formally link them to the municipal decision-making system. This would help promote the participation of the poor (often excluded in a decision-making process at any level) and would encourage self-management at the community level.*

Community-based organizations and associational life have become the glue that holds a society together. A strong civil society facilitates local democracy by:

- Delivering services, sometimes funded by private interests, that the government does not or lacks the authority or capacity to provide, particularly philanthropic efforts such as assistance to the poor or disabled;

- Articulating interests in society and advocating for social needs and reforms, through associations and self-help societies; and

- Providing technical services, such as gathering data on social problems and devising workable solutions in highly variable concepts.

In Nicaragua, for example, a specialized network for NGOs active in local governance has been created, known as the Nicaraguan Network for Local Development. It conducts civic education programmes, election projects, and promotion of women's participation. The network also has helped develop local *concertación* (collaborative consensus-making processes) in which NGOs, CBOs, and local officials search for solutions to specific urban problems.

The trends toward strategic partnering with community-based groups is found in developed countries and emerging democracies alike. Authorities who set such policies need to remember the importance of gender and age sensitivity when forging such partnerships. Many experts on local democracy argue that women, young people, and the elderly are often overlooked or systematically excluded from participation in local governance.

1.3.2 Decentralization and Co-operative Governance

Decentralization refers to the principle that public decisions should be made, when possible, at the level of authority closest to the people. At present, some 70 countries are implementing political reforms aimed at decentralization and enhancement of municipal governments, among them the Dominican Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, and Yemen. In many cases, new democracies that have only recently undergone transitions to popular rule are undertaking such reforms. Some advocate decentralization as a way to further consolidate new democracies, stressing the political, economic, and administrative benefits of decentralization to both central governments and civil society alike. The perceived benefits of decentralization to democratizing countries are:

- *Political*. Increasing the power of citizens and elected representatives;

- *Spatial*. Diffusing population and economic activities geographically;

- *Administrative*. Transferring responsibility for planning, management, revenue raising, and allocation from the central to field offices of central government, or to subordinate levels of government, or to other semi-autonomous institutions; and

- *Economic*. Increasing the efficiency of governmental management of the economy through stimulation and regulation.

Decentralization may also offer tangible benefits to civil society, by fostering:

- Greater government *accountability and transparency*;
- Improved *problem-solving*;
- Opportunities for *sharing technical and social expertise* in policy-making;
- *Influence* over policy decisions; and
- *Control* over the development of those policy programmes that NGOs may be expected to implement.

For example, many specialists point to the success of decentralization in Latin American states as a model of how to bring government closer to the people in a newly democratic setting. However, decentralization has not been without difficulties as the effort to rearrange political systems faced entrenched political power structures and established political cultures that are not conducive to widespread citizen participation. But gains have been made in locally elected leadership – especially the practice of direct, popular election for mayors, replacing the system of indirect "election" that had long served to strengthen political insiders.

A related trend is the development within decentralized systems of networks of local authorities, known as municipal associations. Whether one resides in a megacity or a network of rural villages, increasingly there are associations and networks of municipal politicians, managers, and civic leaders in regional, national, and international settings. Municipal associations have grown in importance in recent years and in many settings these associations have become important advocates for local-level democracy and decentralization of power.

In Bolivia, for example, reforms at the local level have served to dramatically strengthen the accountability of mayors through direct election and by extending the term of office. Other innovations include the introduction of regularly scheduled public meetings, known as *Cabildos Abiertos*, which have been launched in El Salvador and Honduras. In Brazil the expansion of neighbourhood associations has improved community budgeting practices, whereas in Chile the referendum has been relied upon as a means of reaching legally binding decisions about local public expenditures.

The current trend toward decentralization in many contexts points to some stark differences between established democracies and transitional states. In the former, change and reform is less likely and occurs much more slowly; patterns of intergovernmental relations and interactions are much more fixed and a matter of routine. However, in transitional or recently-democratized countries the relations among levels of governance are much more fluid and variable. Designing systems for local democracy anew becomes a real possibility.

1.3.3 New International Norms

The development of new global norms and regional mandates by international organizations on the importance of local democratic development is another trend shaping local governance. These new norms seek to ensure that in every country citizens have a meaningful way of exercising the right to freedom and choice envisioned in international covenants such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Regional organizations have been particularly progressive in establishing new norms that ensure a proper place for local governance in a country's political life. The Council of Europe and the Organization of American States (OAS) have both been assertive in creating new regional standards for local government. In Europe, there have been efforts to assure an important role for local governance in light of increasing economic integration and the principle of subsidiarity: decisions that affect people most and that can be made at the local level should be made there.

In Latin America, the OAS Unit for the Promotion of Democracy describes decentralization, local government, and citizen participation as issues of "growing importance to the Hemisphere's democracy agenda" and the organization has been promoting this approach through training, workshops, research, publications, and technical assistance. This work is done in the context of norms or regional standards adopted by the organization in the early 1990s in defence of the new democracies that had replaced authoritarian governments. For example, in Santiago, Chile, in 1991 the organization adopted the landmark Resolution 1080, on "Representative Democracy", which requires a rapid and robust response by the organization in the event of any "serious political, social, and economic problems that may threaten the stability of democratic governments".

There are also regional norms regarding appropriate powers and scope for local authorities. The most extensive of these is the 1985 European Charter on Local Self-Government, which seeks to give concrete assurances of continued local decision-making authority in the context of regional integration and increasingly interdependent political and economic policy-making by EU countries.

Figure 4	International Norms on Local Self-Governance: Excerpts

The European Charter on Local Self-Government
Adopted by the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, October 1985

Article 2 – Constitutional and legal foundation for local self-government

The principle of local self-government shall be recognized in domestic legislation, and where practicable in the constitution.

Article 3 – Concept of local self-government

1. Local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population.

2. This right shall be exercised by councils or assemblies composed of members freely elected by secret ballot on the basis of direct, equal, universal suffrage, and which may possess executive organs responsible to them. This provision shall in no way affect recourse to assemblies of citizens, referendums or any other form of direct citizen participation where it is permitted by statute.

Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements: A Summary

Adopted at the Habitat II Conference, Istanbul, June 1996

Article 12.

We adopt the enabling strategy and the principles of partnership and participation as the most democratic and effective approach for the realization of our commitments. Recognizing local authorities as our closest partners, and as essential, in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, we must, within the legal framework of each country, promote decentralization through democratic local authorities and work to strengthen their financial and institutional capacities in accordance with the conditions of countries, while ensuring their transparency, accountability and responsiveness to the needs of people, which are key requirements for Governments at all levels. We shall also increase our co-operation with parliamentarians, the private sector, labour unions and non-governmental and other civil society organizations with due respect for their autonomy. We shall also enhance the role of women and encourage socially and environmentally responsible corporate investment by the private sector.

Draft World Charter on Local Self-Government

International Union of Local Authorities, 25 May 1998

Article 3 – Concept of local self-government

1. Local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population.

2. This right shall be exercised by councils or assemblies composed of members freely elected by secret ballot on the basis of direct, equal, universal suffrage, and which may possess executive organs responsible to them.

Article 10 – Participation of citizens and partnership

1. Local authorities shall be entitled to define appropriate forms of popular participation and civic engagement in decision-making and in fulfilment of their function of community leadership.

2. Local authorities shall be empowered to establish and develop partnerships with all actors of civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, and with the private sector and other interested stakeholders.

1.4 Sustainable Urban Development

■ *Building sustainable communities involves facilitating people's empowerment, encouraging co-operation, ensuring equity and access, and providing security.*

With these challenges in mind, the task is to find ways to build "sustainable" communities that are prosperous and vibrant. UNDP, in its 1996 *Human Development Report* defined sustainable development in terms of "protection of the life opportunities of future generations … and … the natural systems on which all life depends". UNDP contends that economic growth alone does not lead to sustainable human development when measured by the Human Development Index, a composition of indicators on the quality of life and equitable access to resources.

How can sustainability be achieved? UNDP identifies five aspects of sustainability that directly relate to tasks of local governance in the twenty-first century. They are the following:

- *Empowerment.* The expansion of men and women's capabilities and choices increases their ability to exercise those choices free of hunger or deprivation. It also increases their opportunity to participate in, or endorse, decision-making affecting their lives.

- *Co-operation.* With a sense of belonging important for personal fulfilment, well-being, and a sense of purpose and meaning, human development is concerned with ways for allowing people to work together and interact.

- *Equity.* The expansion of capabilities and opportunities means more than income – it also means equity, such as an educational system to which everybody has access.

- *Sustainability.* The needs of this generation must be met without compromising the right of future generations to be free of poverty and deprivation and to exercise their basic capabilities.

■ *Security*. Particularly the security of livelihood. People need to be free from threats, such as disease or repression and from sudden harmful disruptions in their lives.

Undoubtedly, economic development will be critical for sustainability. Recent findings suggest that economic growth is often generated at the municipal rather than at the national level. The decisions of local policy-makers to facilitate long-term growth, for example through education and infrastructure investment, and the climate for enterprise development and promotion of the private sector are key to generating wealth in today's global economy. This new economic thinking implies the need to devolve to municipal entities the power to make and implement economic decisions. As discussed in Chapter Three, the thrust of many multilateral and international financial institutions is on decentralization as a prerequisite to promoting economic and social development.

E S S A Y

LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
Gerry Stoker

The heart of the task facing local democratic governance is how to reconcile two challenges. The first is how to ensure the continuing relevance and vibrancy of democratic local government in the context of a globalized world, in which the pressure for high service standards is considerable but willingness to pay higher taxes limited, and where faith in the mainstream instruments of representative democracy (professional politicians, parties, elections) would seem to be on the decline in many countries. The second is the emergence of a civil society of autonomous, self-organizing associations that limits the power of the state and provides an alternative base for both politics and the provision of services. The argument presented here is that the "local" provides a potential forum for a new reconciliation between state and civil society in theory and practice. However, to achieve this goal a different form and practice of local politics is demanded.

The first insight is that the "local" is a location where there is the capacity for great numbers of people to be actively involved in politics. Secondly, local politics and the need for local democracy can be justified on the grounds that it is only local institutions that have the capacity, interest, and detailed knowledge to oversee services and make decisions in tune with local conditions. In short, local democracy helps deliver effective accountability. Finally, the case for local democracy can be made by recognizing the sheer diversity of situations and needs between different localities. Local democracy enables us to cope with difference.

The forces of globalization do not undermine these classic arguments for local governance. There are factors beyond the control of any locality when it comes to the economy or the environment but the point is that these forces are not beyond influence. As the environmentalists put it "think global, act local". The world is a big place but local action can make a difference.

The Core Characteristics of a Good System of Local Governance
Three essential elements are needed for good local governance: a system of local governance should have a capacity for *openness*, *deliberation*, and *integrated action*. These are not the only relevant values but they deserve the highest priority; they are essential in the search for a new legitimacy for local governance.

Openness
In a democratic system the participation of all is not required; rather its defining characteristic is its *openness* to all. Many people prefer to spend their time on non-politi-

cal activities. Some face social and economic constraints that limit their time for political activity. In this light the very ease of participation at the local level gives a particular value to local democracy. The crucial value for good governance is that the system is open, has low barriers to the expression of dissent, and limits the disadvantages of the poorly organized and resourced.

People have a right to participate. Democracy demands systems that can make that right a practical option. Citizens may well decide on reasonable grounds not to avail themselves of the opportunities to participate believing that their interests are already well protected or not threatened. The value of openness does not require or assume large-scale and continuous direct participation. It rests its case on the richness of democratic practice and the options for extending participation that are available. These options should operate without making overwhelming time demands and in a way that enhances the broad social representativeness of those involved.

There are exciting possibilities and developing new practices which take participation beyond the boundaries of traditional and formal representative democracy. Parties and the formal political institutions have a role but they cannot be relied upon or given exclusive roles as mobilizers and organizers of involvement. The presence of community groups, civil society organizations, and user forums, as well as opportunities for direct participation through citizen consultation, citizens' initiatives, referendums, and exchanges through information and new communication technology, all help define the openness of a system.

Deliberation

People are recognized as having the right and the opportunity to take part in local public life. Many of their interventions may be specific to the consumption of a particular service. Those interventions should be expected to be short-term, of low cost to the individual, and to bring forth a rapid response from the appropriate service organization. They are likely to deal with a matter of direct material interest to the person. This is not to say that the outcome of the exchange will always lead to "customer" satisfaction – resource and policy constraints may intervene – but the process should be straightforward and relatively low in its demand of time and effort. However to see local government as a site for political activity requires opportunities for a deeper more sustained level of public intervention and debate. Good local governance requires opportunities for *deliberation* in addition to the general quality of openness.

This concern with deliberation can be seen as a strong theme in communitarian visions of the virtues of local government and democracy. The trouble with liberalism, so some communitarian critics argue, is that it only encourages a thin democracy based around self-interested bargaining. From a communitarian perspective what is required instead is a politics of the common good in which neighbours look for common solutions to their problems. Judgement requires the sharing of experiences and the give-and-take of collective deliberation. Political institutions must be designed to enable citizens to relate to each other as deliberators and not as bargainers engaged

in exchange. Local political institutions with their accessibility to communities would seem well-equipped in principle for this task.

Civic leadership needs a commitment to deliberative politics to check the tendency for it to collapse into the creation of a narrow regime of public and private actors fulfilling their own agenda and their own self-interest with little regard to the wider concerns of the community. The spirit of deliberation requires that some consideration is given to drawing in a broader spectrum of the public into deliberative settings.

Public meetings, forums for the young or the elderly, and neighbourhood assemblies could provide appropriate instruments. Each of these instruments suffers from a number of drawbacks in terms of the spread and range of responses they are likely to obtain from citizens. Multi-choice referendums – accompanied by an organized debate – provide another option. A further option is to adapt the jury system for consideration of policy issues. In several countries experiments have been undertaken in which a sample of inhabitants have been drawn together and exempted from their normal work. They have been asked to make recommendations about a variety of issues with full access to expert advice, data, and administrative support. The great attraction of the last two options is that those who are not normally activists are likely to be drawn into deliberative processes.

A Capacity to Act

Openness and deliberation are to be valued but they lose their lustre in a system that lacks the capacity for effective action. Good local governance requires the *capacity to act*.

Effective bureaucracy and professional expertise will continue to be central to good local governance. The management context may vary and the particular organizational forms may change but a large part of the daily work of government is going to be undertaken by full-time professionals, administrators, and other employees. From the point of view of the citizen there are many advantages in letting these people get on with their complex variety of tasks. The issue is rather how to check the classic faults that emerge in all organizational systems of service delivery: insensitivity, rigidity, and lack of responsiveness. Many "customers" will be satisfied but mechanisms are necessary to allow those that are dissatisfied to make themselves known. Reform programmes to provide a challenge and check complacency are essential.

Yet the capacity to act is about more than meeting service delivery objectives, important as they are. If the "great" issues of poverty, economic renewal, unemployment, environmental decay, and crime – for example – are to be tackled, what is required is the blending of the resources of government with those of non-governmental actors from civil society. Some use the term "enabling" to capture this important task. Others talk of government being "reinvented" and having a catalytic role. The interdependence of governmental and non-governmental forces in meeting economic and social challenges focuses attention upon the problem of co-operation and

co-ordination both within government and between government and non-governmental actors.

One response to the problem of co-ordination would be to set up an agency to impose order and coerce others to go along with its policy goals. Co-ordination in this sense becomes a form of power. People are co-ordinated by being told what to do within a hierarchical frame of reference. An alternative approach and the one advocated here would be co-ordination through networks. Co-operation is obtained, and subsequently sustained, through the establishment of relations premised on solidarity, loyalty, trust, and reciprocity rather than through hierarchy. Under the network model, organizations learn to co-operate by recognizing their mutual dependency; through discussion, negotiation, and open communication; and by the development of shared knowledge and experience. The outcome of successful networking is a long-term commitment to one another and shared goals.

The Search for a New Legitimacy

Given the growing signs that the mainstream instruments of representative democracy are on the decline in terms of their capacity to engage the public and generate trust in government decisions, there is a great need for a renewal of representative democracy through more participatory openings and opportunities. The local polity provides a viable and attractive forum for such developments.

Governance in the twenty-first century needs to recognize the limits to state action and the power and vibrancy that rest in wider civil society. Effective service provision and the tackling of major critical issues such as economic development or environmental protection demand the engagement and active involvement of civic society. The institutions of local government will need to have the capacity to create, enable, and encourage.

The authority vested in the state and exercised through local governance still has a role to play. The renewal of democratic governance is about ensuring the legitimacy of that authority when it is exercised. The local polity provides an appropriate and potentially powerful forum to achieve a new political settlement between state and civil society. To achieve that settlement local governance needs to change the way it works, which means that its political and bureaucratic managers need to change the way they think. Democratic theory can point the way to new directions. Practical politicians and officials are needed to show us how to get there.

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2. DESIGNING SYSTEMS FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY

THREE CASE STUDIES

2.   DESIGNING SYSTEMS FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY

THREE CASE STUDIES

The rich array of national, regional, cultural, and community settings establishes various contexts in which local governance takes place. The role of local governance in a large country's federal system, for example, may be remarkably different from the role played by local authorities in small, highly centralized countries.

This chapter provides an overview of the principal choices for designing systems of local governance. It outlines various national contexts, basic types and forms of local democracy, and criteria for design. In three case studies, it then explores some of the major issues in the design of local governance systems, such as:

— **The debate over decentralization, and the case of the Philippines;**

— **Fiscal decentralization and the implications for fiscal policy, resource allocation, and budgetary autonomy; and**

— **Special considerations of federal systems and the role of international regional integration in the structure and function of local governance institutions.**

2.1 National Contexts

■ *The context of local democracy is either constrained or facilitated by the rules set at the national level.*

The scale of administration of local governance is directly affected by the degree of centralization in a country. The national context establishes the kinds of decisions that are made locally versus those that are directed (or constrained) by policy decisions made at the national or regional level. Municipalities differ significantly – often within a single country or setting – on the degree of devolution and the types

of governing responsibilities exercised at the local level. Clearly the size, function, and challenges of a global city such as New York City differ widely from those of a network of rural hamlets in Tanzania. Prefectures in relatively centralized France, with a long tradition of local self-government, differ dramatically from the newly-amalgamated metropolitan areas of a society in transition such as South Africa.

Various types of national contexts in which local decision-making occurs include the following:

■ Highly centralized one-party systems, such as China;

■ Integrated, relatively homogenous political systems, such as Norway or Japan;

■ Relatively small countries, such as Austria or Senegal, with significant district-level decision-making;

■ Federal systems, such as Australia, Brazil, India, or the United States, with a strong role for states;

■ Highly-devolved political systems with strong local powers, such as Switzerland;

■ Highly-devolved political systems with powers provided to ethnic minority or religious groups, such as local self-governance of native-American Canadians;

■ Autonomous local government within a centralized context, such as in Hong Kong; or

■ Situations of contested sovereignty, such as Sudan, Russia (Chechnya), or Yugoslavia (Kosovo).

Given the particular national context, some critical questions in designing systems of local democracy include:

■ *Authority.* Does the municipal structure make policy and take major decisions, or does it mostly implement policy debated and created at a larger level, such as in a national or provincial (or in federal systems, state) parliament?

■ *Financial capacity.* What is the all-important pattern of revenue flow and fiscal authority? Who controls the budget?

■ *Capacity for policy implementation.* Does the structure and exercise of local authority create political space for civil society organizations and all major players on an issue to have an assured role in local decision-making processes?

■ *Devolution to the appropriate level.* To what extent is power within a municipal structure devolved to the forum at which it is best exercised, such as decentralization of decision-making to wards, community groups, or special panels?

| Figure 5 | Local Governance in the Russian Federation |

An important example in the design of local governance systems is the experience of Russia. The new system of local democracy in Russia finds its immediate origins in the 1993 Constitution, which declares local government units independent of the central state. This is a dramatic shift from the Soviet era, when local authorities were directly under the authority of Moscow and the Communist Party under the rubric of "democratic centralism". Much of the design of today's local government system in Russia was created by central-level constitutional designers. Dr Liudmila Lapteva of the Russian Academy of Sciences notes that local self-government was not a result of citizens' initiatives but mainly a result of actions by the federal authority. By 1997, authorities had established some 12,000 municipalities. Not all of these municipalities have locally elected authorities, however, as some regions of the Russian Federation appoint municipal leaders. Moreover, some of these authorities have had difficulty with financial independence and authority, also diminishing their independence from higher levels of state authority. This problem is exacerbated by ambiguity in the federal laws that give municipalities their power.

An important aspect of strengthening local democracy in Russia will be the development of a vibrant civil society that can help create demands for local democracy from below. The absence of a strong civil society limits citizen participation in local matters and has hindered popular participation in critical matters such as developing community budgets. To develop civil society it will be necessary to build on the experiences of organizations such as housing committees, youth, and local private enterprises. In Novgorod, St. Petersburg, and Moscow local governments have had some success in developing strategic partnerships with businesses; this has helped develop, for example, more participatory community planning processes and implementation. If Russia's nascent democracy is to survive, emphasis is required on the training and capacity-building needs of the reformed municipalities to enable local authorities to work more effectively with, and to help develop, civil society organizations. (See the essay on "Local Governance in the Russian Federation" by Dr Liudmila Lapteva on International IDEA's website, www.idea.int/ideas_work/11_political_local.)

2.2 Basic Types and Forms

■ *From mayoral systems to regional councils, there is a wide variety of types and forms of local governance.*

As discussed in Chapter One, local democracy consists of both the institutions of local government (i.e., mayors, councils, committees, and administrative structures) as well as the relationships among officials and civil society separate from the official government. With this broader understanding of local democracy, there are two fundamental sets of choices that affect the basic types and forms of local democracy.

■ *Institutional choices* and institutional innovation may help enhance participation and promote conflict management. Political institutions reflect the agreed rules of the game. In local polities, one of the key levers of democratic practice is the electoral system (see Chapter Four).

■ *Procedural choices* may include issue-specific participation processes such as special purpose town meetings, community budgeting, special youth or women's outreach efforts, or highly informal practices like the right to make a soapbox speech at City Hall (see Chapter Five).

Keeping these two fundamental choices in mind, we can examine six basic types of local governance:

■ *Strong mayoral systems.* In strong mayoral systems, a single individual is elected as leader of the municipal area and this individual wields broad (and often charismatic) authority. The mayor is usually elected to one or more terms of office, and plays both a decision-making role to determine public policy and a symbolic role in representing the values, characteristics, and culture of a given city. These mayors are also executives, directing and managing the bureaucracy. Strong mayors often emerge in large "mega-cities" where opportunities for direct participation are limited by the size of the urban arena. Moscow is widely viewed as a city in which the mayor is an especially powerful elected official, overshadowing other public officials.

■ *Strong council or parliamentary systems.* In some municipal arenas, a legislative group of city councillors wields the most authority. These elected councils have considerable legislative or parliamentary authority and in many instances they collectively administer the bureaucracy. Strong council or parliamentary systems often feature the employment of a professional city administrator or manager, who handles the city's business and who is held accountable to the council. Amsterdam is run by a city council and a "college" of aldermen. The council is the highest authority in the city of Amsterdam and is responsible for important

decisions. There are 45 seats on the council, contested every four years by the various political parties. The mayor of Amsterdam is appointed by the monarch of The Netherlands and chairs the council but does not have a formal vote.

- *Appointed authority*. Although much less common than previously, some cities are managed by authorities (often mayors or prefects) that are appointed (i.e., not elected) by provincial or national authorities. This type of local governance is often found in highly centralized countries or those with a strong system of regions or provinces. Policy is simply implemented by these appointed authorities, based on decisions made at higher levels of government. Sometimes, when a city is financially bankrupt or otherwise in crisis, central authorities will appoint an administrator on an interim basis until the problem is solved and authority can be returned to elected officials. In China, the administrators of most significant metropolitan areas are appointed by authorities in Beijing, and are accountable to the central government through both Communist Party and governmental channels.

- *Ward or borough systems.* Some large cities feature a highly decentralized form of governance, where larger metropolitan areas are governed in wards or boroughs (neighbourhoods or collections of neighbourhoods) that enjoy devolved or delegated authority. (Devolved authority generally cannot be revoked, whereas delegated authority can often be withdrawn by those in higher levels of government.) Akin to federal systems at the national level, this type of governance is based on a division of authority within a broader arena. New York City has a central authority but it also has five major boroughs that enjoy significant authority and feature powerful elected posts and administrative authority.

- *Regional councils.* Many cities today are really an amalgamation of what were once – prior to massive urbanization and economic development – smaller towns or villages. In some instances, large metropolitan areas still recognize the territorial boundaries and local self-governance rights of these original smaller towns, but there is a need to co-ordinate policy formulation and implementation across jurisdictional lines. Regional councils are collections of these authorities – for example, a regional mayor's forum – that work together to co-ordinate policy on issues such as transportation grids or expanding economic growth and employment. In Ghana, for example, there are 110 regional councils with elected authorities.

- *Direct democracies.* Some municipal areas bypass leaders or parliamentary councils and take major decisions only with the direct participation of the people, either through a referendum or a village or neighbourhood meeting. Bureaucrats implement the decisions taken by the people as a whole. Switzerland, for example, con-

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sists of 23 cantons. Each canton and half-canton (of which there are three, created for historical reasons) has its own constitution, parliament, government, and courts.

Direct democracy in the form of the *Landsgemeinde,* or open-air meetings of citizens, is found only in the cantons of Appenzell Innerrhoden and Glarus; in all the other cantons, voters make their decisions at the ballot box. All the cantons are divided into municipalities or communes. Around one-fifth of the 2,900 municipalities have their own parliament; in the other four-fifths, decisions are taken by a process of direct democracy in the local assembly. This type of governance is limited by the size of the city, although developments in communication technology such as the Internet may lead to new possibilities for more direct local democratic governance (see section 5.7).

2.3 Criteria for Comparison

■ *Size, density, and settlement patterns are important criteria in comparing municipal models.*

An important consideration in comparing municipal models world-wide is the measure of size, but in particular *density in relation to population size and territory*. Although this may not be true in all instances, there is a general belief that the more dense the population in smaller pieces of land, the greater the challenges of urban management. The rules that govern social interaction in highly dense urban arenas must take into account the close interaction of communities and the need to promote co-operation and conflict management. For that reason, large cities are also amenable to further subdivision and decentralization within cities into sub-metropolitan units such as districts, boroughs, neighbourhoods, and other "incorporated" entities. A useful notion in these types of cities is of *layered* or *nested* governance. That is, there are various layers of governance at different levels within large cities, with the subsidiary levels "nested" in other levels; a metaphor for this type of governance is a system of concentric circles, with each circle representing a broader level of government with a larger population. To the extent possible, it is widely believed that those decisions that can be taken at the level closest to the people should be taken.

Evaluating a municipality's size helps us think about the possibilities for self-governance within national contexts and the devolution within a city to neighbourhood associations, community boards, property owners' associations, or civic groups. As a design criterion, one must consider the ways in which the interplay between local governance and the sizes of municipal arenas provide advantages or disadvantages for various types of innovations in democratic practice, such as those described in Chapters Four and Five.

Another criterion to consider is *settlement patterns*. A critical issue in any urban arena is the pattern of settlement and the socio-cultural identity of neighbourhoods, districts, and other areas. This type of settlement normally occurs informally, however in some instances (e.g., Cape Town), settlement patterns by ethnic, racial or religious groups are the result of specific policies. Many cities today feature highly diverse or cosmopolitan areas where diversity and multi-ethnicity are a celebrated and vibrant aspect of a neighbourhood's identity. When settlement patterns are coincidental with distinct ethnic, racial, or religious communities issues invariably arise about the fair and appropriate distribution of services – for example, policing – and the connection between taxation and service delivery. Relationships among and between communities and city-level officials are critical in such situations.

For example, in Los Angeles, a large multi-ethnic city with a high degree of economic inequality, there is a constant tension between more prosperous areas (such as Bel-Air) and the more disadvantaged sections of town, notably South Central Los Angeles and Watts. In 1993, riots broke out over policing in Watts and other communities after an incident of police brutality (the Rodney King affair). Today, some residents of Bel-Air are seeking to secede (or separate) from the city because they claim that they are heavily taxed and do not see a concomitant share of city services for their contribution to the general coffers.

Other characteristics are also important. Comparing the size of cities and evaluating aspects of size as it relates to participation and conflict management is not a matter of simple merits and demerits of size (i.e., the traditional notion that small is better in facilitating direct links between government and the people). Rather, the issue is that the size of a city relates to certain characteristics that may help practitioners and citizens situate themselves comparatively and help identify various distinguishing features. Consider for example, these variables that might give some indication of distinguishing features of various cities.

- *Economic base.* What is the principal economic base of the city? For example, is tourism a major source of tax revenue? Is there a single manufacturer or economic sector that dominates?

- *Layout.* What is the layout or grid of the city? Are there distinctive physical features that define the municipality's boundaries?

- *Function.* Is the city a hub city, or a provincial capital? Or a national capital with special features such as a high number of public-sector employees?

- *Situation.* Is the city situated close to, or far from, national boundaries? Is there a concentrated city core or is the physical or geographic metropolitan environment more dispersed?

Figure 6 | **Categories of Size in Urban Arenas**

Mega-cities *(more than 10 million residents).* These cities pose special challenges of local community self-control, administrative management, transportation, socio-economic inequality, and growth and development. The rates of new mega-city development are much higher in Africa and Asia – where urbanization is greatest – but less so in other regions such as Eastern Europe or Latin America, where most of the urbanization has already occurred. In Mexico, for example, population growth rates in the cities have begun to slow and Mexico City has seen a decline in population growth from 1980 to 1999.

Big Cities *(one million to 10 million).* Big cities face many of the problems of mega-cities, albeit on a slightly smaller scale. Many provincial and district-level capitals fit this category, as do capital cities in many countries. Swelling populations pose challenges of growth, urban sprawl, informal settlements, along with the transportation, health, sanitation, education, or other service delivery problems. Increasingly, these cities are also affected by the forces of globalization in which they must compete on an international scale for investment and job creation. A good example of a city in this category is the fastest growing city in Africa – Durban, South Africa.

Cities *(from 40,000 to one million).* Cities of this size are large enough to have all the problems and features of a major urban area, but in many ways are often more traditional and feel more like a small town. These cities may be more susceptible to being dependent on a single sector of the economy or to a particular industry or even company. On the other hand, small business often thrives in cities of these types and issues of transportation can be less acute.

Towns *(5,000 to 40,000).* In a town there is urban life but traditions and rural roots are also present. Many of the difficult decisions in such towns are made by councillors and city managers, although mayoral roles may still be very important. Towns are also often more dependent on district or state-level structures of governance for revenue and for services.

Small Towns and Villages *(less than 5,000).* Small towns and villages tend to be very traditional in their governance structures and are often networked into larger regions. In this form of municipal organization, opportunities for direct participation of citizens are maximized. The practical aspects of democracy in small villages, however, may have some similar-

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ities to the role that neighbourhood councils may play in a mega-city. That is, scale is important but the definition of local politics may be more contingent on the degree of devolution to any given authority than to actual size of the metropolitan arena.

2.4 Decentralization

◼ *Decentralization allows local government units the power to initiate, fund, and implement programmes meant for local development.*

Decentralization refers to the further devolution of power within various districts or urban arenas. A recent UNDP report on the role of mayors in decentralization notes that:

> *Some 70 countries are now actively engaged in political reforms aimed at decentralization and municipal governments, many of them in parts of the world where elected government were the exception only recently. In some other countries, however, the political will to implement strong decentralization measures lags behind the promulgation of constitutional amendments aimed at devolving government power to the local levels.*

Decentralization often involves the need for extensive reform of intergovernmental relations. This reform process often challenges entrenched practices, vested interests, powerful actors, the inertia of existing institutions, and a lack of will for change. From the local perspective up, decentralization is challenged by the many ways in which the central government may circumvent and undermine local authority. From the national perspective, decentralization is sometimes seen as a way to undermine the authority and efficacy of national-level government, which must make tough decisions that benefit the entire country (sometimes at the expense of local actors).

Some major issues in decentralization include:

- *Hierarchical relations*. The interactions between national, regional, provincial, and municipal government.
- *Competencies and authority.* The degree to which the primary decisions on a particular policy issue are set and the extent to which any level of government is responsible for policy implementation.
- *Political autonomy*. Whether decisions can be made at the local level without influence, interference, or assistance from other tiers of governance.
- *Juridical independence and legal autonomy*. The extent to which legal institutions and processes influence local governance decision-making.

- *Financial flows and revenue generating capacities.* The fiscal dimensions of policy-making that relate to governmental income and taxation.
- *Co-operative governance.* The structures and processes by which governance is harmonized vertically (from national to local, or bottom-up), or horizontally (across arenas at various levels of government).
- *Layers and levels of participation.* The degree to which participation that occurs at various levels of governance is also present or affects policy-making at other levels of governance.

The case of decentralization and popular participation in the Philippines, one of the most successful new democracies in the developing world, is a good example of how the interplay between decentralization and democratization can benefit a country as a whole. As Proserpina Tapales demonstrates in the case study on page 50, decentralization in the Philippines has been a largely successful experiment. The programme, defined in the Local Government Code of 1991, set up special bodies at various levels of governance to address public policy issues such as local needs in health, sanitation, education, and economic development. Particularly successful has been the inclusion of methods for evaluating the effectiveness of various levels of authority in service delivery. The principal innovation, however, has been the introduction for the first time of practical ways to enhance citizen participation; these efforts have created opportunities for citizens to directly learn how to work together to solve community problems.

Figure 7	Advantages and Disadvantages of Decentralization

Advantages

Self-government. In highly decentralized systems, decisions are made closest to the people, promoting the realization of self-government and the maximization of democratic values of participation, inclusion, and accountability.

Democratic pluralism. It is less likely that any single party or faction will control the entire system of government in a country; decentralization is conducive to democratic pluralism.

Economic efficiency. Decentralization can promote economic efficiency as a closer partnership between governance and productive enterprises can be formed.

Regional objectives. Regional mandates can be more easily determined and implemented if power is devolved locally.

Effective partnerships. Local governance systems may have more flexibility in forming partnerships among the most effective policy formulators and implementers, for example local NGOs.

Disadvantages

Economically inefficient. Some see decentralization as economically inefficient as the ability of central authorities to co-ordinate and implement national-level economic policy is diminished.

Lack of common standards. Decentralization encourages a lack of common standards across decentralized areas, allowing for regional interests to dominate in a less restricted manner.

Economic and social disparities. Opportunities arise for large economic and social disparities among regions, for example leading to the possibility of a bankrupt city or impoverished regional economies.

Resource gaps. In some instances, decentralization leads to situations where authority is given legally, but no real resource flow follows and decentralization fails.

Barriers to citizen participation. Sometimes, there are too many layers of decision-making and bureaucracy, and the proliferation of levels of official government creates new barriers to civic organization and citizen involvement.

Weak national unity. Decentralization can weaken national unity, leading to a decline of loyalty to the national state and potentially encouraging separatist or secessionist tendencies.

2.5 Money Talks: Fiscal Policy

■ *The flow of revenue, taxation patterns, and spending are integrally linked to the fostering and promotion of local democracy.*

One of the most contentious issues in local self-governance is the ability of local authorities to collect and spend their own revenue. The flow of revenue and patterns of taxation and spending – fiscal policy – are integrally linked to the fostering and promotion of local democracy. Without adequate resources – either generated at the source by the local government or passed down from the provincial or central government – local democracy cannot thrive. Problems are especially acute when local areas generate significant national resources that are often redistributed elsewhere.

Some sound principles of fiscal policy can be summarized as follows:

- *Fairness* in collection and distribution of national resources;
- *Awareness of and prevention of environmental side-effects* from the exploitation of natural resources – such as mining or petroleum extraction – on the local population;
- *Transparency* in the collection and spending of resources;
- *Accountability*, to ensure that public funds are being spent in the community interest;
- *Community involvement* in the budgeting process;
- *Equity across municipalities* on rates of taxation and *per capita* spending; and
- *Technical assistance* to local authorities to assist them in managing public finance.

The latter point underscores the importance of seemingly technical issues – such as municipal finance – for local democracy. Understanding and influencing patterns of revenue raising and spending is critical to ensuring accountability and transparency. Knowing how and where the money flows is a critical issue for those interested in the quality of local democracy.

The case study by Arno Loessner on page 54, highlights lessons with regard to fiscal decentralization, including the following:

- Democracy and local governance should be strengthened with fiscal decentralization (FD) without diminishing the benefits that can arise from co-ordinated action at the centre.
- Clear and reliable rules must be in place to assign service delivery responsibilities.
- Vertical (intergovernmental) and horizontal (cross-sectoral) partnerships are important to reinforce partnership among levels of government.
- The cost of locally produced services should usually be met by locally collected taxes and user charges. To achieve this, legal authority must be granted to make local government taxing powers enforceable.
- Central government grants to local government must be timely and predictable.

2.6 Linkages Across Boundaries

■ *Increasingly, local governance systems need to learn how to manage the influence of cross-border decision-making and practices.*

Today, many local governance systems must take into account not only the national context but also the influences of governance beyond borders. This is particular-

ly the case for international regional integration, for example within the EU. Supranational organizations such as the EU engage in many activities that directly relate to the decision-making and service delivery functions of local governments, for example:

- Setting norms or rules to which local governments must conform;
- Managing interdependencies across borders and facilitating development within the subregion;
- Allowing for labour mobility;
- Setting standards for the workplace;
- Setting standards for the environmental consequences of industry;
- Providing resources in the form of grants and subsidies; and
- Providing technical expertise.

Supranational organizations such as the EU may also weaken national-level governments. The principle of subsidiarity was mentioned before as a cornerstone of EU policy-making and this principle is buttressed by norms such as the provisions of the European Charter on Local Self-Government.

But there are also many instances in which cross-border co-operation and co-ordination is essential for good governance. This has been especially true in border regions that share a common resource, such as a river or marine estuary, or where there are relatively high levels of migration across international frontiers.

Local governance takes on special qualities when the metropolitan area spills across the borders of sovereign and independent states. One of the best examples of cross-border co-operation is between San Diego, California in the United States and Tijuana, a rapidly urbanizing city across the border in Mexico. In the essay on page 60 Carlos Juárez illustrates that cross-border co-operation in this area has faced many challenges due to its basic physical, economic, and cultural interdependence. In the economic sphere, it has been especially important to manage labour supply problems and illegal migration. Education of Spanish-speaking citizens of San Diego has also been critically important, requiring co-operation from officials on both sides of the border. Similarly, environmental interdependence – especially water, air quality, waste-water management, and waste disposal – has required extensive collective decision-making. He argues that in many situations in which cities sit astride international frontiers, democratic institutions across the border are required for coherent, effective governance.

CASE STUDY

LOCAL GOVERNANCE, DECENTRALIZATION, AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Proserpina Domingo Tapales

In February 1986, the world witnessed a political upheaval in the Philippines: the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship by a peaceful, people-power revolution in Metro Manila, the capital of the Philippines. This paved the way for a return to democracy in the Philippines and inspired other countries with similar experiences of authoritarian regimes wishing to democratize.

The events of 1986 were brought about by a coalition of groups who had been active in the political struggle, representing different sectors including labour, peasants, students, nationalist industrialists, Catholic and Protestant religious groups, as well as by unorganized individuals who went out to barricade the streets after hearing the call on the radio by the influential Cardinal Jaime Sin. Not surprisingly, the euphoria that catapulted Corazon C. Aquino, widow of Senator Benigno S. Aquino to the presidency, brought with it a populist form of government. The 1987 Constitution enshrined people power and led to the passage of more democratic legislation. In 1991, towards the end of the Aquino administration, Congress passed the Local Government Code (Republic Act 7160), which ended centuries of centralized government in the Philippines. As a result, the Filipinos made another contribution to the developing world – the most revolutionary form of decentralization.

Decentralization and Participation

Spain introduced a highly centralized form of government after colonizing the 7,100 islands of the Philippines in 1521. The local government system superimposed on the islands reduced the independent city-states of pre-Spanish times to tax collection agents. The arrival of the Americans in 1898 did not change the centralist system, which was kept after independence and was further exacerbated by martial law. It took the 1986 peaceful revolution to decentralize the local government system in the country, culminating in the Local Government Code of 1991. The Code has three basic components:

- *Devolution of powers* to local chief executives (such as governors of provinces and mayors of cities and municipalities) in the implementation of basic services;
- *Increased sources of funds for local government units* (LGUs) through increased shares from nationally collected taxes as well as their own; and
- Most importantly, *mandating the participation of people* in different aspects of local activity.

People's political participation was strengthened: beyond voting, provisions of an earlier law on initiatives, referendums, plebiscite, and recall were reiterated. Sectoral representation in local councils (called *Sanggunians*) was provided. While the election for three mandated sectors (women, workers, and locally-identified special groups) has not been conducted, the young people are represented in all local councils, as are the village (*barangay*) heads.

A particular innovation of the Local Government Code is the creation of special local bodies for different activities at the local level. From the lowest *barangay*, Local Development Councils (LDC) exist to plan and prioritize local programmes and projects. While the *barangay* chairman, mayor, or governor serves as LDC head, and other officials such as the Chairman of the Council Appropriations Committee play major roles, 25 per cent of the members represent active non-governmental organizations in the community. Other local special bodies also carry NGO or private sector representation, including the Health Board, the Pre-qualification Bids and Awards Committee, the School Board, and the Peace and Order Council.

The Code also strengthened other participative mechanisms provided by earlier laws. At the *barangay* level there are conciliation panels composed of village officials and private persons who sit together to hear cases within the village, thereby minimizing the backlog of cases in the courts. Democracy is also practised in the periodic three-year elections at all levels – municipality, city, province, and national leadership. Youth and village leaders are also elected. Recall of elected local officials has been strengthened by the Code. Plebiscites have been actively utilized in the consultations among the voters on issues directly affecting them, like the conversion of a municipality into a city, or carving out a region from various provinces.

Making Participatory Democracy Work

However, legislation alone cannot ensure people's participation in governance. During the authoritarian regime, for example, referendums were used to force a fearful people to legitimize government policy proposals. In the case of post-1986 events, however, legislation merely instituted the participative mechanisms already at work. The 1987 Constitution legalized people's participation, while the 1991 Code spelled out the mechanics for it. What then emerged is a lively blend of co-operation between government and the people. There are also people's organizations (POs), associations of people for their mutual and collective benefit, such as associations of farmers and fisherfolk.

Many cases of local government/people co-operation have been documented. To encourage innovation among LGUs several government and foreign institutions have granted awards in areas of health, sanitation, agriculture, environmental protection, and efficient management. Noteworthy amongst these are the *Galing Pook* (good local area), the HAMIS (health and management information system), Clean and Green, and Republic Heritage awards.

The Center for Local and Regional Governance studied three outstanding local authorities for UNDP's comparative research on decentralization in 1997-1998, and identified factors that led to their success. The study focused on three areas – Irosin, Sorsogon on the island of Luzon; Balilihan in the island province of Bohol; and Surigao City on the island of Mindanao. All programmes started with health and expanded into other areas; all received *Galing Pook* awards; Irosin and Surigao City also received HAMIS awards.

The case studies reveal that several factors lead to successful local government programmes:

▪ the presence of a *catalyst* (in Irosin, Sorsogon, an NGO; in Balilihan, Bohol, the local mayor; in Surigao City, the health worker);

▪ *community organization* (people's organizations established in Irosin; the *puroks* – groups of 10-25 families living in a contiguous area – organized by the mayor in Balilihan; the Mothers' Clubs organized by the midwife in Surigao City);

▪ *leadership* (the mayors in Irosin and Balilihan, the midwife in Surigao City); and

▪ *government support* (all the local governments concerned provided funds for the programmes to sustain them).

In the Philippines the tripartite approach -– involving the government (or local governments), NGOs, and people's organizations in the planning and delivery of programmes – is a strategy used in many areas for rural development.

Successful projects also have been spearheaded by the Philippine Business for Social Progress, which is funded by contributions of large business enterprises. There are successful modules of LGU/private sector co-operation. Marikina, Metro Manila cleaned up its river through government/private sector financial co-operation and Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila built a modern market through a build-operate-and-transfer (BOT) scheme.

Conclusions

The success of recent innovative programmes at the local level in the Philippines can be attributed to a number of factors, including the following:

▪ *People's participation*. Much of the success is due to the close collaboration between the local government and the people. But people's participation is not an overnight phenomenon. People had been prepared in advance through community organizing efforts and through the work of NGOs. Ironically, the Marcos years spawned non-governmental organizations intended to augment the delivery of basic services. Some organizations documented crimes against human rights committed by the dictatorship to bring them to the world's attention. Others assisted different sectors of society – the peasants, fisherfolk, women, overseas contract workers, and so on.

▪ *Leadership*. In all stories of successful local programmes innovative and committed leadership by the local government has been a crucial factor. The initiative of

the local leaders has motivated people and helped to assure funds for the pro-gramme. In many instances leadership provides the structural mechanism for pro-gramme implementation.

- ■ *Decentralization*. These efforts could not have taken place under the old system of centralization in the country. The policy of decentralization pronounced in the Local Government Code of 1991 reversed the centralist system, and provided more auton-omy to local governments and their chief executives, which enabled them to pro-vide better services. The Code provided for "devolution", or political decentraliza-tion, which gave local government units the power to initiate, fund, and implement programmes meant for local development.

But decentralization in the Philippines was primarily a social occurrence. "People empowerment" started as a response to the authoritarian regime, and it climaxed in the 1986 social upheaval that led to more efforts toward greater empowerment. In such a situation a push toward decentralization of power to the communities is inevitable.

The empowerment of the people in the Philippines, as expressed through people's participation in governance and local government powers, is an irreversible trend. Especially over the last decade, local governments and people have learned how to work together. Moreover, the 1986 people power revolution has been accompanied by the emergence of a new type of leadership – younger, more idealistic, more in con-trol, and more aware of the new powers they have been given. Of course, not all efforts lead to success; but success stories abound and serve as inspiration to local governments and to people around the world.

E S S A Y

PARTNERSHIPS FOR GOVERNANCE
Models for Workable Fiscal Decentralization
Arno Loessner

An approach to governance that involves citizens in the work of their government enhances sustainable democracy. Fiscal decentralization (FD), the devolution of revenue and expenditure authority to local levels, can benefit such an approach. Its purpose is to have the work of government reflect the desires of constituents by letting local units of government allocate resources in accordance with local demands, thereby increasing citizen interest and participation, and making government more responsive, efficient, and accountable. When public officials have the resources they need to address local concerns, citizens will not permit them to pass off responsibility to others. In a democracy, officials will want to respond to the needs of their constituents, because their re-election depends on it. Despite these arguments in its favour, experience shows a reluctance to proceed with FD.

A number of reasons can explain this reluctance:

∎ some transfers of authority have substituted one elite group at the centre for another at the local level;

∎ local officials may lack financial management capability;

∎ central government officials may resist sharing power or may feel that too much decentralization will destabilize national policy; and

∎ local officials fear more responsibility without resources or the power to generate resources locally.

To carry out FD effectively a number of lessons must be kept in mind, including the following.

∎ *The challenge is to strengthen democracy and local governance with FD without diminishing the benefits that can arise from co-ordinated action at the centre.*

FD must not negatively impact the capacity of the central government to formulate and carry out national policies for sub-national income balance (equalizing wealth and resources across regions within a country), macro-economic stability, and national economic development.

The IULA Declaration of Local Self-Government (IULA, 1985, 1993) and the proposed World Charter of Local Self-Government (IULA, 1998) emphasize the concept of subsidiarity, in which public services and revenues are assigned to the lowest level of government competent to implement them.

Macro-economic policy and sub-national equalization (ensuring fair distribution of wealth and resources) are appropriate responsibilities of central government.

Governments at all levels should be partners in economic growth and help do their part to balance the distribution of revenue equally to all regions. Local governments should be consulted and included in deliberations.

■ *Clear and reliable rules must be in place to assign service delivery responsibilities.*

With adequate macro-economic policies in place to provide for economic and political stability, local governments should have responsibility for local services with appropriate intergovernmental transfers from the centre to provide for special needs of ethnic or indigenous populations and service quality standardization. There may be intermediate or regional levels of government, depending upon the geographic size of the country, the extent of externalities, and opportunity for economies of scale.

■ *To reinforce partnership among levels of government, it is important to develop vertical (intergovernmental) and horizontal (cross-sectoral) partnerships.*

While there is no single way to measure degrees of FD, it is advisable to seek supportive intergovernmental relationships, as opposed to segregating service responsibilities. The existence of conditions for centralization does not necessarily require centralization. Grants to local jurisdictions can encourage delivery of services with positive spillovers beyond municipal boundaries. Similarly, negative spillovers such as air and water pollution can be addressed with a combination of corrective regulations and grants. Inter-municipal agreements and special districts can achieve economies of scale.

The table below presents a model that organizes services to benefit from the comparative advantages of each level of government. Some services are assigned exclusively at the national level (e.g., defence, macro-economic policy, judiciary) and some are more or less exclusively local in nature, such as the enforcement of local laws and property rights, but most services benefit from shared responsibility. Trust, probity, and competence are necessary, but if any of these is lacking, officials in other levels of government will see it in their interest to try to restore them, making intergovernmental and cross-sectoral partnerships important to sustainable democracy.

Democracy benefits from government relationships with the private sector and with NGOs. These sectors can bring additional resources, new approaches, and a service delivery capacity that spans across government boundaries.

Figure 8	**Assigning Responsibilities in an Integrated System of Governance** **The Example of Water Supply**		
Organization	**Service provision responsibilities**	**Expenditure and revenue responsibilities**	**Production and delivery responsibilities**
Central government	Water quality standards, agreements with other nations on water rights, social and economic development standards	Credit-worthiness rating, bond bank, grants/loans to regions and local authorities, rules for debt limits, procurement, audits, and financial reporting	Project co-ordination and technical assistance. Overview to ensure plan meets national economic development and regional equity requirements
Regional government	Regional standards and needs, regional plans	Regional taxes and charges to cover costs of debt amortization, and operation and maintenance	Operation of regional pipelines, pumps, treatment plants to benefit from regional planning and economies of scale
Local government	Regional standards and needs, regional plans	Collect local taxes and charges, and serve as "agent" for other layers of governments	Billing, maintenance, connections, and planning

Balancing the Books

■ *The cost of locally produced services should usually be met by locally-collected taxes and user charges. To achieve this, legal authority must be granted to make local government taxing powers enforceable.*

The first test of any public revenue assignment system must be to insure that revenues are sufficient to meet the local share of expenditure assignments. Local officials must determine that the tax base is adequate, tax rates are correctly set, and revenue collection is efficient. These tests are more likely to be robust if local own-source revenues play an important part in local fiscal policy. In order to make local officials more accountable, central governments are encouraged to stress the linkage between local costs and benefits and to commit to an appropriate level of local own-source revenues that will make this link as clear as possible.

Area-wide services, and services mandated by central government, such as payments to redistribute income, should be supported by intergovernmental transfers from central to local level to prevent unfunded mandates. Central government may encourage the production of local public goods and services by using the national tax base to make direct grants to municipalities restricted for the sole purpose of fulfilling directives given at the central level. This is particularly efficient if local discretion is permitted to tailor service delivery to local needs and conditions. As FD matures, restricted grants may be replaced or supplemented with unrestricted "block" grants to allow local areas greater discretion in their application. In such grants, localities are given more discretion on how to spend the money transferred from the central government.

■ *It is particularly important that central government grants to local government be timely and predictable.*

If central government does not follow through on revenue distribution, unexpected revenue gaps render local budgets useless and undermine the credibility of government officials throughout the system. Local officials and their national associations must enforce revenue transfers as a condition of FD.

Central government may need to act unilaterally and/or impose certain limitations to balance local autonomy and national stability. Most central governments reserve the right to limit local authority over spending, tax rates, tax assessments, and tax bases. These limits should not be punitive; indeed central government should consider the impact of macro-economic policies on local authorities and take compensating actions, as appropriate. Compensating action policy requires an understanding of sub-national *fiscal capacity* (tax base) and *fiscal effort* (measured by the effective tax rate: local tax payments divided by personal income).

Capital Finance

Intergovernmental partnerships are important to capital budgeting as well. Central government can partner with local government to encourage investments with benefits that spill over local boundaries, and to assist poorer areas that lack sufficient fiscal capacity. As local officials consider capital outlays, it is important to understand the impact of the outlays upon subsequent operating budgets (e.g., maintenance

expenses) and to determine the capacity to handle these ongoing expenses before making the capital outlay.

While co-ordination of the capital and operating budgets is essential, a separate capital budget should be prepared, regardless of the source of funds used for capital expenditures, and the budget document should show the results of tests of fiscal capacity. The capital budget will usually cover a period of six years on a rolling basis. This is appropriate, given the nature of capital projects and their funding, but it does mean that the budgeting period will usually exceed the length of term of elected local officials. Central governments typically want to retain some control over local debt. If a local jurisdiction becomes over extended and is unable to pay annual debt repayments, meeting these obligations will be the responsibility of central government. For example, in the United States, only two of the 50 states have not imposed debt limits on cities. Restrictions are usually for capital projects and typically include a debt limit expressed as a proportion of tax capacity, which is contained in the state-issued municipal charter. Restrictions may specify the purposes for which debt may be incurred, prescribe procedures for issuing debt, and stipulate types of permitted debt obligations. Thirty-nine states require voter approval for issuance of bonds by local governments.

In addition to setting rules for local government debt, it is helpful to clarify capital expenditure partnerships with other sectors. In some countries interest income paid to bondholders is exempt from taxation by the central government, which makes locally-issued bonds more attractive to investors and helps forge important intergovernmental partnerships.

Credit-worthiness ratings by private international credit rating companies are increasingly important as governments realize the potential to tap into the assets of capital markets and banks world-wide. Ratings companies systematically evaluate the capacity of governments to repay debt with interest and render their assessment of fiscal strength in a risk rating. Lenders rely heavily upon credit-worthiness ratings. These ratings can be a useful evaluative tool for citizens as well as investors.

Bond buyers expect to receive higher earnings (interest payments) on monies loaned to higher risk borrowers. Improved ratings will usually mean lower risk to lenders, which means bonds can be sold at lower borrowing costs. Although local governments strive for better ratings, in some cases they are limited to the overall rating given the central government of a country through a "sovereign" rating cap. This alone should be sufficient incentive for local officials to want to work with central government to insure effective national economic and legal systems. In the event of default, the responsibility for local debt falls upon central government, so the sovereign cap is a means of providing accurate risk assessment to borrowers no matter how well managed the local government or how viable the projects. It also prevents local governments from acquiring credit-worthiness ratings that allow them to compete with the central government for borrowed credit.

Implementing Fiscal Decentralization

Effective FD strategy emphasizes public administration processes and rules more than personalities. Rules assign service provision, production and expenditure responsibilities, and allocate revenues between levels of government. Rules govern budgeting and reporting, cash management, procurement, audit, and debt. Donor organizations, bond rating companies, and those who invest in public sector projects expect these rules to be enforceable and predictable, defined in law, capable of revision as needed, and binding upon all levels of government. Predictability is a prerequisite of FD. Properly and equitably administered, these assignments and rules can yield a more efficient public sector that attracts private financial resources.

Experience confirms the importance of partnerships with "supporting organizations" in achieving sustainable decentralization. Two such organizations are national associations of local authorities and universities. The World Bank argues that national associations can act as a "counterbalance" to the authority of central government, thereby contributing to the success of decentralization. National associations conduct research and articulate policies. IULA, whose members are national associations, is working to strengthen their capacity to carry out these roles. Universities can also play an important role by enriching public understanding of local democracy. Roles include educational outreach programmes that extend universities beyond the traditional classroom, educating students in public administration and providing training for practitioners, and applied research in financial management to enable and sustain the FD process.

CASE STUDY

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA USA AND TIJUANA, MEXICO
Co-operation and Democracy on the US-Mexican Border
Carlos E. Juárez

The San Diego-Tijuana border region is a contiguous, interdependent urban region bisected by an international frontier. It offers a valuable case study of unprecedented partnership between two municipalities, and highlights some of the challenges facing border regions at different levels of political and economic development. Since at least the mid-1980s, greater cross-border co-operation has also helped to foster greater local democracy on the Mexican side, with Tijuana emerging as a leading city in Mexico's rebirth of democracy, with vigorous political competition, a vibrant civil society, and a well-organized private sector.

Geographical Context

The San Diego-Tijuana region consists of the County of San Diego in the south-west corner of the US state of California, and the Municipality of Tijuana, capital city of the Mexican state of Baja California. The two cities are located across from each other on the extreme western end of the international boundary between Mexico and the United States. The approximately four million people of the San Diego-Tijuana region are highly urbanized and concentrated near the coast in the valleys, terraces, and low hills inland from the coastal range of mountains. Most of the region's population is located within 15 miles of the ocean and 20 miles on either side of the international boundary.

As the population and economy of the region has grown substantially, the US and Mexican portions of the transborder region have become more inextricably linked. Economic interaction, cultural ties, and shared transborder environmental, transportation, and other urban management problems and opportunities have increased significantly over the past decades. On one side of the nearly 2,000-mile-long border lies the United States of America, one of the most highly industrialized, technologically advanced countries in the world. To the other side lies Mexico, a developing country in transition. It is unlikely that there are two more distinctly different countries anywhere sharing a border; the political and social systems of the two countries are radically different. Those differences present a serious challenge for co-operation and management of several major global issues. But they also present an invaluable opportunity for fostering greater local democracy on the Mexican side as public officials and private citizens from both cities deepen their level of interaction.

Historical Background

Some historical background is crucial to understanding the border region's complex interdependence. The international boundary line between USA and Mexico was

established in the mid-nineteenth century, a time when the seeds of many of today's border issues and problems were sown. The Prohibition Era in the US, beginning in 1919, brought enormous changes to Tijuana as gambling, horse racing, tourism, entertainment, and the availability of alcohol fuelled its economy. Dependent upon San Diego and Southern California, Tijuana in the 1920s experienced rapid urban and economic growth. Significant amounts of capital, mainly from the US, built cabarets, bars, hippodromes, casinos, and hotels; industries such as beer and wine production grew. Many of the businesses created in Tijuana during this golden age of tourism (1919-1929) were staffed mainly by Americans and the economic ties to San Diego and Southern California were firmly established; they have persisted until today.

By the 1940s, the economic links were strengthened by severe labour shortages in the US during World War Two. One response to the labour issue was the establishment by the two governments of the *Bracero* Programme that allowed for short-term contract work by Mexicans in the United States. This programme, which continued in one form or another until 1964, had significant impact on San Diego and Tijuana. It provided the labour that San Diego needed, not only during the war, but also for the great period of urban growth in the post-war years.

Tijuana's economy is relatively isolated from the national economy of Mexico and has developed largely through its connections with the US economy. The best example is the *maquiladora* industry (border industries, mostly manufacturing, that take advantage of low labour costs and less strict regulatory environments) established in Tijuana and other Mexican border cities beginning in 1964 to create jobs for former *braceros* who lost their jobs as a result of the termination of the *Bracero* Programme. The economy of Tijuana and Baja California has been stimulated by the rapid expansion of the *maquiladora* industry, and since the inauguration of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, the economic linkages between San Diego and Tijuana have grown and intensified. The region is now a powerful symbol of globalization: in recent years, it has been growing at an annual rate of seven per cent, and Mexico ranks second to China as a destination for developing-world investment.

From an economic perspective, San Diego and Tijuana are:

- asymmetrical in terms of size and influence on each others' economy;
- complementary in terms of goods and services produced and the techniques used to produce them; and
- increasingly integrated in terms of exports/imports, transborder shopping, and patterns of commuter workers.

Transborder Economic Linkages and Issues
The extraordinarily high demographic and urban growth of San Diego and Tijuana since 1940 has physically brought the cities together to share the same contiguously-settled urban space in a large metropolitan region divided by a porous international boundary. Physical proximity has brought a host of issues such as renegade sewage

flows from Tijuana to San Diego, movement of disease, transborder air pollution, and transborder traffic and transportation problems that have made it difficult to ignore the international context of these issues.

The economies of San Diego and Tijuana, their transborder linkages, and their ties with their respective national economies and the world economy are not well understood. On the US side, methods of gathering basic economic data often do not easily permit separating out city of San Diego-specific information. On the Mexican side, data collection is much poorer. In terms of understanding the linkages across the border, many of the flows are not measured in any meaningful way and often data collected on one side of the border are not comparable with data from the other city. Despite these difficulties, a picture of the transborder regional economy has emerged through a number of studies so that a description of the region and its components is possible with some degree of confidence.

Social and cultural factors, in some ways, have lagged behind other factors in creating cross-border linkages between San Diego and Tijuana. For much of its history, San Diego was not a border town in the sense of being an international city. The population of Mexican origin in San Diego was small – only 14.9 per cent in 1980 – so there was minimal transborder family and cultural interaction. In some ways, Los Angeles, with its very large Hispanic population and direct social and cultural ties to Mexico, was more of a border town than San Diego. By 1990, however, San Diego's population had changed considerably. Strong demographic and urban growth in the southern part of the county and a rapidly growing Hispanic population had increased the city's social- and cultural-level connections across the border. In 1990, over 20 per cent of the city's population was Hispanic and with more economic ties to Tijuana and Mexico, more San Diego residents came to have an international focus.

As the percentage of San Diego's Mexican population has increased, family and cultural ties have also increased between the two cities. It has been a two-way flow. Expanded business opportunities in the 1980s for San Diegans in Tijuana that were related to the growing *maquiladora* industry and new investment possibilities brought by NAFTA, led to more San Diegans crossing to Tijuana to live and work. Tijuana's population, by contrast, is relatively homogeneous. Currently, there are about 35,000 workers who reside in Tijuana and commute on a regular basis to work in San Diego legally, with most of these individuals concentrated in low paid, service sector jobs. By contrast, many of the American and other foreign managers who work in Tijuana tend to reside on the US side of the border. The result is a steady flow of daily commuters back and forth to their respective jobs.

Despite the differences between the Tijuana and San Diego portions of the metropolitan region, there are similarities in the development of the twin cities over the past several decades. Most striking is that both cities experienced high rates of economic growth and rapid urban expansion. This was driven largely by the generation of jobs on both sides of the border and the subsequent immigration in response to economic opportunity. An area of considerable controversy in the region relates to the ongoing

debate about the costs associated with San Diego providing a series of social and governmental services to people from Tijuana and *vice versa*, about the benefits brought to San Diego by documented and illegal workers from Tijuana, and about the contributions to tax revenues that people from Tijuana make to San Diego and from San Diego to Tijuana.

Another area of tension and controversy relates to drug trafficking, an issue that accelerated in the 1980s and 1990s, as Mexican drug cartels, including one based in Tijuana, emerged as powerful actors in Mexican politics. The trafficking of illicit drugs from Tijuana into San Diego is a large enterprise that produces significant profits. It has also led to growing insecurity in the region as the violence associated with the drug economy led to the assassination of many public officials on the Mexican side.

Education

A strong area of interaction and linkage has been education. Higher education in the San Diego-Tijuana area has played an important regional role, not only in terms of the formation of human capital for the transborder metropolis, but also in the analysis of regional issues. The products of this research eventually trickle down to broader society and to decision-makers in the public and private sectors. Academic and public/private partnerships are increasingly becoming crucial to meeting the challenges of regional issues and to taking advantage of bi-national opportunities.

In the 1970s, at San Diego State University (SDSU), several units were established to enhance the university's ability to work on important regional issues and to understand and facilitate interactions with Mexican border institutions. In 1983, the Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias was organized at SDSU to continue this effort. Since the early 1980s, ties between SDSU and Mexican border institutions have grown considerably. By 1996, SDSU and Mexican universities implemented a transborder co-operative undergraduate degree programme and had additional undergraduate and graduate transborder programmes on the drawing board. Additionally, an ongoing series of seminars at SDSU, "Californias in Transition", has been bringing together researchers and practitioners from both sides of the border since 1992. The establishment of *El Colegio de la Frontera Norte* (COLEF, the College of the Northern Border) in Tijuana in the early 1980s and the emergence of the *Universidad Autónoma de Baja California* (UABC, National Autonomous University of Baja California) as major centres of research on regional and transborder issues created a critical mass of Mexican scholars for interaction with counterparts across the border in San Diego and elsewhere.

As the *maquiladora* industry and NAFTA emerged as significant national and international issues, the University of California-San Diego (UCSD) began to devote more systematic attention to aspects of the border reality. UCSD's Center for US-Mexican Studies has taken the lead in this area, but also important have been the Institute of the Americas, the Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Rim Studies and variety of other departments at UCSD.

The universities of the San Diego-Tijuana region play a significant role in the formation of human capital in the transborder zone. As the programmes of study have evolved to reflect the policy concerns of the bi-national region, generations of future leaders have graduated with new skills and tools with which to meet the challenges and take advantage of opportunities presented in the new global world at the transborder regional level.

Environmental Issues

A number of transborder environmental issues are of concern in the San Diego-Tijuana region. Some of these problems are the result of rapid population growth and urbanization in the region without accompanying adequate physical infrastructure. At the same time, some of the problems are related to inadequate regulation, enforcement, and compliance. The problems of water supply and water quality are also critical issues affecting both cities. Tijuana not only faces severe problems with water supply but with the declining quality of water. In the San Diego-Tijuana border region, not only is there a shortage of water sources, but existing surface streams and aquifers are threatened by raw sewage dumping, agricultural run-off, and industrial and hazardous waste pollution. Provisions of NAFTA have opened up mechanisms for greater co-operation and funding of environmental issues, although important differences in political and administrative structures continue to hamper an effective long-term solution.

Political and Administrative Features

Two very different political systems meet at the border, which makes co-operation on mutual problems much more complicated. Mexico is highly centralized. Political power flows from the presidency, as do economic resources. Local governments are relatively weak in Mexico. Traditionally, Mexican municipalities have had no secure and adequate source of funding so they have relied on transfer payments from state and federal governments. There is no civil service in Mexico, so with each new municipal president, governor, or president, there is massive turnover in administrative staff. This makes continuity in programmes difficult and works against continuity in transboundary co-operation. This is particularly a problem in the case of Tijuana where new municipal administrations take office every three years.

There are few direct governmental and administrative direct counterparts across the border. Areas that are local responsibilities on the US side are often state or federal responsibilities in Baja California. California (US) local governments are able to raise financing for infrastructure through issuing bonds and taxing mechanisms, but these options are extremely limited in Baja California and Mexico.

The juxtaposition at the border of the highly-centralized Mexican political system with the decentralized federal US political system has broad implications for the daily lives of border residents. The differences in the two political systems historically have hindered bilateral co-operation on transborder issues of importance to border residents. While the foreign relations departments (the US Department of State and the

Mexican *Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores* [SRE]) are technically in charge of developing and implementing foreign policy, the Mexican SRE is much more successful than its US counterpart in controlling, supervising, and limiting transborder contacts and relations between Mexican government agencies at the state, local, and federal levels, and their counterparts in the US.

Due to the federal system of the US, many different government agencies make decisions with foreign implications. Agencies from the US border states and from the city and county local governments likewise initiate policies that have importance for Mexico and its border region. While the US State Department tries to monitor these actions, it does not attempt to enforce absolute control. However, in Mexico policy tends to emanate mainly from, and is more tightly controlled by, the Foreign Relations ministry.

These important differences in political and administrative structures clearly make local transborder co-operation more difficult. Direct administrative counterparts often do not exist in the twin cities. Usually, local government agencies in San Diego are able to initiate projects independently and develop financing. Whereas Tijuana agencies are constrained not only by restricted mandates for independent action, but have extremely limited financial and technical resources and trained human capital. The great disparity in resources available to local governments on opposite sides of the border is not adequately appreciated in discussions of transborder co-operation. The significant financial asymmetry of public finances makes it clear why Tijuana has so much difficulty in meeting the basic urban service needs of its rapidly growing population, and why it is often difficult for the municipality to participate in activities with counterparts in the US.

Another difference in the political and public administration systems across the border is the nature of public service and office holding. In San Diego, the majority of local, state, and federal government employees fall under various sorts of civil service systems. This assures that the professional staff most responsible for the day-to-day running of agencies will remain in place even when there is a change in the elected officials. In Tijuana, the situation is quite different. There, with the change of administrations, whether federal, state, or local, government employees at all levels are replaced by new political appointments. Hence, continuity and institutional memory are much more fragmented in public administration on the Mexican side of the border. An additional element is that in Mexico, upward career movement often means jumping from agency to agency through a series of political appointments. While this produces individuals with significant experience in many areas of government, it tends to work against the most capable people staying in one agency to provide leadership and continuing expertise. Bureaucrats in the US tend to advance careers through promotion within the same agency, continually upgrading their knowledge and skills in that one particular area. All of these factors constitute bottlenecks for effective bi-national governmental co-operation.

Future Challenges and Opportunities

With respect to transborder collaboration and planning, there are many perspectives on the kind of relationship the two cities should aspire to develop. One is that San Diego and Tijuana are on independent development paths and therefore should collaborate only to the extent necessary to keep out of each other's way and facilitate – through the provision of infrastructure – normal interaction between the neighbouring cities. This is the peaceful co-existence option. Another view holds that the two cities must develop a close partnership by forging a joint vision of the future of the region with a plan and appropriate transborder institutions for achieving it. This vision must not be clouded by wishful thinking and inaccurate information about the region, nor by narrow and elitist agendas. Rather, it must be based on solid and reliable data, a realistic recognition of the significant differences and asymmetries from one side of the border to the other, and participation of all sectors of the transborder region in the processes of self-definition and planning. This will provide the basis for this process to move forward effectively into the future.

Irrespective of one's view regarding a transborder policy, it is clear that close, ongoing collaboration is essential to managing the many spillover environmental and health problems as well as to developing the infrastructure needed to facilitate the region's increasing integration. The only question at this crucial juncture in the region's history is what kinds of transborder institutions can be both effective and politically acceptable. The increasing self-identification of San Diego-Tijuana as a linked bi-national region along with growing economic integration, social and familial transborder linkages, and co-operation and collaboration in higher education, local government, environmental protection, public health, infrastructure planning, and other areas, suggests that the region is now prepared to move forward with the development of more rational mechanisms for co-ordination and management of the region.

The growing interdependence of the region in recent years has lead to a wide array of consultative mechanisms, some formal and others more informal in nature. The two neighbouring cities could help facilitate public management of the region by establishing a transborder management authority to begin the slow and complex process of better managing and planning the bi-national region into the twenty-first century. Initially, the effort needs to be directed towards narrow, specific aspects of transborder management; regional transportation planning is a good example. Once successful working partnerships have developed and a record of positive achievements has been established, then the efforts should be expanded to encompass more complex tasks such as regional economic development planning, or transborder ecosystem management.

Lessons for Local Democracy

The cross-border co-operation between the municipalities of San Diego and Tijuana has helped to create an unprecedented partnership to help address many common

issues. What is equally important, though somewhat more difficult to gauge, is the impact this relationship has had on democratic development on the Mexican side. While San Diego is clearly a developed "local democracy", and part of one of the more institutionalized states in the US, Tijuana remains a city with a more limited degree of democracy, though one clearly in transition. Indeed, since the mid- to late-1980s, the city has emerged as an important stronghold for the centre-right National Action Party (PAN, *Partido Accion Nacional*), which now controls the national government since the historic July 2000 election of President Vicente Fox, which marked the first change in power in modern Mexican history.

It could well be argued that the close links between the two neighbour cities, particularly through various consultative mechanisms, has helped to foster a more independent streak in public officials in Tijuana. Close links between the two municipalities help to develop a more open process of decision-making, and can lead to a certain degree of learning on the part of Mexican authorities. This suggests that local democracy is something that can indeed be affected by international forces, especially in an era of increasing globalization.

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3. | DIVERSITY AND DEMOCRACY |

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Every major urban arena today features cultural minorities, distinct ethnic, linguistic or religious groups, and networks based around identity affiliation. Whether in Cape Town, Jakarta, London, New York, Santiago or Tokyo, an important aspect of modern urban life today is the need to recognize, embrace, and benefit from cultural diversity.

While there are no clear answers for promoting democracy in a diverse setting beset by the problems of ethnic politics, this chapter and the associated case studies illustrate how democracy can be conceived as a system for conflict management. Specifically, it investigates *principles*, *public policy guidelines*, and *practical measures* for promoting social peace, by examining the following questions:

— **What principles should inform local democracy as a tool for conflict management?**

— **How can urban public policy be better conceived and implemented to help manage diversity in deeply-divided urban arenas?**

— **What practical measures can be put in place to help promote local-level peace-building?**

3.1 Ethnically-Charged Disputes

■ *Ethnically charged disputes can arise over a variety of issues from transportation policies to language use to employment opportunities.*

Much of the excitement and creativity of today's metropolitan arenas comes from the synergy generated by the mixing of ideas, art, and culture. At the same time, many urban settings suffer from problems of prejudice, discrimination, racial hatred, and some-

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times violent conflict among identity groups. Recent ethnic tensions in Copenhagen, Jakarta, Kaduna (Nigeria), Karachi, Los Angeles, Montreal, Moscow and Paris are only a few examples; many other violent situations never make the global press.

Disputes arise on any number of issues that may affect the safety, cultural security, and livelihood of ethnic groups, whether they live in distinct neighbourhoods or in more mixed settings. Some examples include:

- *Transportation* policies, which affect the ways in which communities are linked together, and with the central business district;

- *Employment* opportunities, and equal access to jobs and benefits such as health insurance;

- *Housing,* access to land, affordable rents, and the quality of public projects for disadvantaged members of society;

- *Language-use* policies, especially in public schools and in public forums such as city council meetings and other open methods of making decisions;

- *Policing* that does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, race, or religion and security for crime-ridden neighbourhoods;

- *Religious practice*, and public restrictions or promotion of religious beliefs, particularly when these values form the basis of law that affects people of other religions; and

- *Cultural expression*, for example the terms under which a given group can celebrate its culture and traditions, especially in situations where other groups find the expression of group pride threatening to their own.

3.2 Democracy as Conflict Management

■ *Democracy is a set of institutions and practices for conflict management.*

Reconciling traditional concepts of democracy given today's reality of large, multi-ethnic cities is difficult, and there is no ready set of answers on how this can be achieved. Clearly, chauvinism, discrimination, intimidation, violence, and cultural intolerance are dangers to democracy. Mitigating segregation and fostering inclusion are key functions of democracy.

Democracy and conflict management must go hand in hand. Democracy is in many ways a system of managing social conflicts that arise from community diversity using a set of agreed social rules. In a democracy, disputes arise, are processed, debated and reacted to, rather than being resolved definitively. In short, democracy operates as a conflict management system without recourse to violence. Larry Diamond writes that:

> *Sustained interethnic moderation and peace follow from the frank recognition of plural identities, legal protection for group and individual rights, devolution of power to various localities and regions, and political institutions that encourage bargaining and accommodation at the centre.*

Certainly in some South Asian countries, one of the driving forces for devolution of political power has been the need to promote conflict management in areas where the central authority is perceived as too strong. Decentralization and local autonomy may be a mechanism for conflict management. In their study of decentralization in Asia, Abdul Aziz and David Arnold suggest that in India, for example, "over concentration of power at the centre is frequently cited as a factor contributing to unrest in regions such as Punjab, Kashmir, and Assam. … A similar set of factors underlies Sri Lanka's establishment in 1987 of elected provincial councils, in a move to defuse demands for political autonomy in the island's strife-torn north eastern region."

3.2.1 Aims and Options

Designers of systems of local democracy for managing and promoting inter-group harmony must have a clear understanding of the aims of the systems they are trying to devise. Two broad aims include:

- *Groups sharing urban space.* Is the purpose to give local ethnic groups autonomy over their own affairs and representation at the level of municipal decision-making as a whole? Is the city a mosaic of groups living essentially apart but sharing power and working together in consensus?

- *The city as a melting pot.* Or is the purpose to promote integrated political coalitions, and not to base devolution or decision-making in identity terms? That is, is the city to be seen as a rainbow or mosaic, in which identity is recognized but democracy and political activity is not based along identity lines?

Various options for design of democratic institutions can serve either of these aims.

- *Autonomy.* Autonomy is not a term on which there is a consensus definition, but Yash Ghai's effort at a definition is useful: "Autonomy is a device to allow an ethnic group or other groups claiming a distinct identity to exercise direct control over important affairs of concern to them while allowing the larger entity to exercise those powers which are the common interests of both sections." Forms of autonomy include "symmetrical devolution" in which all units enjoy similar powers, and "asymmetrical devolution", which might provide enhanced powers to a particular neighbourhood or group. An example of asymmetrical devolution is the special administrative arrangements made available to Hong Kong following negotiations between China and the United Kingdom that led to the city's

transfer to Chinese central authority in 1997. Hong Kong enjoys its own political assembly, legal system, revenue authority, and status unique within China.

■ *Power sharing: group security.* Power sharing refers to joint or consensus decision-making by all major mobilized factions in society; it is widely viewed as a viable alternative to "winner-take-all" democracy in which the winner at the ballot box alone controls the reins of authority. The *group building-block approach* relies on accommodation by ethnic group leaders at the political centre and guarantees for group autonomy and minority rights. The key institutions are: decentralization to the neighbourhood level (where groups are known to concentrate); minority vetoes on issues of particular importance to them; grand coalition city councils in a parliamentary framework, and proportionality in all spheres of public life (e.g., budgeting and civil service appointments).

An example of this is the local government system in Brussels, Belgium, in which seats in the legislative assembly are allocated on a linguistic basis and there is a high degree of local decentralization to French or Flemish-speaking neighbourhoods. Direct elections to the newly autonomous Council of the Brussels-Capital region were first held in 1989. Candidates taking part in the Brussels regional elections are presented on separate lists depending on their linguistic affiliation. When they submit their application to contest elections, they state the linguistic group to which they belong; the Brussels regional deputies elected on the French-speaking lists then constitute the French linguistic group and the Brussels regional deputies elected on the Flemish-speaking lists constitute the Flemish linguistic group. The form of local power sharing reflects a broader national commitment in Belgium to representation and autonomy along ethnic group lines.

■ *Power sharing: integrative approach.* Power sharing is not a single approach, however, and some suggest that rather than providing guarantees of group security, peace settlements should feature incentives for multi-ethnic co-operation. The integrative approach avoids using ethnic groups as the building blocks of a common society. Rather, it seeks to build multi-ethnic political coalitions (usually political parties), to create incentives for political leaders to be moderate on divisive ethnic themes, and to enhance minority influence in majority decision-making. The elements of an integrative approach include electoral systems that encourage pre-election pacts across ethnic lines, non-ethnic federalism that diffuses points of power, and public policies that promote political allegiances that transcend groups.

The elections for an elected mayor in London (UK) illustrate how minority voters can help determine the winner in highly diverse settings. In the May 2000

poll, voters had two votes for mayor, one for their first preference and another for a second preference. The victor, politician Ken Livingstone, enhanced his electoral majority through the counting of second-preference votes; analysts widely believe that minority support helped Mr Livingstone gain office in this historic election.

■ *Majority rule democracy.* Majority rule democracy is generally not seen as ideal for multi-ethnic cities in which one identity group is a majority or is historically dominant. Ethnic minorities may be consistently outvoted and rarely obtain representation; exclusion breeds frustration, which can lead to violence. Strict majority rule in Jerusalem, and limitation of the franchise to Israeli citizens, has led to considerable alienation by the excluded Palestinian community.

Yet majority democracy (as we note in Chapter Four) can sometimes serve to induce politicians and political parties to include minorities – especially when their votes are needed to win – and majority rule systems should not be ruled out when the demographic and social factors are favourable to building multi-ethnic political coalitions. In mayoral elections in New York City, for example, candidates work hard to court the votes of a wide range of ethnic, racial, and religious groups, and as a result they are generally responsive to these groups' concerns while governing. When coupled with other measures such as sensible housing and home ownership policies, basic protection of individual human rights, and safety, liberal or majority rule democracy may be a more desirable solution than those that are primarily designed to reconcile identity-based social differences through ethnic-group-based representation.

Although there is considerable flexibility in designing systems of local democracy for ethnic conflict management, it is generally agreed that autonomy and group-based power sharing tend to serve the aims of groups sharing urban space. Integrative power sharing and majority rule democracy may help to integrate ethnic groups more freely in political institutions and in civil society.

3.2.2 Approaches to Conflict Handling

Increasingly, conflict specialists are concerned with efforts to build local capacity for consensus-building skills that feature negotiation, mediation, and coalition-building capabilities. This is particularly a focus in big cities with communal tensions and in post-war cities, which face serious problems of reconstruction and reconciliation. There are four major approaches to handling conflict:

■ *Conflict prevention.* A healthy system of local democracy, in which all groups feel they have representation and influence in the institutions and policy decisions of governance, helps prevent feelings of alienation and frustration. This helps prevent conflict by giving outlets to grievances and creates opportunities for collab-

orative (rather than conflictual) problem-solving. A well-conceived system of local governance – for example, when elected authorities are in close communication with community-based organizations – also creates a system of monitoring and early warning when identity-based conflicts in a city are about to escalate dangerously.

■ *Conflict management.* As a system for bargaining and negotiation, democracy helps manage conflicts among groups, keeping them within the boundaries of political dialogue and debate, and off the streets. The aim of conflict management is keeping disputes within accepted arenas of negotiation and keeping them from escalating into damaging confrontation and violence.

■ *Conflict resolution.* Resolution is a process whereby an issue or set of issues is discussed, agreements are made and implemented, and the underlying source or cause of the conflict is removed. Many disputes about diversity – for example, language policies in schools – can be resolved with agreement on a set of rules to guide decision-making. A recent example is the introduction of Albanian-language schooling in Montenegro as a way to defuse local inter-group tensions. As long as the rules are regarded by all people in the community as fair, and no major group seeks to change the rules, the conflict is considered resolved.

■ *Conflict transformation.* Some long-standing disputes, such as those described in the case study on Jerusalem, Belfast, and Johannesburg, defy resolution. (See page 82) Similarly, simply managing the problems between key populations in a city does not help resolve the underlying causes of conflict. In these cases, there is the need for conflict transformation. This requires a multi-layered approach, working with political leaders and NGOs – at national or regional levels and directly at the grassroots level – simultaneously. The aim of the conflict transformation approach is to change the underlying structural disparities in society – for example, access to health care – that fuel conflict among identity groups.

Many have argued that international approaches to post-settlement peace-building have focused too often on the national-level elite. Peace-building efforts have proceeded without an integrated strategy that seeks to promote conciliation by "middle-range actors" (such as regional and local party functionaries or militias) and the grassroots. John Paul Lederach, a leading authority in the conflict resolution field, believes that a more integrated strategy of peace-building that explicitly seeks to build peace at multiple levels of society, including and especially at the neglected middle and grassroots tiers and considering short- and long-term goals, is much more effective. He has worked with civil society and grassroots organizations in the Balkans, Colombia, Nicaragua, and Northern Ireland in a bottom-up approach to foster reconciliation in situations of deep-rooted conflict. In Colombia, for exam-

ple, he has been working with a peace-building resource centre known as *Justapaz*, conducting training with all sectors of that society and working with grassroots, middle-level, and senior public and NGO officials in a long-term approach to managing the crises of violence that characterize that country's long-running civil war. The training has emphasized the need to co-ordinate the conflict mitigation efforts at local, regional, and national levels, in support of the national-level peace process between the government and the guerrilla groups.

Working from the ground up is critical to alleviating the underlying causes of conflict among identity groups in urban arenas. John Burton writes: "Decision-making at a community level is likely to focus on human needs as they surface in family, social, and school environments. It is likely to be, therefore, more problem-solving than would be the case at a level at which there is little face-to-face contact between decision-makers and those affected."

In some instances, dealing with community diversity is best done through unofficial means. International and local NGOs are increasingly taking on the task of peace-making, and some would argue that they have a comparative advantage in dealing with conflicts at the local level. Although NGOs clearly have strengths and weaknesses as peacemakers in a changing world, they are increasingly called upon to engage in peace-making in arenas where states and international organizations are simply not up to the task. As international humanitarian relief specialist Andrew Natsios asserts:

> *NGOs carry on their work at the very lowest level of social order, the rural village and city neighbourhood. Their highly participatory system of decision-making and programme management, while time-consuming and laborious, does tend to engage the energy and commitment of the community. This approach to development creates loyalty and trust between NGOs and the communities in which they work, and this can serve an important purpose in conflict resolution.*

One lesson from such experiences is that it is unrealistic to expect that a collaborative problem-solving process will simply make conflict go away. Consensus-oriented approaches are limited by the hard facts and entrenched positions of many situations of deep-rooted conflict. But, when people can work to turn their attention towards the problem instead of turning against their adversaries, practical, consensus-based solutions can be found even in very acrimonious, post-war relationships.

The aims and approaches to handling deep-rooted conflict in urban arenas highlighted here are not mutually exclusive. However, thinking about different disputes in these terms can help determine which strategy is appropriate in a given setting. That is, prior to designing institutions or launching participatory forums, policy-

makers and civic leaders need to have a prior agreement on what the aims of conflict handling strategies should be, and the appropriate fit between aims, institutional design, and principles of public policy.

3.3 Public Policy

◼ *Public policy, carefully conceived and implemented, can facilitate and engender social harmony.*

Public policy – the allocation of resources, services, and opportunities – can be an instrument of social exclusion, discrimination and oppression, or it can be designed to facilitate and engender social harmony.

The experiences of conflict management in diverse cities are extensive and broad. Here and in the essays that follow we focus on the work of four experts whose experience and research include many of the most divided cities on the globe. Scott Bollens focuses on the impact of public policies on conflict management in Johannesburg, Jerusalem, and Belfast. Michael Lund describes experiences from around the world with the establishment of local- level peace commissions that seek to prevent, monitor, and manage political violence or serve as forums for reconciliation. Demetrios Papademetriou considers the effect of migrant populations on community decision-making. Finally, Julia Demichelis analyses the phenomenon of half-cities in Bosnia after that country's devastating civil war. These contributions point to the importance of carefully designed political institutions and carefully conceived and implemented public policy.

These studies highlight several common principles for promoting democratic local governance in contexts of deep-rooted conflict and diversity:

◼ *Inclusion, recognition, and group self-worth.* Do all groups feel that they are perceived and treated as equals, with dignity and respect?

◼ *Satisfaction of basic human needs.* Are any groups so disadvantaged as to have their basic human needs unmet? How are the poorest and most economically disenfranchised populations in a city integrated into municipal decision-making? How fair is the allocation of resources? In what ways does public policy promote basic human security, especially for vulnerable groups or those who have been historically discriminated against?

◼ *Practical solutions.* Can practical solutions to seemingly irresolvable disputes be devised? What mechanisms can be introduced to provide ongoing opportunities for dialogue, negotiation, and mediation of disputes involving ethnic, racial, or religious minorities?

- *Trust.* Trust and mutually beneficial relationships among officials, civic leaders, and citizens is critical to promoting harmony in diverse urban environments. What is the quality of leadership on divisive issues? Do political leaders "play the ethnic card" and exacerbate tensions, or do they seek to moderate and mediate tensions among groups?

- *Structure of political and decision-making institutions.* Do the political institutions, by design or by accident, systematically discriminate against any given minority group? Is representation proportional for all identity groups? Is there a spirit of dialogue and compromise among social groups?

- *Interdependencies and common bonds.* Do public policies emphasize what people have in common, such as regional loyalties, a common heritage, or a love of place, rather than what divides them in terms of culture, skin colour, or belief?

- *Taking action.* Are the grievances of disadvantaged groups heard and appreciated? Is concrete action taken to attempt to address these grievances seriously?

- *Minority participation.* Is effective participation of minorities in public life encouraged? Are minorities able to maintain their community, culture, identity, and characteristics?

Translating general principles into practical options is difficult. Each situation is a unique social environment with its own customs, image, problems, and issues. The following case studies provide some examples of how diversity and conflict management have been addressed in various settings. Chapters Four and Five offer choices and instruments for building democracy at the local level, focusing first on elections and then on participatory structures.

Figure 9	The Lund Guidelines: Recommendations for Reconciling Democracy and Diversity

The 1999 Guidelines for Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life – drafted for the OSCE by Europe's High Commissioner for National Minorities – provide a well-considered overview of specific public policy recommendations for reconciling democracy and diversity. The "Lund Guidelines", as these are known, provide a more specific menu of measures that should be taken to help promote minority participation in institutions and public policy-making. Some of the main points are excerpted below.

Voting and Elections

The electoral process should facilitate the participation of minorities in the political sphere. States shall guarantee the right of persons belonging

to national minorities to take part in the conduct of public affairs, including through the rights to vote and stand for office without discrimination.

- The regulation of the formation and activity of political parties shall comply with the international law principle of freedom of association. This principle includes the freedom to establish political parties based on communal identities as well as those not identified exclusively with the interests of a specific community.

- The electoral system should facilitate minority representation and influence.

- The geographic boundaries of electoral districts should facilitate the equitable representation of national minorities.

Transparency

- The structures and decision-making processes of regional and local authorities should be made transparent and accessible in order to encourage the participation of minorities.

Advisory and Consultative Bodies

- States should establish advisory or consultative bodies within appropriate institutional frameworks to serve as channels for dialogue between governmental authorities and national minorities. Such bodies might also include special purpose committees for addressing such issues as housing, land, education, language, and culture. The composition of such bodies should reflect their purpose and contribute to more effective communication and advancement of minority interests.

- These bodies should be able to raise issues with decision-makers, prepare recommendations, formulate legislative and other proposals, monitor developments and provide views on proposed governmental decisions that may directly or indirectly affect minorities. Governmental authorities should consult these bodies regularly regarding minority-related legislation and administrative measures in order to contribute to the satisfaction of minority concerns and to the building of confidence. The effective functioning of these bodies will require that they have adequate resources.

Self-Governance

- Effective participation of minorities in public life may call for non-territorial or territorial arrangements of self-governance or a combination thereof. States should devote adequate resources to such arrangements.

- Non-territorial forms of governance are useful for the maintenance and development of the identity and culture of national minorities. The issues most susceptible to regulation by these arrangements include education, culture, use of minority language, religion, and other matters crucial to the identity and way of life of national minorities.

- Taking into account the responsibility of the governmental authorities to set educational standards, minority institutions can determine curricula for teaching of their minority languages, cultures, or both. Minorities can determine and enjoy their own symbols and other forms of cultural expression.

- Functions over which such administrations have successfully assumed primary or significant authority include education, culture, use of minority language, environment, local planning, natural resources, economic development, local policing functions, and housing, health, and other social services.

- Self-governance arrangements should be established by law and generally not be subject to change in the same manner as ordinary legislation. Arrangements for promoting participation of minorities in decision-making may be determined by law or other appropriate means.

Dispute Resolution

- Effective participation of national minorities in public life requires established channels of consultation for the prevention of conflicts and dispute resolution, as well as the possibility of *ad hoc* or alternative mechanisms when necessary. Such methods include:

- judicial resolution of conflicts, such as judicial review of legislation or administrative actions, which requires that the State possess an independent, accessible, and impartial judiciary whose decisions are respected;

- and additional dispute resolution mechanisms, such as

- negotiation,

- fact finding,

- mediation,

- arbitration,

- an ombudsman for national minorities, and

- special commissions, which can serve as focal points and mechanisms for the resolution of grievances about governance issues.

CASE STUDY

ROLE OF PUBLIC POLICY
Belfast, Jerusalem, and Johannesburg
Scott A. Bollens

This case study explores the role of public policy in contested cities and the impact it has on the magnitude and manifestation of ethno-national conflict. It looks at inter-communal strife in the ethnically polarized cities of Belfast (Northern Ireland), Jerusalem (Israel and the West Bank), and Johannesburg (South Africa). Each city encapsulates deep-rooted cleavages based on competing nationalisms and arguments over state legitimacy; each provides a multi-decade account of urban policy and management in contested bicommunal environments; and each has been engrossed in a transition process tied to progress on a broader political front of peace-making. The case study examines:

▪ the lessons that city management of ethnic conflict provides;

▪ the principles of city-building amidst group-based conflict;

▪ the linkage between local and national peace-building.

Deeply Divided Cities

A disturbing number of cities across the world are susceptible to intense inter-communal conflict and violence reflecting ethnic or nationalist fractures, including cities such as Algiers, Beirut, Belfast, Brussels, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, New Delhi, Nicosia, and Sarajevo. In some cases (such as Jerusalem and Belfast), cities are the focal point for unresolved nationalist ethnic conflict. In other cases (such as Sarajevo), the management of war-torn urban areas holds the key to sustainable co-existence of warring ethnic groups subsequent to cessation of overt hostilities. Common to many of these cities is that ethnic identity and nationalism combine to create pressures for group rights, autonomy, or territorial separation. These cities can be battlegrounds between "homeland" ethnic groups, each proclaiming the city as their own. The legitimacy of a city's political structures and its rules of decision-making and governance are commonly challenged by ethnic groups who either seek an equal or proportionate share of power (such as blacks in South Africa) or demand group-based autonomy or independence (such as Palestinians in Jerusalem or the Quebecois in Montreal). Of course, not all ethnically tense cities erupt into violence. In Montreal, for example, tensions were high in 1995 when a referendum for Quebec's independence from Canada was narrowly defeated; although the voting was largely along ethnic lines and the streets filled with protesters, the city did not erupt into violence.

Urban public policies potentially can have substantial impact on ethnic stability or volatility. Such policies include land use planning and regulation, economic development, housing production and allocation, capital facility planning, social service deliv-

ery, community participation, and municipal government organization. These policies can maintain or disrupt territorial claims, they can distribute economic benefits fairly or unfairly, they can provide or discourage access to policy-making and political power, they can protect or erode collective ethnic/cultural rights, and they can stifle or galvanize political urban-based opposition.

Belfast

Background

Belfast encapsulates an overlapping nationalist (Irish/British) and religious (Catholic/Protestant) conflict. Since 1969 it has been a violent city of sectarian warfare. The urban arena is extremely segregated and people tend to live in distinctly segregated communities along the lines of conflict, with the antagonistic groups living close to one another but separate as well. Inter-community hostilities have required the building of 15 "peacelines" – ranging from corrugated iron fences and steel palisade structures, to permanent brick or steel walls, to environmental barriers or buffers. The city of Belfast, like the country of Northern Ireland as a whole, has a majority Protestant population. The 1996 city population of 297,000 was about 54 per cent Protestant and 43 per cent Catholic, although the Catholic percentage has been increasing over the last few decades due to higher birth rates and Protestant migration to adjoining towns.

Religious identities coincide strongly with political and national loyalties. The allegiances of Protestant "Unionists" and "loyalists" are with Britain, which from 1972 to 1999 exercised direct rule over Northern Ireland. Catholic "nationalists" and "republicans", in contrast, consider themselves Irish and commit their personal and political loyalties to the Republic of Ireland in the south. The introduction of British direct rule was brought about due to the instability of the "Troubles" catalyzed by widespread discrimination by the pre-1972 Unionist-controlled Northern Irish government. Direct rule has resulted in an almost complete absence of representative participation and accountability, with the locally elected 51-member Unionist majority Belfast City Council having severely constrained policy-making power.

Urban Policy

The objectives of Belfast urban policy-makers and administrators are:

- to position government's role and image in Belfast as a neutral participant not biased toward either "orange" (Protestant) or "green" (Catholic); and

- to ensure that government policy does not exacerbate sectarian tensions by managing ethnic space in a way that reacts to, and reflects, residents' wishes.

This means, in effect, that policy-makers condone the strict territoriality of the city, one that imposes tight constraints on the growing Catholic population while protecting under-utilized Protestant land. City government has no comprehensive or strategic approach to dealing with sectarian divisions, with the town planning function having largely assigned sectarian issues to policy domains outside its responsibility. The

1987 plan for the Belfast urban area states that, "it is not the purpose of a strategic land use plan to deal with the social, economic, and other aspects involved". It emphasizes instead the "neutral territory" of the central city and its revitalization. Housing allocation administrators have designed a neutral set of criteria intended to immunize them from discrimination claims. Yet, this neutrality has been found to reinforce the residential segregation of religions. Agencies involved in constructing new development or housing projects, in contrast, have learned that they must still work closely with sectarian neighbourhoods that do not conform to the neutral principles. These projects that are still basically sectarian in nature, however, have been *ad hoc* or project-based actions occurring outside a broader strategic framework aimed at progressive ethnic conflict management. In the end, British policy-making in Belfast has helped achieve short-term abstinence from violence, but it appears insufficient in a city of obstructive ethnic territoriality and varied Protestant-Catholic needs.

Jerusalem

Background

Jerusalem is an enigma: it is a highly multi-ethnic and religiously diverse city, unified in theory but separate in practice between the two major population groups. In Jerusalem, Jewish-Muslim religious and Israeli-Palestinian nationalist, tensions intertwine to create a city of "intimate enemies". With a 1996 population of about 603,000, the city is a site of demographic and physical competition between two populations.

The social and political geography of Jerusalem has dramatically changed from a multi-cultural mosaic as the pre-1948 British Mandated Territory, to a two-sided physical partitioning of Jerusalem into Israeli and Jordanian-controlled components during the 1949-1967 period. Since 1967, it has been a contested Israeli-controlled municipality three times the size of the pre-1967 city (due to unilateral and internationally unrecognized annexation) and encompassing formerly-Arab East Jerusalem. The international status of East Jerusalem today remains "occupied territory". Jewish demographic advantage (of approximately three to one) within the Israeli-defined city of today's "Jerusalem" translates into Jewish control of the city council and mayor's office. Arab resistance to participating in municipal elections they deem to be illegitimate solidifies this control. The city of Jerusalem is surrounded on three sides by the Israeli-occupied West Bank, populated by approximately 1.7 million Palestinians and about 150,000 Jews.

Urban Policy

Since 1967, Israeli urban policy-makers and planners have pursued the goals of Israeli control and security through policies that entrench a Jewish majority within the Israeli-defined city. These policies have:

▪ facilitated the pace and increased the magnitude of Jewish development to assert Jewish demographic strength;

■ influenced the location of new Jewish development in annexed areas to create an obstacle to "re-division" of the city;

■ restricted Arab growth and development to weaken their claims to a reunified Jerusalem.

Large Jewish communities in strategic locations have been built throughout the annexed municipal area in order to establish a "critical mass" of Jews in the urban region after 1967. Of the approximately 70 square kilometres annexed after the 1967 War, approximately 24 square kilometres (or about 33 per cent) have been expropriated by the Israeli government. The "public purpose" behind such expropriations is the development of Jewish neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods today in "east" Jerusalem are homes to approximately 160,000 Jewish residents. Since 1967, 88 per cent of all housing units built in east Jerusalem have been built for the Jewish population.

Israeli planners have restricted, through planning regulations, the growth of Palestinian communities within Jerusalem. Restrictions take multiple forms such as land expropriation, zoning regulations that constrain Palestinian rights to development, use of road-building to restrict and fragment Palestinian communities, "hidden guidelines" behind Israeli plans which restrict building volume in Palestinian areas, and the intentional absence of plans for Arab areas that obstructs infrastructure provision and community development. As a result, only 11 per cent of annexed east Jerusalem, at most, is vacant land where the Israeli government today allows Palestinian development.

There has been over 30 years of Israeli partisan planning in Jerusalem. Such policy-making, however, appears paradoxically to have produced city-level and regional consequences that now bedevil Israel's own goal of undisputed political control. This partisan planning, over the years, has now proven an obstacle in reaching a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians that can secure Israel's long-term interests in this perhaps most-contested city.

Johannesburg

Background

Johannesburg anchors a geographically disfigured urban region of enormous economic and social contrasts. It is clear that the legacy of apartheid-era city planning will be reflected in the city's demographic geography for many years, if not decades. The metropolitan region contains at least two million people and is approximately 60 per cent black and 31 per cent white. Racially-segregated townships, cities, and informal settlements (shanty towns) characterize modern Johannesburg, even well into the post-apartheid era. The *de facto* segregation is a legacy, directly or indirectly, of Group Areas apartheid legislation enacted in the 1950s. An enormous proportion of basic needs are presently unmet, including housing, land tenure, water, and sanitation facilities. Income distribution is grossly skewed in the province and nationally.

Black Africans inhabit several different "geographies of poverty". The two primary locations are Alexandra and Soweto townships, the latter being an amalgamation of 29 townships south-west of, and spatially disconnected from, Johannesburg. Bricks-and-mortar housing was intentionally underbuilt since urban blacks were considered temporary and unwanted. Hostels were built to shelter workers in industrial and mining activities nearby. The hostels are areas of significant tension politically, ethnically, and physically. Backyard shacks in townships and free-standing shacks on vacant land in townships are characterized by near-inhuman conditions of living, lack of secure tenure, inadequate standards of shelter and sanitation, and lack of social facilities and services.

Urban Policy

In 1995, local and metropolitan government in Johannesburg was restructured to link politically formerly white local authorities with adjacent black townships. Black majorities were subsequently elected to all four local governments and to the Johannesburg metropolitan council. Post-apartheid city-building principles aspire to stitch together the segregated living areas and integrate the disconnected parts and peoples of Johannesburg. On the one hand, policy is directed at alleviating the many short-term, crisis-related needs of the urban fringe poor pertaining to shelter, public health, personal security, and unmet basic needs for water, sanitation, and electricity. On the other hand, policy is seeking to create a compact and functionally integrated city where the poor are located close to central city employment and other urban opportunities. A major challenge for policy-makers in post-apartheid Johannesburg is that they are trying to address distressing levels of unmet human needs amidst market-based urban "normalization" processes – such as "employment suburbanization" (movement of well-paying jobs away from poorer areas into already prosperous suburbs) – that threaten to reinforce apartheid's racial geography.

Amidst societal transformation there is also a critical examination of urban policy practices. Two competing paradigms now exist – one connected to town planning's historical affinity to regulatory control; the other rooted in anti-apartheid community mobilization and linked to a more expansive definition of development. The latter paradigm represents an historic attempt to create a system of social guidance that utilizes the legacy and lessons of social mobilization.

Lessons Learned

The challenges of urban policy-making in Belfast, Jerusalem, and Johannesburg inform policy-makers and planners in other urban regions of the world, both in ideologically-contested cities as well as those near ethnic breaking-point. Some of the lessons and strategies that can be adapted depending on context, include the following:

- ◼ *Promote rules of inter-ethnic agreement, rather than winner-take-all politics.* Developing local democracy in highly diverse and conflicted settings requires movement away from majoritarian democratic forms toward the use of rules that require inter-ethnic agreement on common issues and the use of political incen-

tives that inspire cross-group coalition building. Although majority rule may be appropriate in many situations even with changing and volatile ethnic and racial differences, in those cities where tensions are acute and violence is likely forms of consensus-promoting democracy may be appropriate.

■ *Cities and urban policies matter amidst broader conflict.* Local policy can moderate, exacerbate, or passively reflect the broader historical conflict. This depends upon the strategies chosen, the spatial, economic, and psychological conditions and contradictions they generate in the landscape, and the organizational and mobilization qualities of the oppositional group. "Partisan" planning exacerbates group-based conflict and, through its production of urban inequality and instability, creates arguments for its continued use. "Neutral" policy-making suspends antagonisms in the short-term, but buys such abstinence from violence at the expense of reconciling competing ethnic visions.

■ *"Equity" policy-making is a necessary component of policy-making.* Equity policy-making, which would involve redistributing resources to the often materially disadvantaged "out-group", appears to be a necessary component of urban policy-making in the midst of conflict. Yet there is a likelihood this would prove counterproductive if it occurs outside broader negotiations over sovereignty and political control. "Resolver" policy-making – policies aimed at conflict prevention, management, and resolution – is needed that goes beyond urban symptoms of conflict to address root causes. It should seek to accommodate competing ethnic needs and contribute such urban policy principles to national-level negotiations dealing with sovereignty claims, basic social structures, and power relationships.

■ *Neutrality is not necessarily fair in governing contested cities.* Neutrality and colour-blindness in policy, when applied in urban settings of structural inequality, do not produce equitable outcomes. Governments must avoid the comfort of acting as a benign outsider to ethnic conflict. Equality of opportunity is not sufficient when life choices have been constrained by societal expectations and actions. In other cases, seemingly uniform requirements dealing with land ownership or development can have disparate effects across cultures having different values and customs.

■ *The goal of urban policy should be accommodation, not assimilation that requires individuals to abandon their cultures or identities.* Urban policy-makers should take stock of ethnicity and colour, not dismiss it or seek to eradicate it. Policy-makers should accommodate the unique needs of each ethnic group. Urban policy strategies should be aimed at "co-existent viability" of ethnic groups having different objective and psychological needs, and should help define the terms of peaceful urban and metropolitan co-existence – in terms of territorial control, public service availability, and preservation of group identity.

■ *Carefully manage local citizen participation in contested cities.* Urban policy-makers must find ways to balance intra-group community development and inter-group community relations. Policy should seek to improve and enrich the self-confidence

and identity of deprived ethnic communities without solidifying ghettoization and inter-group separation.

■ *Recognize psychological needs of communities*. Policy-makers should incorporate non-technical, psychological aspects of community identity into a planning profession that heretofore has been biased toward objective and rational methods. An ethnic group under perceived threat has psychological as well as objective needs. Conflict will be most evident when one ethnic group is seen as ascending; the other descending. For a threatened urban ethnic group, psychological needs pertaining to viability, group identity, and cultural symbolism can be as important as objective needs pertaining to land, housing, and economic opportunities.

■ *Ethnic differences must be expected, recognized, and appreciated*. Policy-makers and planners in contested cities must address the complex spatial, social-psychological, and organizational attributes of potentially antagonistic urban communities. They must be sensitive to the multi-ethnic environments toward which their skills are applied, and to the ways that empowered groups legitimate and extend their power. Specifically, urban policy-making should, in its methods of analysis and decision-making, explicitly account for the importance of ethnic community identity, territoriality, and symbolism embedded in the urban landscape. Training and education of local administrators and officials through professional organizations and cross-community forums should prepare them to deal with the complex issues of city-building amidst ethnic difference.

■ *Co-existence, rather than integration per se*. Urban policy-making should both respect ethnic territoriality where it constitutes a healthy source of community identity, and overcome ethnic territorial boundaries where they distort urban functionality and obstruct cross-community relations. Separation in urban settings breeds contempt. Learning of stereotypes is made easier if you do not know the other person. It is harder to demonize someone when you are interacting with them. Gates and boundaries (physical or psychological) in urban areas have two effects: provision of safety; and reinforcement of "the other" as a threat. The goal of policy should not be integration *per se*, but a "porous" society where diversity can co-exist and communities are free to interact, if they choose.

■ *Redress economic disadvantages and grievances*. In reconstructing urban regions racked by conflict, there should be clear articulation of the roles of governmental, private, and non-governmental sectors in "normalization" processes. Normalization of urban regions distorted by group conflict should emphasize policies to uplift the previously disadvantaged, and not rely solely on a free economic market that would likely spawn new forms of urban and regional inequality. During urban reconstruction, local officials should be especially attuned to how their approaches and actions affect urban development and they should pursue policies of co-existence, sharing, and normalization of politics in ways that reflect the psychological, emotional, and cultural views of both established and newly relocated city residents, especially immigrant communities.

■ *Consider local autonomy as a form of broader power sharing*. Urban policy-making should contribute practical principles that foster co-existent viability and connect these efforts to larger peace and reconstruction efforts. Tangible urban-level efforts and national-level negotiations should constitute inseparable parts of peace-making efforts. Local policies aimed at the basic needs and co-existent viability of competing ethnic groups are capable of contributing the sole authentic source of inter-ethnic accommodation amidst a set of larger diplomatic political agreements that may otherwise be susceptible to ethnic hardening and fraying. Political arrangements such as "two-tier metropolitanism" (partially divided or shared sovereignty) or power-sharing democracy that might emerge can respond to the basic dual needs for sovereignty and political control, but must be reinforced by changes in on-the-ground local policies.

■ *Develop urban strategies, in addition to a national peace*. Policy principles and peace agreements inevitably represent agreements at the political level, not that of daily interaction between ethnic groups and individuals. Progressive and ethnically-sensitive urban strategies can be put forth to anchor these formal local agreements over power. A national peace without urban accommodation would be one not rooted in the practical and potentially explosive issues of inter-group and territorial relations.

E   S   S   A   Y

PEACE COMMISSIONS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND RECONCILIATION
Michael Lund

Peace commissions, peace committees, or ethnic conciliation commissions are special structures that are set up at the national, regional, and local levels to informally bring together representatives of formerly conflicting communities to discuss transition issues in the open and address potentially volatile inter-communal problems. By creating neutral forums for open dialogue on lingering issues as well as mechanisms to monitor violent behaviour that may disrupt a peace accord, peace committees aim to discourage violence and actively promote reconciliation. Convening representatives of the government, opposition groups, religious leaders, associations, military, and police as well as unaffiliated community members create opportunities and vehicles for collaborative problem-solving through which government-opposition, majority-minority, or minority-minority conflicts can be addressed.

Thus, peace committees constitute auxiliary and decentralized processes to carry out and reflect the national process of political reconciliation that is taking place. They are one way to build legitimacy for the more permanent structures because they bring stakeholders together and give them a role in moving the peace process forward.

Figure 10	Examples of Peace Commissions

Peace commissions have been used most explicitly in Eastern Europe, South Africa, Sudan, and Nicaragua:

Eastern Europe. Responding to concerns that ethnic tensions in Central and Eastern Europe could threaten European regional security, a US-based NGO, Partners for Democratic Change, launched an initiative in 1992 to develop local ethnic conciliation commissions in towns experiencing significant ethnic tensions. By 1995, six commissions were operating in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland.

South Africa. In South Africa, the National Peace Accord of September 1991 created dispute resolution commissions, later known as peace committees, at the national, regional, and local levels to assist in investigating and actively combating violence and intimidation that was jeopardizing the transition from apartheid to majority rule. The aim was to create a nation-wide network of peace structures and a dispute resolution system linked with the process of political rapprochement that had begun a year earlier between the ruling National

Party and the ANC with the lifting of a ban on political parties and the release of political prisoners, most notably the ANC leader, Nelson Mandela.

Nicaragua. In 1986, concerned citizens in the rural Nueva Guinea region of Nicaragua began meeting to respond to local violence, resulting in the formation of what are now known as local peace commissions. The National Reconciliation Commission in Nicaragua also moved to establish and support peace commissions at the zonal and local levels, although resources were very scarce. By early 1995, there were over 85 local peace commissions.

Sudan. The 1994 Akobo Peace Conference was an initiative of community elders in southern Sudan to address inter-communal conflict between two sections of the Nuer ethnic group in south-central Sudan. This conference set up mobile peace delegations that included community and church leaders. They were tasked with travelling to fishing holes and cattle camps to explain, monitor, and promote a recent peace agreement. The conference achieved considerable success at managing differences among factions of this ethnic group amidst the broader civil war in Sudan. The agreement may be a model on which further local conflict resolution efforts in Sudan and elsewhere in Africa could be based.

Tasks and Functions

Peace commissions focus on a number of tasks, including:

- *Information gathering*. Investigate incidents of ethnic or religious conflict and allegations of discrimination in employment, housing, education, or public facilities; channel information to the proper authorities; and hold public hearings on community problems that may otherwise result in inter-group tensions or discrimination;

- *Advocacy*. Denounce human rights violations, speak out on behalf of victims, counter exaggeration and rumours, and make non-partisan public statements;

- *Disseminate information*. Disseminate cross-cultural and human rights educational and informational material and develop courses of instruction on human rights;

- *Promote non-violent methods*. Put pressure on groups to use non-violent means in any strikes or demonstration and instruct them in non-violent methods;

- *Moral support*. Offer pastoral support, listening and grieving with victims of violence, and providing a moral presence, especially from those peace commission members who are also religious leaders;

- *Submit recommendations*. Submit reports and make recommendations to local, regional, and national public officials on legislation to assist commission objectives;

- *Help resolve political controversies and disputes*. For example, the South African peace committees dealt with hundreds of disputes throughout the country, includ-

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ing such issues as permission for political marches and rallies; police conduct during marches and rallies; attempts by one political group to prevent another from engaging in political activities; threatened or actual consumer boycotts or refusal to pay for municipal services; and threats to withdraw such services; and

■ *Election assistance*.

Organization

Commissions can be created informally and independently by community members, using a bottom-up approach, or they can be set up formally from the national level as part of an accord, using a top-down approach. Depending largely on the level at which they are initiated, these commissions may operate entirely at the local level, as in Eastern Europe; operate locally but have regional co-ordinating bodies, as in Nicaragua; or function actively at the local, regional, and national levels, as in South Africa.

Commission members are not necessarily neutral in their positions on the conflict, but must include representatives from opposing sides, even ex-combatants. To be trusted by the conflicting parties, they need to be widely respected people in their communities who have a history of being active in community affairs, have relationships of trust that cross political boundaries, and possess relevant knowledge and resources for the work of the commission.

Commission members often include lay church leaders or clergy. Commission members and a chairperson may either be appointed or elected, as determined by the local officials creating the commission. The Ethnic Conciliation Commissions in Eastern Europe consist of five to eleven members representing ethnic, religious, and national groups in their communities. Commission members and a chairperson are either appointed or elected for a three-year term as determined by the city creating the commission. Staff may be paid or volunteers.

Figure 11	South Africa's Peace Committees

The tripartite structure of the South African peace committees is probably the most elaborate to be developed thus far. The National Peace Commission (NPC) had approximately 60 members, most of whom were experienced politicians; it included a small secretariat. Its task was to monitor implementation of the National Peace Accord (NPA) and ensure compliance. The National Peace Secretariat (NPS), created in 1991, was permanent and full-time, consisting of seven persons nominated by the members of the NPC, and thus the major political parties; it includes one member from the legal profession, and one representative of the Department of Justice. The role of the NPS was to define the regions covered by the regional committees, and to co-ordinate the Regional and Local Dispute Resolution Commissions (RDRCs

and LDRCs), which later came to be known as Regional and Local Peace Commissions (RPCs and LPCs). Whereas the NPC met only twice before April 1994, the NPS met frequently.

The RPCs included representatives from political organizations, churches, trade unions, industry and business in the region, local and tribal authorities, a wide variety of civil society organizations, and the police and defence forces. Their stated duties included creating and guiding the local peace committees; advising on causes of violence and intimidation in the region; settling disputes by negotiation with the parties concerned; monitoring peace accords and future peace agreements and settling related disputes; informing the NPS of steps taken to prevent violence and intimidation in its region including breaches of agreements; and consulting with authorities in the region to combat or prevent violence and intimidation. RPCs also identify communities where LPCs should be established.

The LPCs' stated duties included creating trust and reconciliation among grassroots community organizations, including security forces; co-operating with the local Justice of the Peace in combating and preventing violence and intimidation; settling disputes causing violence or intimidation by negotiating with the parties concerned; eliminating conditions which may harm peace accords or peaceful relations, and promoting compliance with peace accords; agreeing on rules relating to marches, rallies and gatherings; and liaising with local police and magistrates on matters concerning the prevention of violence at political events. Staff were appointed by the RPCs on a consensus basis. By the 1994 elections, about 260 LPCs had been created. It proved helpful to have at least one professional mediator to serve as a technical assistant.

Peace committees can often augment the work of local police and government in encouraging law and order. In South Africa, UN and other international observers co-ordinated with the peace commissions, attended their meetings, and communicated regularly with political groups across the spectrum, keeping informed of planned events and potential conflicts. In authorizing the deployment of the UN Observer Mission to South Africa (UNOMSA) the UN Security Council mandated the observers to strengthen ties with the National Peace Accord structures. UNOMSA officials attended political rallies and demonstrations, RPC and LPC meetings, and NPC meetings and consulted regularly with NPS staff. The international monitors in South Africa have considerably bolstered the peace structures, and their presence has been effective in containing some political violence.

Key Enabling Conditions

Outlined below are some design, implementation, and contextual factors that are important in structuring an effective peace commission.

Design Factors

◾ Initiation of the committees comes from the affected country itself;

◾ Support from respected individuals whose skills and personality help keep up the momentum for peace;

◾ Selection of multi-skilled and flexible staff able to operate in uncertain environments;

◾ Inclusion of all relevant groups, including those that may ordinarily be marginalized, such as traditional authorities, women, youth, and the displaced;

◾ Authority to monitor political parties, the security forces, local government, and the media so committees can hold official actors accountable for their actions;

◾ Local community commitment to the idea and development of a sense of ownership of the committee mechanism.

Implementation Factors

◾ Financing is ample and prompt;

◾ Committee proceedings are seen to be consistently following balanced and even-handed procedures;

◾ Information dissemination to the wider general community is actively pursued by the committees, countering the influence of rumour, disinformation, and suspicion;

◾ Monitoring and helping to guide and manage political demonstrations, funeral marches, and other public events that otherwise could turn violent are undertaken assertively by the committees;

◾ Selection of local recipients by outside donors after gaining thorough knowledge of the options, and allocating assistance to needs that are identified by reliable local stakeholders;

◾ Training in conflict resolution, administration, finance and other necessary skills provided for staff, so that the committees can be sustained on their own beyond the initial phase.

Contextual Factors

◾ When the parties to the conflict are solidly committed to the political transition and have the capacity to bring along their followers. Where the stakes of political competition are high, such as in the run-up to elections, peace committees may face difficulties because of the continuing incentive of the parties to seek partisan advantage;

◾ Whether created by central political actors or arising from the grassroots, peace commissions in most cases require official agreement of the conflict parties. Infor-

mal peace committee efforts do not necessarily require such agreement, but probably require the assent and support of the leading political authorities to be effective;

■ Where effective limits have been placed on armed groups, including covert activities such as death squads as well as the official security forces, to keep them from carrying out violence and intimidation. In especially tumultuous areas, some commissions find it difficult to isolate themselves from the tensions and hatreds present;

■ If the key groups that are represented have previously developed relationships of trust;

■ If the structure of local committees take into account the particular patterns of authority in different communities;

■ If civil society institutions can provide the source of community leadership and support.

Challenges and Pitfalls

■ *Source of funds*. Commissions depend on funding, and government funding may be needed, at least initially. In Nicaragua, peace commissions had limited access to resources due to lack of ties with the government. But in South Africa, the reliance on government funding led to widespread perceptions that the peace structures were under government control and that manipulation was taking place. To become more visibly independent from the government, as well as to shorten cumbersome procedures required by government financial regulations for handling public funds, it was agreed that the National Peace Secretariat (NPS) would seek independent funding and administer its own funds in accordance with agreed procedures. The South African experience suggests that commission funding ideally should come from a neutral entity, not from the government or other institutions involved in the conflicts. For example, members with church ties might help arrange for funding through church bodies in- and outside the country.

■ *Stimulating participation and balance*. It may be difficult to recruit capable and willing prospective members because they will be initially sceptical that a peace accord is viable. Launching a truly representative commission is also often difficult. Parties often insist on preconditions before a commission can meet. Community leaders may be uncertain of the commissions' purposes, power, and prospects, and thus wary of being drawn into co-operation with rival political forces, undercutting their own legitimacy. The range of participation may be limited; women, youth, and church leaders may be unwilling or unable to participate.

■ *Security risks*. In some cases, participation puts members' lives in jeopardy. In Natal, South Africa, several peace commissioners have been assassinated.

■ *Politicization*. Some argue that peace commissions, which have multi-party-based structures, tend to politicize conflict that may be apolitical. Thus, a local dispute

channelled through a peace commission composed of political leaders may turn a conflict that has little to do with politics into a divisive political issue.

■ *Co-optation*. Top-down peace structures can deteriorate into state bureaucracies with little responsiveness to community needs and desires. An evaluation of the South Africa peace structures noted a widespread public perception that they were elitist. To avoid this, some experts recommend forming stronger linkages between the local peace structures and indigenous, grassroots community conflict resolution practices and home-grown organizations.

■ *Fragmentation*. The decentralized, bottom-up structure, such as that used in Nicaragua, may result in poor co-ordination between local committees, limiting their ability to learn from one another and keeping them from working in other parts of the country where the services are also needed. Local commissions may require a national or regional entity to co-ordinate actions and facilitate communication among the individual commissions.

Conclusions

Because most peace committee structures are relatively young, much is still being learned about their possibilities as well as their failures or limitations. But in certain conditions, peace commissions clearly have been successful in achieving their most immediate overriding function, which is to contain inter-communal disputes. Because commission members represent the various ethnic, religious, and national groups in their communities and seek to enlist influential and respected members of the communities in which they operate, they can often recognize conflicts as they emerge and respond to them quickly through local informal and effective processes. In South Africa, peace workers have observed that although political violence continued in areas where peace committees were active, the violence would have been much worse without their activities.

Peace committees can also establish safe places and reserve specific times for raising issues that other forums may not address. They can build lines of communication across communal divides, thus serving as a confidence-building measure. They can help to create balance in the effective influence of the differing elements of a community. By setting rules and codes of conduct for venting disputes, they legitimize the notion of peaceful negotiation of differences and give participants experience in multi-party co-operation and tolerance. In the process, participants may be educated and trained in cross-group and cross-cultural collective problem-solving skills and procedures. Finally, they help to promote ethnic, religious, and national harmony and encourage understanding regarding cultural differences.

Peace committees should not be seen as permanent substitutes for the regular institutions of a government. As interim para-governmental mechanisms to help manage tensions, they are not intended to displace formal institutions of government such as the police, judicial system, local councils, and parliaments. Although peace committees may transform themselves into continuing organizations, the popular support

garnered through peace committees needs to be increasingly channelled into the more institutionalized forms of conflict resolution of the state that can give a regular political voice to the broad rank and file adult population, such as regular elections and legislatures. Thus in South Africa, the government elected in April 1994 ended its funding of the peace committees because of the view that the institutions of the multi-party state with its political parties and national assembly, would be better able to represent the views and interests of all citizens.

E S S A Y

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND CITIES
Demetrios G. Papademetriou

International migration today touches the lives of more people and looms larger in the politics and economics of more states than ever before. In fact, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, almost no country is immune from the impact of international migration. Migration and the mobility of peoples are as old as mankind; at times such population flows have been crucial to human progress. Yet migration is still usually viewed as a problem and cities today seem to be only marginally better at managing it effectively than those in the past. And remarkably, the duration and depth of a society's engagement with immigration does not seem to inoculate it against excessive reactions to immigration.

One of the most urgent challenges most societies face in the years ahead is identifying a set of coherent responses to one of international migration's most important dimensions: its effect on receiving societies' cities and their residents – natives and immigrants. In this regard, what follows is an outline of important questions that cities that are hosts to large numbers of international immigrants must address if they are to remain successful in the decades ahead. Understanding the interactive effects of international migration and devising appropriate responses to them, is an essential element of managing the issues well.

Managing Multi-ethnic Cities

Immigration contributes to and impacts on a number of important issues, perhaps most critically on the following:

■ labour markets and economic participation;

■ housing and physical space; and

■ societal "cohesion" and political participation.

Together, these issue areas help shape immigrant integration and determine whether a city's long-term experience with immigration will be positive or troubled.

Labour market and economic participation issues. The importance of these issues cannot be over-emphasized not only for their role in successfully incorporating immigrants economically but, perhaps even more critically, for their effect in shaping the host public's view of immigrants. Immigrants can be considered as net contributors to and creators of additional public assets, rather than as net consumers of such assets – that is, as economic and social resources rather than as economic and social liabilities.

Many immigrants bring with them significant amounts of both human and physical capital, contribute to business and job creation, and often play significant roles in the

revitalization of city neighbourhoods. Evidence from cities such as Amsterdam, Melbourne, or New York attest to the positive effects the energy of immigrants can bring to reviving the economic life and renewing the physical infrastructure of cities with large immigrant concentrations. The ability of local governments to promote and facilitate such revitalization can lead to big differences in outcomes. Among the most promising initiatives are:

- reducing some of the barriers to entrepreneurship;
- making more systematic efforts to recognize the credentials of immigrants;
- making more systematic efforts to re-certify immigrants with technical and professional qualifications;
- encouraging immigrant communities to use their often unique forms of "social capital" to advance themselves economically – although always within the host society's legal norms;
- assisting newcomers qualify for start-up business loans; and
- assisting newcomers qualify for housing mortgages.

Australia, Canada, The Netherlands, and the United States seem to be ahead of other immigrant-receiving societies in different aspects of these issues (two areas in which the US public and private sectors have been particularly creative and effective are qualification assistance for start-up business loans and housing mortgages).

Labour market competition and adverse job opportunity and wage effects directly and intensely affect a society's marginalized groups such as immigrants. These issues, as well as the related issue of immigrants' contributions to the "informal" and "underground" economy, need to be understood much better and treated sensitively.

For example, in many cities throughout the United States, such as Los Angeles (California), Chicago (Illinois), and Miami (Florida), disputes have arisen over the impact of illegal immigrants from Mexico and Central and South America on jobs in the manufacturing, tourism, and construction industries. These cities have recently been working with the US and Mexican governments, particularly, to normalize the work situation of illegal immigrants who have been in the US for many years (and whose children have become citizens) and to create a programme in which those seeking work can come to the United States legally. These cities have also re-oriented their social welfare programmes to meet the health, education, and safety needs of illegal immigrants by taking a pragmatic approach that recognizes the indispensability of these people to the labour pool.

While analytically these issues pose a challenge, in public policy terms the elements of an answer can be found in two types of initiative. Firstly, making education and training programmes truly accessible (rather than just available), for all who need them. In this regard, there are few shining examples, although some countries, such as The Netherlands and Canada, seem to be doing better than others. Secondly,

developing labour market and related rules that, at a minimum, reduce significantly incentives for employers to break them. Some employers clearly employ immigrants with little regard to their legal status because most immigrants are willing to work for lower wages and accept inferior working conditions. And when the employment is off-the-books, an avenue that allows employers to avoid paying their social taxes, the immigrants' illegal status can be an "advantage". None of the measures employed so far by receiving societies – almost all of which focus on penalizing employers for employing unauthorized workers – have been successful. Hence there is a need for re-examination. The effort to recast the dominant thinking in this regard has already begun in the United States – where, as of early 2000, the union movement and its allies have begun to focus on the conditions of work, rather that the immigration status of the job occupant, and on targeting employers who refuse to play by fundamental labour-market rules.

Spatial concentration. Physical segregation and spatial concentration are among the most challenging issues that arise from large-scale immigration. The development of immigrant enclaves typically affects the ability of immigrants to become socially and economically integrated; frequent characterization of these enclaves as "ghettos" further affects how host populations perceive immigrants.

A better understanding of the causes and effects of concentration is essential if policies that advance the well-being of cities and their residents are to be developed and pursued with some expectation of success. Is spatial concentration the result of voluntary preferences by immigrant groups who opt to organize themselves in enclaves so as to combat their marginalization, protect themselves socially and culturally, and advance economically by using ethnic resources (including "social capital") to maximum advantage? Or is it the precursor and predictor of such social pathologies as marginalization, troubled inter-group relations, "disaffiliation", and fragmentation? Furthermore, how does spatial concentration affect the pattern of immigrant interactions with the broader host population as well as with other ethnic and marginalized groups?

Looking at the issue from a different perspective, is spatial concentration the result of exclusionary policies and the effect of public and private discriminatory practices by the host society (the result of unequal access to housing, jobs, social goods and resources, and so on)? Or is it a rational process that uses ethnic solidarity as a transition belt to eventual broader societal integration? For example, in London there are both highly integrated neighbourhoods with a vibrant mosaic of peoples as well as certain parts of the city that are relatively homogenous areas mostly inhabited by migrant peoples of the same culture. London has sought to foster a sense of tolerance in diverse communities and cultural identity for those areas more clearly identified with a single group. In one programme, grants are offered to community groups that reflect a particular immigrant culture, fostering their language, music, art, theatre, and other traditions.

Understanding these issues better can lead to public policies that facilitate turning spatial concentration into an asset while at the same time trying to address the liabilities of concentration. Programmes involving sustained improvements to an area's social and physical infrastructure have had some success in Quebec and some Northern European countries. Programmes involving the gradual privatization of public (social) housing have had some success in the US. Of course, vastly different philosophical traditions with regard to public housing (and, more generally, social issues) between North America and much of Europe, have so far restricted the opportunities for transatlantic learning.

Social cohesion is linked to political participation. Failing to work towards (or making progress towards achieving) the integration of newcomers misses an opportunity to benefit from immigration as fully as possible. Furthermore, there is the risk of creating different classes of membership in societies and, eventually, adversely affecting societal cohesion. Tolerance, inclusion, equality, effective inter-group relations, hope, and cohesion, are not abstractions – they are indispensable elements of successful multi-ethnic cities and societies.

One question that must be answered in all instances is how public institutions – public schools, bureaucracies, public service delivery agencies, police and judicial systems, political parties – can promote inclusion (and reject exclusion) more effectively? As advanced industrial societies are beginning to "rediscover" their private sector institutions another set of questions seems to be gaining in importance. Specifically, what roles do (and can) private institutions – such as unions, individual employers and their associations, banking institutions, churches and other social assistance agencies, foundations, and self-help and mutual-aid organizations – play in offering the necessary mediation and conflict prevention/resolution services?

The inevitable other side to social inclusion and tolerance is social exclusion. Exclusion spans issues of physical segregation, social and cultural discrimination, marginalization, and the absence of adequate or meaningful, or reductions in, economic opportunities. Interest in promoting inclusion should come as much from the fact that immigration entails a process of social, economic, and cultural growth for immigrants as from the realization that it does so also for their hosts. Combating social exclusion (and the racism and discrimination that typically accompany it) is a priority for all societies. In this last regard, offering the local franchise to EU citizens and efforts by the EU Commission to devise and enshrine anti-racist and anti-discriminatory instruments are worth watching closely. So are the efforts by a handful of EU member states to grant the local franchise to long-term legal residents, regardless of nationality.

Debates in national capitals and, more interestingly, actions by a number of US cities to guarantee equal access to all types of services are similarly important to follow. Ultimately, it may be that trying to learn from and emulate Canada's strict adherence to non-discrimination and inclusion in both public and most private conduct may be the most worthwhile effort for immigrant-receiving cities to explore.

Conclusions: Engagement with Immigrants

Cities are undeniably the "ground zero" of immigration policies – the place where immigration and integration policies meet. It is in cities that competition for often scarce resources occurs (from housing and social goods, to jobs, education, and political power). They are also the real laboratories for testing different models of living together successfully as members of a community with shared purposes and goals that emphasize the "we" more than the "I" or "they." Consequently, it is important to strengthen the capacity of cities for performing this critical (and, in many ways, very traditional) role.

The search for solutions that work must engage all stakeholders, from government and social institutions to the smallest grassroots organizations. What should bind them together is a common interest in working together, both in devising and helping implement policies that assist with the integration of newcomers and in evaluating such policies and adapting them accordingly. Without an abiding and continuous commitment to policies that help different groups come closer together in pursuit of a common project, some cities will find that they will be pulled apart.

CASE STUDY

PEACE-BUILDING IN BOSNIA'S ETHNICALLY DIVIDED CITIES
The Case of Gornji Vakuf
Julia Demichelis

In early 1993 a small Bosnian town of 25,000 Bosniac, Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb residents erupted into flames from barrel bombs and sniper fire. For almost two years neighbours who had shared each other's culture, worked and schooled together, and jointly pursued a variety of recreations, turned on each other and killed each other's families, livestock and livelihoods, as well as their own community life. They dug tunnels and went out mostly at night. The remarkable capacity for conflict of Gornji Vakuf residents and their "armies" resulted in the most destroyed town in central Bosnia, as assessed by international engineers. Reconstructing the town's newly-divided reality – with most people on the opposite side of the cease-fire line to where they started – was beyond the scope of skilled technicians who brought material aid.

This case study looks at how two groups of outsiders arrived in Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje, as its peacetime identity became to be known, to create a dynamic process whereby those who had destroyed could rebuild more than just structures through a process of social reconstruction. In defiance of the Dayton Accords, the political town remained divided by the main ethno-national political parties, which maintain their power through separatism. However, civilian families and leaders relate openly across the divide in non-violent ways, demonstrating the limits of formal mediation and internationally-driven political solutions.

The Municipal Rehabilitation Programme

Early in 1995 USAID started an experiment to expand the role of disaster-relief NGOs. The aim was to rebuild structures for joint-ethnic use in politically-divided towns, while encouraging local politicians to adhere to the new laws of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, created by a pact brokered by the US government. This work plan instructed NGOs to negotiate with local-level politicians to agree to joint-use structures when their national-level leaders were unwilling to do the same. At the time, USAID underestimated the resolve of most Bosnian politicians to follow their own separatist party politics. However, the local political leaders did agree to collaborate with each other across political divides, agreeing to maintain their own jurisdictions but also engaging in "Balkan barter" ("enemies" frequently traded with each other throughout the war, though not in front of international observers).

In Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje, the two "mayors" refused to permit the United Methodist Committee for Relief (UMCOR) – the NGO with which USAID had contracted – to distribute aid for four months while townspeople watched the cement and sand imported for their houses get ruined in NGO-rented local warehouse yards. The townspeo-

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ple discovered that international humanitarians and donors could be as easily manipulated as they themselves were by the politicians who had forced them to fight. The two "mayors" continued to reject USAID's US$2 million offer to rebuild houses, schools, and infrastructure as long as the offer entailed any joint-ethnic ventures. USAID failed to persuade other donors working in Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje to join its new "embargo" against the community. It was difficult for USAID to learn that its stated social and political reconciliation goals actually contradicted each other. And it was institutionally painful to discover a new methodology to try to achieve both these goals in this highly visible, devastated community.

Start with Immediate Stakeholders

In August 1995 the author, an employee of UMCOR, arrived to assess the project's feasibility and to find new ways to implement this dual-directed project. The rapid community assessment that gave rise to the project had not revealed the complex issues members of a split community faced as they watched each other across the division line. Nor had it understood the untapped capacity of the townspeople themselves to find ways to assist UMCOR to achieve USAID's objectives in their community. Simply, the townspeople had been ignored while self-appointed politicians were empowered by USAID to identify what needed to be done after the war. The townspeople themselves had many ideas, and they were willing to take risks. But no foreigner had even asked them whether or not, and under what conditions, they would want to return to their homes or to rebuild their community.

Having been told by their elected representatives to kill, or be killed by, their own neighbours (and having done so with such fear that they destroyed their town, breaking through three UN cease fire lines), civilians of Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje trusted few people around them to tell them what to do next. They survived two alpine winters without heat or electricity. They survived sniper-fire when they sought food and water outside their tunnels. And they survived mine explosions from devices laid indiscriminately throughout the town when they had to address other needs, such as getting medical assistance. When the fighting and destruction were finally halted by a row of white UN tanks down the centre street, dividing the townspeople according to an agreement reached between their nationalist politicians; then it was only the townspeople, not outsiders, who could reflect upon what they had done to each other, contextualize their experiences within their history, and project some kind of a future for their community.

Only the people who had transformed themselves from neighbours to enemies could develop appropriate mechanisms to recondition their lives toward a peaceful future. They needed the support, not the directions, of neutral outsiders. Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje residents were particularly unimpressed with foreigners who arrived with money and comforts for themselves, and with lots of advice about how to recover from a situation they had not experienced themselves.

Conducting a preliminary survey of community attitudes, and assessing the feasibility of any joint-ethnic community reconstruction, required a team going to old and

young survivors wherever they were and listening to whatever they wanted to discuss. For three months, prior to identifying what programmes might be possible, the author and UMCOR staff alongside a locally resident peace-building organization, UN Office of Volunteers, used a survey methodology that included: informal house visits, billiard games, cooking meals, chopping firewood, and otherwise working alongside the community on both "sides" of town.

Establish Credibility and Develop Partnerships

For these three months, while no joint-ethnic humanitarian aid was permitted by the "mayors", newly resident NGO and international organization (IO) staff – worked to:

- open doors and minds;
- learn the area's history and peoples' perceptions thereof;
- share information with townspeople on both sides of the divide the townspeople themselves could not communicate across;
- assess needs and capacities;
- provide information about international humanitarian aid systems and its players; and most of all
- establish credibility of the foreign individuals who had a vision to pursue community peace-building work that would require a significant amount of trust on everyone's part.

It is essential for post-conflict participants to get to know these foreigners who try to help them; developing a person-to-person relationship in this post-conflict arena requires a human effort beyond upholding a project-to-project responsibility in an ordinary community development effort.

After two months of intensive individual and family meetings, NGO and IO staff, who exchanged information without breaking their confidentiality, accepted the idea of holding a public, joint-ethnic group meeting in a place selected by the community leaders themselves. Townspeople could not cross the dividing line, so a badly damaged building sitting on the line in the centre of town was chosen as the venue. (Ironically, this building was where the war started, the first shot fired.) While UMCOR staff hoped this event could lead to a first joint-ethnic project idea, it was structured freely so that no one would feel any pressure to decide anything, and whatever townspeople wanted to say would be acceptable and respected. The NGO staff had translated all USAID programme instructions into the local language.

The meeting began with hugs and joyful tears. The atmosphere was charged with the emotions of seeing former neighbours for the first time in years, including those the townspeople knew had killed their families. The townspeople advised UMCOR staff to focus on helping people and not playing politics. They agreed to meet again and again to talk with each other, alternating venues on each side of town, as long as UMCOR would officially conduct these meetings. UMCOR staff committed to do

whatever was necessary to continue and to channel information upwards in order to reprogram the investment targeted for this politically-divided community. UMCOR staff welcomed each "mayor" to send a representative to collect their own information, to then better represent their constituency. This unexpected transparency and partnership created a productive relationship with the UMCOR staff when the "mayors" later requested municipal authority training themselves.

Community Strategy

Within a month, and while Dayton was being drafted to draw new political lines throughout their country, the vibrant joint-ethnic Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje group decided that a youth centre for children would get them off the streets and mined ground that permeated the town's centre, and allow them a space outside the political control of the "mayors" who forced them to go to ethnically-separate schools. The United Nations of Vienna volunteers worked with modestly-financed local staff, training them in non-violent teaching methods. Children were invited to identify courses they wished to take, and had to show their parents' permission in order to attend. They chose computers, photography, art, English, dance, and other topics for which the the UN of Vienna recruited skilled international volunteers who also spoke the local language. In partnership, the UMCOR financed some of the "hardware" for this project. Meanwhile, USAID changed its programming direction, and invested in a larger, mono-ethnic house and school reconstruction programme that overshadowed its multi-ethnic reconciliation attempt of the previous year.

UMCOR implemented both projects, which signalled insincerity about reconciliation to the "mayors" and the townspeople. What did the UMCOR really stand for? What would be the dominant programming strategy? Only a thorough translation of US Congressional testimony explained the transition by USAID, whose officials soon had to come to Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje to speak with the townspeople themselves. USAID reversed some "joint-ethnic micro-project decisions" in order to support its new "mono-ethnic return plan". The people of Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje said, "We will not use our children as experiments of the Federation – they have already suffered enough." So, the townspeople worked intensively with UMCOR staff on the ground to determine (within a new US political framework) whether they wished to use their USAID programme funds. And then, to decide how to use the funds. They all continued to work with the constant IO, UN of Vienna, which was growing in reputation, as the joint-ethnic programmes were getting underway.

Community Organization

The Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje Youth Centre was conceived as a product of user programming and management, which has evolved in the direction and at the pace the townspeople could handle. No pre-set objectives were established, no strict criteria were given to teachers or students within which to work and learn. The programmes, as well as the building repair and interior design, were all done on-site by the townspeople – with their own expertise and ideas – as opposed to by foreign engineers and conflict resolution experts with experience from another place.

The technical resources (cameras, development materials, computers, and so on) were procured jointly and gradually, and as the townspeople learned to manage them, additional proposals were co-written by the UN of Vienna staff and townspeople to procure further resources. The Youth Centre successfully expanded to become a Cultural Centre in a bigger premise across the street. Adults from both sides joined to attend a host of evening events and entertainment, while they still worked separately in mono-ethnic firms.

Meanwhile, in another "reconciliation" project, the well-funded UMCOR spurred numerous arguments in a joint women's group by giving them an "introductory" US$ 10,000 for knitting supplies, as soon as the group formed. The Catholic and Muslim women, all of whom had business or knitting experience, had not yet organized themselves in this new group, nor had they identified how they wanted to work, or exactly what use they would put any income to (or how they would manage and share it). A quick and easy sum dropped onto their books caused fighting for three months, when UMCOR had to appeal to United Nations of Vienna to resolve, and then visibly bowed out of the "reconciliation" effort. Eventually, a local-NGO business plan was made and the women's group strategy has succeeded in linking with other groups in broader women's issue forums to improve the quality of their post-conflict community lives.

Toward Sustainability

Two years later, UMCOR used up its projects' budget and exited when its principal donors lost interest in large-scale rehabilitation in the still-politically-divided community. It left 14 houses incomplete, only the external shell of the huge central library repaired, and a partially-repaired four-storey apartment building uninhabitable due to failed political negotiations. Based in Sarajevo, the NGO's management then looked at the new financing for Republika Srpska, which was easier to get than continuing the complicated process of dealing with the long-misunderstood political issues of a divided community. The NGO ordered all its staff to exit Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje and transferred them to new projects.

The NGO's locally-based Bosnian staff, having partnered well with the still-resourceful IO, transferred themselves to become volunteers or local employees of the town-owned reconciliation programmes. The UN of Vienna management continued to gradually hand over to community members each component of proposal/grant writing, donor relations, financial reporting, and programme management of their joint-ethnic programmes. The UN of Vienna finished the 14 houses through its own joint-ethnic construction programme, with its own donors and partners. One by one, as agreed upon with the community members, the UN of Vienna reduced its international volunteer staff, who had been absorbed into an UNDP umbrella-like programme, for complete local ownership. Thus, each community-identified programme incorporated and registered itself as a legal NGO in Bosnia, eventually linking themselves as a "family" of civil society organizations, and continue to manage themselves within the global peace-building community.

Lessons Learned

■ *Use participatory programming in all sectors of post-conflict rehabilitation and rec-onciliation work.* Strengthen community-minded civil society leaders, not the nationalist-oriented political leaders of the conflict. International agencies and NGOs that work through only official government (i.e., political) channels to design programmes and to direct investments continue to reinforce the physical divisions and dependencies created by these politicians during the war. Organizations that work directly with communities and professionals (i.e., doctors) to assess needs and to target participants have been able to reunite segregated ethnic groups or work with minority ethnic groups successfully. These agencies continue to strengthen multi-ethnic and democratic relations in Bosnia through community-building with the empowered participants.

■ *Empower community leaders to create their own solutions.* The only way to prevent the re-emergence of conflict is to support local and national leaders to build up new institutions, those that reflect their cultural values and capacities, from a solid democratic base. With this in mind it is more effective to work outside the main political parties, through transparent partnerships within a community. The "ethnic cleansing" and expulsions in the Bosnian conflict, as well as the initial election exercises thereafter, have strengthened the nationalist-separatists' power. Foreign interveners must realize that each community has its own leaders who must be included in the design and implementation of sustainable-reconstruction and ethnic-reconciliation programmes in order to defeat Bosnia's entrenched political separatism.

■ *Help the whole community to improve conditions.* Aiding only ethnic minorities or refugees increases local tensions among those that stayed to defend their neigh-bourhoods. The key to a peaceful Bosnia is the re-establishment of community life that emphasizes co-existence in a stable region. This approach assumes that refugees and displaced persons will return to their communities, when basic con-ditions such as security, jobs and education exist. Supplying only reconstruction materials or helping only one ethnic group does not help the community as a whole; rather, it fragments it.

■ *Direct humanitarian resources through private sector channels, where possible, in a conscious strategy to reintegrate resource use, management, and ownership.* Promoting investment in small-scale, privately-owned businesses has resulted in successful multi-ethnic, cross-entity relationships, and thus in "independent" sources of power to influence post-conflict Bosnian politics. Tile-making machines, hand tools for craftsmen, clothing manufacturing, furniture repair, small dairy and agribusiness equipment, and the construction of cross-border infra-structure have brought people together in a country where minority-ethnic returns remain the exception (despite figures rising in 2000). This approach to peaceful, economic sustainability is ignored when aid/investment has been distributed through

programmes under contract to Bosnia's large publicly-owned agencies or firms, which, re-staffed along ethnic lines, have proven unproductive. Regardless of the particular Bosnian institutions engaged in reconstruction, *accountability* – making sure funds are used for the purposes intended – is imperative.

■ *Reduce the commercialization and symbols of the international community at the local level*. Community redevelopment and democracy-building efforts call for different kinds of advertising and promotional campaigns than short-term emergency relief work. Pervasive symbols of foreign organizations in Bosnian villages are not desirable and do not contribute to the goals of community ownership and participation, key elements of redevelopment. Organizational logos should be minimized because of the violence-inciting role that various signs and symbols have played in the conflict's demarcation of territory. While nationalist propaganda continues to bombard people with separatist sentiments and laws to protect minorities remain politically unendorsed, self-congratulatory advertising by foreign players continues to emphasize the presence of and dependence on foreign actors, over five years after a multi-party peace agreement was signed. Such advertising trivializes the real purpose of these programmes – to help families and communities re-establish themselves; and it reduces the space for multi-ethnic community-inspired messages to encourage people to reconcile in the face of protracted, nearly institutionalized, separation.

■ *Create a consistent donor strategy and a practical set of co-ordination principles to accomplish it*. Only a consistent post-conflict rehabilitation strategy among Bosnia's donors will avoid confusion and often renewed conflict among residents, NGO workers and officials in the same municipality trying to comply with different donor conditions. In Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje, European donors did not require multi-ethnic use of central urban apartments or other housing in order to fund repairs, nor did different US government agencies require multi-ethnic use of schools or other facilities. However, one USAID project required extensive demonstration of "multi-ethnic reconciliation value" and property ownership of apartments before the donor would consent to fund repair activities. The lone multi-ethnic programme in town had very little political leverage when the other projects could simply repair the buildings with no reconciliation requirements imposed on the politicians. Significant community-level resources and time have been wasted during the past five years to sort through incompatible and inconsistent aid-conditionality stipulations.

■ *Strengthen the public sector – particularly at the canton level – to establish operative partnerships with civil society*. Training new civil society leaders can be threatening to new Bosnian government officials, who often lack the skills and training to perform their own jobs. The canton remains the most important level for public sector training because it regulates key areas: regional education, cultural activities, land use, and other policies that are integral to Bosnia's reconstruction and reconciliation. Canton offices are key public buffers between the grassroots-

focused constituency who may be inclined towards accommodation and national-minded politicians who are constrained from cooperating. Building strategic partnerships between the public and multi-ethnic private sectors will also improve the quality of community redevelopment and democracy building more than simply adding resources or providing straightforward technical assistance to the public sector alone. Introducing incentives for better public management in the face of policies of favouritism, as was accomplished with the inter-entity customs bureau, would also help to build a peaceful and democratic government of the divided communities of Bosnia.

Conclusions

Since the 1995 Dayton Agreement, Bosnian civil society has proven the illegitimacy of ethnic separatism as a pre-requisite to peace. The Bosnian private sector continues to profit through multi-ethnic, inter-entity relations beyond the reaches of nationalist political parties. In the first quarter of 2000, the rate of minority-ethnic return was four-fold than in the same period in 1999, which was a similar multiple increase over 1998. Even in the "extreme" areas of Republika Srpska, persons who are determined to rebuild their communities in a spirit of co-existence are doing so.

As Bosnian citizens gain economic strength to support and provide security for their families, their interest in participating in a broader democracy increases. Hence, major economic restructuring of the Bosnian economy – with privatization as a central theme – remains critical to democracy building. In short, the deliberate participation by Bosniacs, Bosnian Croats, and Bosnian Serbs alike, to pursue a strategy of peaceful and productive interdependence has sent a constant signal to donors on how to shape new electoral processes, enhance new systems of governance, and generate new investments in economic ventures – i.e., with a sustainable, multi-ethnic strategy. With rigorously reshaped public sector investment, Bosnia may become a viable member of our global democratic society, healed from the violence of the civil war.

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4. | ENHANCING ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY

4. | **ENHANCING ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY**

The right to vote and to hold those in office accountable at the ballot box is a necessary element of democracy. Local elections are a central element of democratic governance closest to the people. In local elections citizens can personally know the candidates, can offer direct knowledge and information on the issues, and can communicate with elected officials on a more frequent basis.

This chapter focuses on *traditional participation* in terms of elections, elected officials, and political parties. Chapter Five addresses what has become known as *enhanced representation* – citizens becoming directly involved in policy-making and implementation. The approaches are complementary; each seeks to improve the quality of democracy and they both have important ramifications for successfully managing conflict. This chapter explores:

- **Major aspects of local elections;**
- **The functions of elections, with regard to accountability, representation, inclusion, and the creation of coalitions;**
- **Options for electoral systems and major considerations for local elections;**
- **Advantages and disadvantages of using popular referendums; and**
- **The critical role of political parties in local elections and electoral contests.**

4.1 Elections: Legitimacy, Accountability, and Trust

■ *There is no viable alternative to popular elections as a way to legitimize the actions of representatives in a democratic political system.*

The principal function of elections is to *legitimize* public authority and to provide officials with a mandate for specific action. Election campaigns serve many functions too, such as clarifying issues and policies, holding candidates to account, communicating information among candidates and voters, and offering choices about solutions to community problems to the general public.

Elections are also a critical means of promoting public *accountability*. Accountability involves not just the ability of voters to vote out of office elected officials who have not performed well in the public interest, but it also includes the opportunity for elected officials to give an account. As Professor John Stewart explains: "Those who exercise public power and spend public money should be accountable to those on whose behalf they act….[But] to give an account would be inadequate without a basis for holding to account. To hold to account requires an account as a basis for judgement. The two elements complement each other." In addition to elections, elected officials can be held accountable by external inspections, audits, and regulation.

The link between elections and accountability becomes clear if we consider the problems that often arise when local officials are appointed rather than elected. In Africa, for example, many local political positions are not usually filled through the electoral system but through appointment by central government (with or without consultation with local citizens). As African political scientist Dele Oluwu explains, this often means that municipal or metropolitan council political representatives perceive themselves as representing the central government rather than the citizens or community they serve.

The critical issue with regard to elections is the element of *trust*. Voters must be able to trust elected officials to carry out their campaign promises and believe that they will engage in open, corruption-free governance. Candidates must trust that if they lose this election, they will have a fair opportunity to win the next one (the concept of alternation in power). Minority communities must trust that even if they do not win a majority of seats in the city council, for example, their interests will not be neglected and they will not be subject to systematic disadvantage, given their minority group status. All actors in local elections must trust that the administration of the poll is free and fair and that the will of the voters will prevail.

4.2 Local Elections: Major Issues

■ *Local elections can be much more passionate and more important to the daily lives of citizens than national elections.*

4.2.1 The Who? What? When? and How? of Local Elections

■ The *Who?* of elections refers to the traditional distinction between individuals standing for office, or voting for political parties who have pre-selected candidates running on their ticket (for example, in a proportional representation system). The positions for which elections are held vary widely, but the actors in local elections often include: candidates standing alone or under the banner of a political party; the voters, who cast ballots; election officials, who ensure the procedural fairness of the vote including issues of security and honesty in vote counting; the press, which reports on the campaign and outcomes; political party volunteers and other civil society actors; and official and unofficial monitors.

■ The *What?* of local elections refers to the institutional forum for which elections are held. These are often described in terms of executive positions – mayors, city administrators, ombudsmen, judges, law enforcement officers, and so on. And elections can occur for legislative functions – city councils, district councils, neighbourhood committees, and the like. The *What?* can also refer to public decision-making on specific questions, such as incurring new public debt, phrased in terms of a referendum or ballot initiative.

■ The *When?* Elections for local office may be held coincidentally with national or provincial/state polls, or they may be held at other times. Issues related to *When?* include the periodicity of elections, the term of office, whether they are staggered around the country or held all at once, and the length of the election cycle (over one day or even several weeks). The significance of the *When?* of elections is that the frequency and timing of voting may significantly affect voter turnout.

■ And the *How?* How voting occurs is a matter of electoral system choice. But other administrative aspects of elections impinge. Recent innovations and issues in the *How?* of voting include voting by mail, online voting, "queuing" (lining up publicly behind a sign for a candidate or party) versus secret balloting (in which individual vote preferences are not made public), and the increasing use of referendums in some countries.

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4.2.2 Advantages of Local Elections

Local elections can have certain distinct advantages as compared with national elections, including the following.

- *Barometers of national political trends.* Local elections are important for their role in a broader national democracy. Recent local elections in China, Japan, Germany, Nigeria, and the United Kingdom show that these polls can be important indicators of national political trends.

- *Determining what matters most to voters.* Often issues in local elections are those that directly affect the daily lives of citizens; sometimes, local issues are the ones that voters care about most. The nature of contestation among parties and candidates, and the issues that arise, can be an important indicator of what voters care deeply about.

- *Democratization process.* Local elections may be used as a first step towards a country's democratization process, as was the case in the Nigerian local elections of 1998.

- *Minority inclusion.* Local elections can be highly useful for allowing minorities at the national level to find inclusion in a country's political life in a local arena (see essay on India on page 135).

- *Development of national party systems.* There are also intricate linkages among local elections, party systems, and local level and national-level party system formation. In Nigeria, for example, party formation rules applied to the local elections in 1998 had a strong influence on the formation of the party system at the national level in Nigeria.

4.3 Local Elections in Democratizing Societies

■ *Without a viable system of local elections, the transition to democracy remains incomplete.*

Local elections have become especially important in countries that are experiencing, or have recently undergone, transition from authoritarian rule to more open political systems, as these elections occur in the context of broader political reforms.

In democratizing countries, local elections often raise important questions of *sequencing.* In some cases, local elections precede the introduction of national democracy (e.g., in Nigeria in 1998); in other instances local elections follow the creation of new national-level governments, for example in South Africa in 1995 and 1996 and Bosnia in 2000. There is no agreed rule to indicate when local polls should precede national ones, or *vice versa*; each country has its own experience and rationale for sequencing local and national elections. Clearly, local elections are

lower risk for incumbent governments and it is no surprise that democratization efforts are often allowed to unfold slowly and under tight control. Most recently, Pakistan's military government under General Pervez Musharraf, who seized power in a *coup d'état* in October 1999, announced a possible return to civilian rule to start with local voting in a new, three-tiered system of local government.

Whatever the sequencing, it is clear that without a viable system of local elections, the transition to democracy remains incomplete or insufficient. Consider, for example, the first municipal elections held in Mozambique in June 1998. The overall transition from civil war to a more peaceful democracy in Mozambique is regarded as one of the important successes of the immediate post-Cold War period. Two relatively successful national elections were held (1994 and 1999) and the country enjoyed a new-found openness and vibrant political competition. However, local elections were less than successful. In addition to administrative irregularities, there were serious problems of voter turnout. Estimates are that, on average, across 33 local administrative areas, more than 85 per cent of the population abstained from voting after a call by the principal opposition party, Mozambique Resistance Movement (RENAMO), for a boycott.

Although Mozambique's 1998 election results were sustained by the Supreme Court – which argued that there was no provision for annulling election results due to low voter turnout – the legitimacy of the outcome was clearly questioned. The depth and quality of post-transition democracy in Mozambique cannot be considered complete. A critical challenge for the country is to continue efforts to improve the legitimacy of elected local governance in subsequent municipal elections.

The Mozambique experience underscores a general finding from the literature on elections in democratization processes. The transition from closed to open political systems is inherently a long-term and difficult process. National-level elections are critical in starting (as in South Africa) or culminating (as in Nigeria) this process, but they are not enough. Local elections play a critical role in democratization, despite the fact that they have been under-valued in many academic and practitioner evaluations of democratization.

Local elections have also proved to be critically important and valuable in political systems where competition at the national level is highly constrained or circumscribed by law or in practice. Jim Schiller has commented that, for example, "Nearly two-thirds of Indonesia's voters live outside the major cities in small towns and villages. For them, the face of the government is the village head or the sub-district officer. If democracy is going to be meaningful to a majority of Indonesians it must reduce their dependence on officials and increase their freedom to choose leaders and to influence local governance".

The example of village-level elections in China is also a case in point. Despite a tight political monopoly of the Chinese Communist Party at the national level, space for democratic activity (on a strictly non-party basis) has been allowed. Thus, local elections can be an important aspect of the democratic experience in a country even when the overall climate is hostile to multi-party politics. They may serve as harbinger of future democratization, as the case study on China illustrates (page 137).

4.4 Evaluating Local Elections

■ *The critical test for evaluating the efficacy of local elections is to examine whether the issues of immediate relevance to citizens are debated and tackled.*

The greater the extent to which important issues can be solved locally, the better; not all issues (such as foreign policy) can be solved in local contests, but many (such as the local environment) often can be addressed.

The following questions can be used as a checklist to analyse the integrity of a given election:

- *Will of the people.* Do local elections indicate that the will of the people has been expressed and the authority of governance approved as legitimate?

- *Possibility of alternation.* Does the election allow for the possibility of alternation in winning political coalitions? That is, does the opposition party have a real chance of winning?

- *Confidence-building.* Does the election build confidence in the political system, namely that the leaders are exercising public power in pursuit of the common good?

- *Educated choices.* Do the elections provide voters and candidates an opportunity to clearly define the issues and to make choices among solutions to community problems? Do the elections help educate the citizens on the critical issues before the community?

- *Level playing field.* Is the playing field among the various candidates and parties a level one? That is, does any given candidate have an inherent advantage?

- *Mandate.* Is the primary purpose of the election to generate adversarial, "winner-take-all" choices among parties and candidates or are the elections designed to produce representatives of various elements of the voting population, leaving the resolution of contentious issues to subsequent bargaining among these officials?

Figure 12

Local Elections in Comparative Perspective

Iran, February 1998

In Iran in February 1998, local elections were an important indicator of the relative strength of moderate and conservative political forces. The 1998 poll was the first local elections to be held in Iran since the 1979 revolution. More than 300,000 candidates contested the poll for more than 200,000 seats on local councils; the candidacy of many of those standing for office, particularly the non-clerics, was disputed between a national screening panel and the Interior Ministry responsible for holding the vote. Since the revolution, Muslim clerics have held the balance of political power in Iran. The elections were hotly contested and most observers saw the aggregate result of the voting as an indicator that the supporters of moderate President Mohammad Khatami were ascendant.

Israel, November 1998

In a very politicized society, some of the most difficult disputes in Israel are fought out in highly adversarial politics at the local level. Particularly in Israel's big cities, the politics of identity is especially important; differences among secular and more religious Jews, among various immigrant communities, and between Israeli Jews and Arabs are especially acute when local-level decision-making and representation is at stake. In the 1998 elections, for example, an Arab won election to the city council in Jerusalem for the first time.

Azerbaijan, December 1999

Elections for local councils in Azerbaijan were held in December 1999. This was the first round of local voting since the country's independence following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The voting was deeply troubled, with opposition parties unable to compete in nearly three-quarters of the contested seats for local councils. Moreover, international observers from the Council of Europe declined to certify the elections as "free and fair", citing alleged ballot stuffing and other violations. The implications of the elections were significant: first, the poor showing weakened Azerbaijan's bid to join the Council of Europe; second, it reinforced a broader concern that the country's system of democracy is deeply flawed. Finally, and most important from the opposition's point of view, as a result of flawed local elections, no level of political institution in the country could claim democratic legitimacy.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, April 2000

Wracked by years of war and bitter memories of atrocities, Bosnia seems an unlikely case for the development of local democracy. Yet, in April 2000

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the OSCE organized local elections to augment the country's two national-level elections held since the war ended. In many ways, the elections were successful. Voter turnout was comparatively high: an estimated 70 per cent of the electorate voted. The OSCE declared the voting generally free and fair (noting intimidation and irregularities in some districts, however). The results mirrored the general pattern of post-war politics in Bosnia, namely that the nationalistic parties that led the country to war still receive strong support in their respective communities. At the same time, the local elections showed that, particularly in Bosniac-majority areas, opposition parties are gaining ground.

South Africa, December 2000

South Africa held nation-wide local elections in December 2000, which were the first for newly created municipal structures that unified previously segregated areas. In the polling, the nationally dominant African National Congress (ANC) won the lion's share of municipalities (170 of the nearly 240 contested), although the party saw a slip in its overall share of votes across the country (winning just under 60 per cent of the votes cast, down some four per cent from the national elections in 1999). Significantly, the principal opposition party (the Democratic Alliance) gained ground (winning 22 per cent of the overall vote) and won control of 18 municipal councils. The elections were watched carefully because they dealt with a number of significant issues pertaining to South Africa's ongoing process of democratization after apartheid: the predominance of the ANC, the creation of viable multi-ethnic opposition parties, the role of traditional leaders, the importance of service delivery, and the enthusiasm of the people for democracy in general. So far, the elections seem to reaffirm that South Africa's nascent democracy remains functioning and vibrant.

4.5 Electoral Systems

■ *Electoral systems define and structure the rules of the game of political competition. The process by which these rules are adopted is critically important.*

Academics and practitioners alike have focused on the structure of the electoral system as critical to determining the overall character of a democracy. These choices have received important attention in recent years, too, as a means of "engineering" certain political outcomes, such as ensuring that minority communities are not systematically excluded from representation and influence when "winner-take-all" pol-

itics prevail. Analysts of electoral systems agree that the choice of a particular system of translating votes to public positions entails decisions – and sometimes trade-offs – over certain values such as stable government, clear election outcomes, representation, accountability, links to constituencies, the importance of political parties, and the degree of voter choice among alternative candidates and parties.

Election systems can also affect the overall "spin" of a political system. Systems that set up "winner-take-all" contests among candidates, for example, arguably encourage a more adversarial government versus opposition political system. On the other hand, forms of proportional representation are often said to lead to more accommodative politics, albeit at the cost of potentially fragmenting the political system.

In local elections, electoral system issues are important because they critically effect how the political community is defined, and the ways in which elected officials relate to sub-districts, neighbourhoods, or dominant social interests. In many of today's more diverse municipalities, ethnic, religious, and gender diversity is an important consideration in the choice of an appropriate electoral system. Some systems may, in various contexts, be more amenable to promoting municipal peace than others.

4.5.1 Choosing an Electoral System

In some cases, local municipalities have the right to choose their own electoral system; in other cases the electoral system is determined by national legislation. Choosing an electoral system is a matter of careful design to meet the specific challenges of any given local setting. The choices are often difficult as they involve decisions about how to manage trade-offs – such as representation of all communities, which might lead to unstable governing coalitions – and maximizing values such as links to constituencies, ease of understanding, inclusion, contestation, proportionality, accountability, candidate identity, and the formation of alliances among contending political forces. For example in Andrew Nickson's study of local governments in Latin America, he argues that the reliance on closed-list proportional representation in many countries in Latin America has weakened public discretion and enhanced the national-level political grip on power; he advocates reforms to introduce an open-list proportional representation system.

Choosing among alternative election systems for a municipal arena means bargaining among interests over the objectives, meaning, and form of elections. The choices may imply very serious decisions for a community, especially the choice between adversarial elections – choosing among candidates with sharply differing positions – and more collaborative democracy in which representatives to consen-
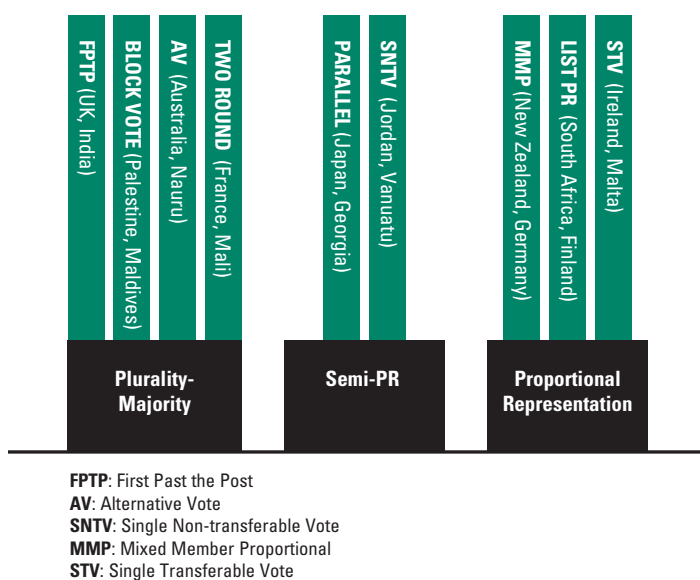
sus-building forums such as city councils are chosen. But reform of election rules is inherently difficult, because they involve such fundamental choices for a political community.

In Italy, for example, the electoral system was reformed in late 1999 to allow for the direct election of regional presidents (there are 20 in total, five have special status). In the regions, 80 per cent of the council seats are elected from provincial lists using proportional representation. The remaining 20 per cent of seats are assigned to the candidates of the regional list that got the highest number of votes. The first names on the party lists are their candidates for the Presidency of the *Giunta* (region), and the party with the most votes gets its front-running candidate elected president. For the first time, on 16 April 2000, voters directly elected presidents of the regions in elections held around the country.

Figure 13

Types of Electoral Systems

The following diagram presents the three basic families of electoral systems: Plurality-Majority, Semi-Proportional Representation, and Proportional Representation (PR).

FPTP (UK, India)
BLOCK VOTE (Palestine, Maldives)
AV (Australia, Nauru)
TWO ROUND (France, Mali)
PARALLEL (Japan, Georgia)
SNTV (Jordan, Vanuatu)
MMP (New Zealand, Germany)
LIST PR (South Africa, Finland)
STV (Ireland, Malta)

Plurality-Majority   **Semi-PR**   **Proportional Representation**

FPTP: First Past the Post
AV: Alternative Vote
SNTV: Single Non-transferable Vote
MMP: Mixed Member Proportional
STV: Single Transferable Vote

Source: The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design, 1997. Stockholm: International IDEA

4.5.2 Principal Options

The principal options for local-level systems of elections mirror in many ways the choices that are available for other arenas, such as in national elections or within a labour union.

The three main types of electoral systems are: plurality or majority systems, semi-proportional or mixed systems, or proportional representation systems. But the features of various electoral systems can be combined in myriad innovations. There are, as a result, an extremely wide variety of electoral system options for application in municipal settings. The three principal variables or elements to consider are:

- *Electoral formula*, which defines the ways in which votes are transferred to seats;
- *Ballot structure*, or the way in which candidates or parties appear on the ballot paper or in other methods of voting; and
- *District magnitude*, or the number of candidates elected from a given district (in general, the higher the district magnitude, the greater the degree of proportionality).

The principal electoral systems are:

Plurality or Majority Systems. These systems can be used for the election of executives (mayors and similar functions) or legislative members (city council) and other individual office-holders.

First-past-the-post. The simplest system for single-member districts, the candidate (not party) who receives more votes than any other candidate wins the seat; this does not necessarily mean that the candidate receives a majority of votes, simply a plurality.

Two-round or run-off. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes in the first round, a run-off is held between the top two (or sometimes more) vote-winners. Whoever wins the highest number of votes in the second round is declared elected, sometimes regardless of whether they have achieved majority support or not.

Block vote. Used in multi-member districts, the block vote allows voters to have as many votes as there are candidates to be elected (e.g., if there are three seats, each voter has three votes). Voting can be either candidate-centred or party-centred. Counting is identical to first-past-the-post, with the candidates with highest vote totals winning the seats.

Alternative vote. A system, used in single-member districts, in which voters specify their first and alternative (second, third, etc.) preference on the ballot paper. A candidate who receives over 50 per cent of first-preferences is declared elected. If no candidate receives an absolute majority of first-preferences, votes are reallocated until one candidate has an absolute majority of votes cast.

Semi-Proportional or Mixed Systems

Parallel. In parallel systems, proportional representation is used in conjunction with a plurality-majority system but the two systems run in parallel, and the PR seats do not compensate for any disproportionality (i.e., the variation in the proportion of votes to seats) arising from election of the candidates in single-member districts.

Single non-transferable vote. In this system, first-past-the-post methods of vote counting are combined with multi-member districts, with voters having only one vote. Thus, the largest one, two, three, and so on, vote-getters are deemed elected.

Proportional Representation. Systems in which the vote-to-seat allocation (for example in city councils) is roughly proportionate.

List systems. List systems enable each party to represent a list of candidates to voters who choose among parties. Parties receive seats in proportion to their overall share of the vote. Winning candidates are drawn from the party lists. List systems can be closed (or "fixed" as candidates are not changeable by the electorate) or open (voters can indicate their preferences among candidates on the list). In some instances, parties can link their lists together through a mechanism known as *apparentement* (agreements among political parties, often those with primarily a local or regional base, to pool their votes together in an election contest by "linking" their lists).

Mixed member proportional. In these systems, a portion of the council (usually half) is selected by plurality-majority methods, and the balance is elected from PR lists. The PR seats are used to compensate for the disproportionality that may occur in non-PR seats, so that the overall calculation leads to proportional outcomes in the assembly as a whole.

Single transferable vote. A preferential system used in multi-member districts. To gain election, candidates must surpass a specified quota of first-preference votes. Voter's preferences are reallocated to other continuing candidates when an unsuccessful candidate is excluded or if an elected candidate has a surplus. The overall effect of this system is proportionality in the assembly with elected officials having a link to a specific constituency.

4.5.3 Special Considerations for Local Democracy

Among the special considerations concerning electoral system choice for local government is the relatively greater importance of geography and personality and the common use of "at-large" delegates (chosen by the general electorate and not tied to a specific district) that are sometimes elected in addition to those elected on the basis of constituency.

Geography and space. Districts and their boundaries are particularly important for local democracy. The geographic dimension of representation matters because the issues decided at the local level involve the issues of everyday life, such as service delivery, neighbourhood safety, sub-municipal identity (neighbourhoods characterized by ethnic, religious, cultural, or racial factors), economic development, transportation, schools, and the like. People identify closely with the area in which they live, and they feel common interests with others sharing their part of the city.

For this reason, many municipal electoral systems feature a "ward" (small district), neighbourhood, or sub-municipal system of electoral boundary delimitation. This can be beneficial in terms of ensuring representation, but it can also be problematic when minorities within these sub-municipal boundaries are not fully represented. Districting or boundary delimitation offers certain opportunities but also introduces potential problems.

One solution is the "spokes of the wheel" principle in which districts or wards are delimited not on the basis of definable communities, but instead on the basis of segments of a circle emanating from the city centre. That is, districts are drawn in a manner that divides the city up into several equal segments (much like a pizza). This option may allow for districts to include both inner city and suburban communities and a greater mix of ethnic or class differences; in systems such as these, other urban boundaries such as neighbourhoods or geographical features are not taken into account when drawing boundaries for districts.

Personality. Because local officials are especially well known to voters, often on a personal basis, and because cities often lend themselves to mayoral systems with a strong executive, the role of individuals and personality in local politics is relatively more important. This emphasis on personality and individuals in politics tends to favour the adoption of majority systems for executive selection, often featuring "run-offs" if no clear winner emerges in the first round of electoral competition.

Density of representation. The density of representation, or "district magnitude", is another important factor. As John Stewart writes, "local government has the potential to achieve a scale of representation that is qualitatively different from national representation. . . . Representation should be built on and by a continuing relationship between the councillors and those he or she represents. The more citizens participate in the process of government, the stronger will be the process or representation".

Although there is no general guideline, a critical factor to assess is the number of councillors as a ratio to the voting-age population in electoral districts. Local government systems have the opportunity to minimize that ratio (offering more representatives for fewer people). That is, representation is enhanced with the lowest possible density of representation.

PR and "at-large" options. Another important aspect of electoral system choice in municipal settings is the common practice of using PR systems within a single defined municipal boundary. In these instances, single-list (party-based) PR is used to proportionally reflect the various political opinions. This election system choice is conducive to the formation of broadly representative municipal councils or district legislatures, and it obviates the need for sub-municipal districting. One concern about PR list systems is that they can potentially give an advantage to parties at the expense of individual candidates or representatives of local associations that do not have a party-political profile.

Another mechanism that is often used is the election of "at-large" candidates not tied to a specific sub-municipal district. When several at-large candidates are elected, it is possible to promote a more proportionate outcome through the crafting of the election rules. As a result, it may be possible to achieve some degree of proportionality through multi-member at-large seats while reserving the principal orientation of the electoral system as featuring constituency-based representation.

4.6 Referendums and Ballot Initiatives

■ *Referendums can give voters a direct say in important policy matters, but potential disadvantages must also be considered.*

One of the most rapidly evolving practices is the use of referendums to solve contentious municipal disputes. In a referendum, a public issue that cannot or should not be decided without direct reference to the will of the people is put to the electorate in terms of a question. Voters are asked to vote "yes" or "no" on the referendum question, and in most cases 50 per cent or more of votes will decide the outcome (although some require "super-majorities", for example two-thirds or 67 per cent of the voters, to accept or reject the proposal).

Questions to consider when deciding to use referendums to settle community public policy questions include:

■ Is it an appropriate issue to be decided directly by the people?
■ Are the people sufficiently interested in the question being put to them?
■ How is the referendum called or placed on the ballot?
■ How is the question phrased?
■ How intense are opinions about the issue?
■ What are the consequences of a yes or no outcome?

- What is the "decision rule" (amount of votes needed to pass or fail)?
- Does the public require educating on the ramifications of the issue?

Citizen initiatives have forced referendum questions to be placed on the ballot on a wide variety of issues, such as hunting, abortion, transportation, taxes, and health care, particularly in the United States. In January 1999 the US Supreme Court was asked to rule on the validity of such measures, with the State of Colorado arguing such initiatives should be more strictly regulated. The Court ruled that restricting such activity was a violation of constitutional guarantees of free speech.

Referendums also sometimes become larger than the specific question being addressed, amounting to a public confidence vote on the government of the day. This was at least one interpretation of the overwhelming defeat of a November 1999 referendum in Portugal on a plan for regional devolution of power. The plan proposed the division of Portugal into eight regions, with the view that greater powers for the regions could stimulate economic development in the relatively less prosperous rural interior of the country. The plan would have set up regional assemblies and allowed for greater public involvement in economic planning. Opponents of the plan argued that it would undermine national unity, lead to inconsistency in economic policy, and create a new, unnecessary layer of government administration. The proposal was rejected in a referendum by 63 per cent of voters.

Because public education is such an important aspect of a referendum process, in some countries and localities independent campaign consultants are hired to lobby for a question being put on the ballot, mounting the campaign for advocating passage or denial of the question, and advocating for its adoption. The increasing use of campaign consultants has led some to conclude that referendums can be anti-democratic when huge sums of money are at stake and costly consultants are brought in to manipulate the political process and influence the electorate. Others believe that consultants play a critical role in democracy, so limiting their role or prohibiting their use infringes on the rights of free speech, association, and advocacy.

| Figure 14 | **Popular Referendums: Promises and Perils** |

Many praise referendums because they give voters a direct say on important policy matters. Sometimes, when special interests are powerful, referendums may allow the public's will to prevail. Others, however, question whether the public has enough information on certain policy issues and whether the people can always make the best choice. With the advent of information technology applications like Internet voting, some see referendums as a practical means of marrying elections and voting with direct democracy on a day-to-day basis.

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Promises

- Definitive resolution of a public dispute;
- Clear and easy-to-understand mechanism for citizen participation and direct decision-making;
- Citizen initiatives can put the question on the ballot;
- Clear and unambiguous determination of the popular will and the precise level of support or opposition among voters; and
- Opportunities for public education on important issues.

Perils

- Referendums lend themselves to "minimum winning coalitions", or bare majority rule. On contentious issues, this can lead to "winner-take-all" politics, which can induce community conflict rather than resolve it;
- Questions can be written in such a way as to mislead or obfuscate the issues, rather than clarify them;
- Referendums may become a vote on the legitimacy of the incumbent government instead of the merits of the particular issue at hand;
- Some issues require deliberation and compromise rather than clear "yes" or "no" answers;
- Some issues require specialized knowledge and information that the public may not be able to easily digest and decide upon, particularly if the issue is highly technical or emotionally charged;
- Sometimes what may be in the individual interests of a bare majority of voters is not really in the broader interest of the community as a whole, such as tax cuts that then undermine funding for education and schools.

4.7 Political Organizations

◼ *Developing democracy within political parties is a key challenge for established and traditional democracies alike.*

Electoral system choices have important ramifications for the development of local political parties, their linkages with national parties, and the internal democracy practices within the local-level party structures. Plurality-majority systems place a greater premium on public assessment of individual candidates; PR list systems give more discretion to political parties in selecting candidates. For this reason, many stress the importance of practices of internal democracy within political parties as a means to enhancing representative democracy.

Some countries or municipalities, however, have opted not to promote political parties at the local level at all. The view is that political party formation may be detrimental to the promotion of local democracy at this level. In Canada, for example, no local party systems occur in cities unless the population is greater than 20,000. Candidates for office run as individuals. Some of the advantages of "party-free" local democracies are that successful candidates can claim to speak for all citizens, mayors of various cities can work together without party-political labels, and the best, most capable candidate may have a better chance of gaining a larger share of votes.

The challenges for political party development in established, democratic, municipal polities is different than those affecting post-transition and especially post-war environments. In established systems, party affiliation and affection among voters is strong, the networks of party organization are well-established, and political leadership within parties is more stable and cohesive. Thus, change is less likely to occur rapidly. Stability of the party system has a "down-side", however; more established political parties may be less adept at adapting to changing challenges in today's municipal arenas. In transitional countries, political party formation is less well-established and more susceptible to the volatile entry and departure of new political parties, often based around a charismatic individual.

In post-war societies, political party development often reflects the divisions of the war and the extent to which reconciliation occurs is often a matter of intra-party politics. The most recent example of the importance of within-party politics at the local level is the relationship within Northern Ireland's Unionist parties (pro-association with the United Kingdom) and within the nationalist factions (pro-association with the Republic of Ireland) community. Within the Ulster Unionist Party led by the first minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly, David Trimble, debates between moderates and conservatives have been critical as to whether the Good Friday Agreement setting up new local autonomy would be implemented. A very close vote in November 1999 led to the party's agreement to participate in the new assembly. Similarly, debates within Sinn Fein have often dictated the nature of nationalist positions in the talks and the pace of implementing the peace agreement.

It is generally believed that there is a "right" to form political parties and that political parties as associations have certain "rights". This view is contested in some countries, such as Uganda, which has argued for a "no-party" democracy. Some commonly accepted "rights of political parties", include:

■ The right to form political parties on economic or political interest;
■ The right (questioned by some) to form political parties on a regional, ethnic, religious, or other identity-group basis;

- The right of an individual to run as an independent candidate and to have an equal opportunity to compete against party candidates;
- The right to form single-issue parties or *ad hoc* coalitions on a single issue;
- The right to gain a place at publicly-sponsored community forums.

A critical issue in many municipalities is whether political parties and other associations (particularly civic associations and publicly funded groups) have the right to exclude individuals. These issues are invariably fraught with conflict precisely because political parties and the form of representation is so important in defining the political community and determining how governance occurs within the community.

4.7.1 Local Party Development

Developing democracy within political parties is a major challenge to established and transitional democracies alike, and in many situations around the world there are real challenges for the effective development of local party structures. The networks that aggregate interests upwards – building coalitions among like-minded individuals – can also be abused for creating patronage networks that can feature anti-democratic practices such as nepotism and corruption. The wheeling and dealing that occurs in coalition-making can sometimes lead parties to develop narrow agendas and interests separate from the broader community of individuals they purport to represent. An important issue for local political party development is the ways in which recruitment of party activists and members occurs, and the extent and nature of grassroots organizing.

Exclusion of traditionally under-represented groups has also been an issue in many communities. Sometime the onus is placed on political parties to ensure that their candidates generally reflect the composition of the communities they serve. In India, for example, laws stipulate that one-third of the office-holders in the *panchats* (local governments) must be women. This legal change has revolutionized the way that political parties find, nominate, and promote their candidates and relate to their office-holders. Some have suggested that these changes have also significantly affected the agendas and policies of parties, with greater reflection of issues often of special concern to women such as health, sanitation, and nutrition.

A critical issue is the financing of campaigns and candidates and the influence of money in politics. The extent to which campaign spending influences party and candidate positions, democracy based on the will of all the people – rich and poor – is undermined. Real issues of access to the political system occur when money plays a nefarious role in the development of parties and the way they relate to the electorate. Transparency and fair practices are essential in campaign financing.

Concerns about undue influence and money in politics has led to emphasis on the ways in which democracy can be fostered from the lowest branch level to the ways that local political parties can have more influence at other tiers of governance. For example, in Europe many local political organizations have a direct role in the selection of members of the European Parliament.

4.7.2 Democracy within Parties

Democratic procedures need to be built into the very first level of political organization for a fully integrated democracy to occur, and that means at the very branch level of political parties. Again, a series of questions can help structure evaluations of the relative democratic nature of local political organizations. The purpose of the questions is not to suggest that there is only one recipe for internal party organization, but rather to suggest the central issues that need to be discussed within an organization as it seeks to improve its practical, internal democratic procedures.

Checklist	Evaluating Democratic Practices in Local Political Organizations

- Are the internal electoral processes of parties subject to external observation and monitoring, and are elections procedurally and substantively free and fair?

- Are candidate selection procedures transparent, open, and fair? Are the criteria for standing as a candidate and the nomination and selection process clear and reasonable? How does the party deal with candidates clearly tied to narrow special interests as opposed to broader community-wide interests?

- Are candidates allowed to switch parties once they have been elected, or is their election tied to representation of the party? What is the balance between the exercise of individual discretion and decision-making by party office-holders or candidates and the policies of the party?

- How do ward or district and "at-large" candidate selection occur? Is the process accessible? What is the nature of the party's ties to the community that is represented?

- What are the procedures for funding candidates and linkages among local campaign finance and regional- or national-level party coffers? Can the party receive donations from foreign sources? Can party funds be externally audited?

- Is the party open to the representation of communities that are often marginalized, such as women and young people?

- Is a neutral, independent agency (such as court or electoral commission) empowered to oversee and supervise local political party practices?

The world-wide concern with the role of money in democratic politics suggests that new, innovative ways need to be discovered to re-engage citizens in democracy and to encourage their direct expression of the views. Practically, involving all citizens in large political entities (like mega-cities) is limited; there are too many voices to be heard. One of the solutions may be further sub-municipal devolution; another may be improving the electoral system and fostering democracy internally through political parties. A third option is to expand civic participation beyond the traditional, and occasional, casting of ballots as the primary means of citizen involvement in governance. This is the subject of Chapter Five.

E   S   S   A   Y

LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN INDIA
Empowering Women and Minorities
Pran Chopra

The Constitution of India contains the directive that "The State shall take steps to organise village *panchayats* and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government". *Panchayat* means a gathering of *panch* (five) wise men. The concept was changed later to *gram sabha*, the *gram* (village) *sabha* (assembly), consisting of all voters. All voters in a municipal ward became the urban equivalent.

As the directives contained in the Indian Constitution are not enforceable in law, in the early 1990s a new section was added making local self-government enforceable both in rural and urban India. This section has vastly increased the number of elective offices recognized by the constitution, from about 5,000 (members of parliament and members of the 25 or so state legislatures) to more than three million (including all members of *panchayats* and municipalities in this new sub-state level of governance). They are elected by the same universal adult franchise, and state-level election commissions supervise all elections.

These local bodies are a country-wide network of sub-federations under the overarching federation, the Indian Union. Just as the constitution stipulates division of powers, resources, and finances between the Union and the states of the Union, it now enjoins a similar division between a state and these new sub-state entities. The main difference is that since local governance is a state subject and not a Union subject, and socio-economic conditions vary widely from state to state, the specifics of the sub-state structure within a state have been left to be defined by that state's legislature. But each state has to have *zilla parishads* (district councils) at the highest rung of the rural sub-state structure, and municipalities or corporations at the equivalent urban level.

The sub-state elective bodies have some additional provisions that the Union and state legislatures have not acquired as yet. As at all levels, they too reserve seats for the most underprivileged sections of society. But they also make a reservation of seats for women, one-third of the total, which higher legislatures have not yet provided for. In many cases, the actual number of women elected is more than the number of seats reserved for them; thus, women are winning elections for the unreserved seats. In the southern state of Karnataka, for example, the number of women elected to the local bodies is 10 per cent more than the number of seats reserved for them. The sub-state local bodies also have another advantage compared with the state legislatures. They too may be dissolved, like the latter, but fresh elections must be held within a relatively short and stipulated time; there is no equivalent stipulation for restoring a state legislature.

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Nevertheless, the picture is less rosy on the ground than on paper. Firstly, it takes time for the newly empowered to learn how to seize and use their power. Also, there is resistance from entrenched institutions to share power with a new institution, further aggravated by the fact that a male-dominated institution is required to devolve power to structures in which women are guaranteed a position.

As a result elections are not held on schedule in many states; in others the devolution of power and resources is insufficient given what the Constitution stipulates. While legal remedies are available, they take time to take effect. But the dynamic of empowerment is such that once begun it gains momentum, and the pace with which the states of the Union have gained power at the expense of the Union suggests that the same thing may happen at the sub-state level also in the not so distant future.

CASE STUDY

VILLAGE ELECTIONS
China's Experiment in Rural Self-government
Minxin Pei

There are two types of local elections in China (at and below the county level). Firstly, Chinese citizens directly elect the deputies to local (county and township) people's congresses, the nominal legislature which chooses local executives. But these elections are hardly competitive because the government nominates almost all candidates and voters have no alternatives. Secondly, direct elections have been officially adopted, since 1988, to elect village leaders in rural China. Compared to the government-controlled elections of deputies of local people's congresses, village elections are more competitive and have greater potential of growing into established democratic institutions and processes.

Despite the overall lack of democratic reform in China since the country's drive toward a market economy in the late 1970s, several important trends of political change have emerged and may help lay the foundations for democratization in the future. The institution of village elections is regarded as one of the most promising political openings in China even though the constitutional status of the bodies elected by these elections – village committees – is not that of a local government, but of a local self-governing civic group.

The Evolution of a Democratizing Experiment

Self-governing local political institutions, such as village committees, emerged in China in the wake of sweeping economic changes. An unintended, but inevitable, victim of de-collectivization of agriculture (1979-1982) was the political administrative infrastructure that was attached to the people's commune system. After agricultural reform dismantled the communes, this infrastructure, along with the rural cells of the Communist Party, collapsed almost totally, creating a serious problem of governance in China's 930,000 villages where 800 million peasants lived. In some areas, peasants responded by spontaneously holding elections to organize self-government. Both reform elements and conservative leaders ironically, endorsed this experiment. Reformers pushed these elections as the initial step towards democratization while conservatives, worried about deteriorating political order in rural China, supported the same elections as a useful instrument to re-constitute a new mechanism of political control. Peng Zhen, a well-known conservative who headed the National People's Congress (China's legislature), became the patron of village elections and was the driving force behind the passage of "The Draft Organic Law of the Village Committees" in 1987. This law formally established the legal status and administrative functions of village committees. The 1987 law was revised in 1998 and contains many procedural improvements (such as the mandatory requirement of secret balloting).

The early history of the implementation of the village elections law was not encouraging. Between the second half of 1988 and 1989, only 14 provinces (out of 30) held the first round of village elections on a trial basis. The political crackdown following the pro-democracy movement in Tiananmen Square in 1989 temporarily halted this reform. The experiment picked up momentum only after 1992, when a new round of economic reform was launched. At the end of 1995, 24 of the provinces had passed local legislation on electing village committees. According to official data, village elections have been held in all 30 provinces (excluding Tibet). Fujian and Liaoning, two provinces considered leaders in the experiment, had completed six rounds while 19 other provinces had held three to five rounds.

Although village committees elected by rural residents are not, according to the Chinese Constitution, a form of local government, they perform essential administrative functions such as fiscal management, economic development, implementation of government policies, and provision of public services. Typically, village committees membership consists of chairman, vice chairman, and three to five members. The size of the committee varies with local population; a Chinese village has anywhere between 800 and 3,000 residents. The role of the village committee is akin to that of an executive council that makes daily administrative decisions. In theory, the highest decision-making body is the village representative assembly, which effectively functions as the local legislature. Some reports suggest that the most important economic decisions (such as those involving large capital expenditures) are made by the assemblies. Assemblies also play an important role in the nomination of candidates for village chairmen.

In many ways, these assemblies complement the role of village committees and enhance the legitimacy of their decision-making because of greater participation by villagers. Unlike the elected village committees that have received extensive scholarly attention and media coverage, there is scant knowledge about how the village representative assemblies are elected or function. (There are no laws or formal rules specifying the elections and functions of the assembly.) What is known is that such assemblies have, on average, about 30 members. In areas that have fully established this governance structure, village committees and village representative assemblies are elected concurrently. Although most Chinese villages have elected village committees, official reports indicate that, by 1994, only about half of the Chinese villages had formed such assemblies.

Assessment of the Experiment

Given the relatively short history of village elections, the enormous diversity of local conditions, and lack of accurate national and regional data, it is impossible to generalize the progress of democratic governance in rural areas. Published accounts, both by academics and journalists, portray a complex but incomplete picture. Unfortunately, the best data available come from provinces that have implemented this experiment most effectively (such as Fujian and Liaoning) and are thus unrepresentative. In Fujian

province in the south, village elections have gained significant institutional maturity after six rounds. Voter turnout has been high. Secret ballots and covered voting booths were used in 95 per cent of the villages in 1997 (neither was used in 1989). Elections have become more competitive, as demonstrated by the fact that the number of nominees for village committees in 1997 was three times that in 1989. The province has also introduced the use of absentee ballots and election monitors, abolished proxy voting prone to fraud, and extended voting time from two to eight hours. Estimates of how village elections are held in other areas vary widely. Top government officials openly admit their ignorance while academics offer varying educated guesses. Some estimate that between 10 and 20 per cent of villages have implemented the electoral procedures well, while others put the figure slightly higher.

A widely shared reservation about the democratizing potential of village elections is the pre-eminence of members of the ruling Communist Party in newly established self-governing institutions. A survey of village committees carried out in the early 1990s found that about 60 per cent of elected members of village committees and 50 to 70 per cent of chairmen of village committees were Communist Party members. About 20 to 50 per cent of the members of representative assemblies were estimated to be Party members. Sceptics of China's village elections cite such evidence to downplay the political significance of the experiment. Optimists counter that the situation is more complex on the ground. Members of the ruling party win these elections not because such elections are inherently uncompetitive, but because Party members may be stronger candidates than non-party ones (for example, they may have better education, name recognition, and advantages of incumbency). In many cases, non-party candidates who win are later recruited into the ruling Party. This suggests that membership of the Party may not offer as critical an advantage as many think.

Available studies of village elections suggest that the success of the experiment is not related to macro structural factors such as the level of economic development. The leading provinces in this experiment are neither the wealthiest nor the poorest. Fujian and Liaoning are among the upper-middle income provinces in China. However, there is evidence that the laggards in this experiment are more likely the poorest provinces. An authoritative study on village elections conducted by the Carter Center (at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, US) shows that the most important variable is the leadership provided by provincial authorities in charge of local elections and by consistent government efforts to enforce and improve electoral procedures. This conclusion highlights the dilemma of democratic reform in an authoritarian system: initial democratic opening must receive some support from elements within the regime. The progress of democratization under such circumstances is inevitably slow, uncertain, and ambiguous.

The most fascinating but least-known aspect of village elections is their impact on local governance. Has this democratic experiment made a difference in the daily lives of villagers and reduced corruption and abuse of power? Unfortunately, no systemat-

ic study has been carried out to address these questions. However, anecdotal evidence suggests a link between democracy and good governance in villages that have implemented this reform more effectively. Official publications report that law and order improved measurably in villages with elected committees. Village resistance to government policies (especially unpopular ones involving family-planning and taxes) declined. Fiscal management became more transparent and less corrupt.

External factors have also played a positive role in China's experiment of rural self-government. Although these factors were not crucial at the initial stage of the experiment, they provided valuable technical and material assistance in the late 1990s when the prospects of village elections improved considerably. The EU donated US$ 12 million in 1998 to support elections-related programmes. American non-governmental organizations, such as the Ford Foundation, the Carter Center, the Asia Foundation, and the International Republican Institute supplied funds and technical expertise. For example, Professor Robert Pastor of the Carter Center was invited to comment on the draft revision of the Organic Law of Village Committees by the National People's Congress, and some of his suggestions were adopted in the final text of the law. The IRI also reported that most of its technical recommendations on elections management were adopted by provincial authorities in Fujian.

Prospects

Many factors influence the prospects of village elections as democratic institutions and their effects on political opening elsewhere in the Chinese political system. As a newly-established channel of political participation, village elections seem to be undergoing consolidation. At the grassroots level, poll data indicates a rising level of democratic consciousness. A 1996 survey of 5,000 peasants reported that 80 per cent cared about the election of the members of the village committee, and 91 per cent were concerned with the management of village affairs and especially its budget. In addition, villagers may be acquiring valuable learning experience as they repeat the electoral process. Electoral procedures may likely improve and produce more accountable local administrations. Village elections and village committees may gain importance and change the political landscape in rural China because these institutions can provide ambitious individuals with a certain degree of popular legitimacy and power to counter the dominance of the ruling Communist Party.

Reformist elements inside the ruling regime have also invested enough political capital in this experiment and seem to have been encouraged by the initial results. The central government has announced plans to train as many as 1.5 million local officials in elections management to improve the electoral process in villages. Finally, village elections may produce a demonstration effect and increase pressure on the government to expand similar democratic experiments. In December 1998, an impoverished township of 16,000 in Sichuan province held a competitive election for its mayor without receiving approval from provincial or central authorities (the township leaders did get an informal endorsement from the county leaders). Although the central

government initially criticized the township for holding an "illegal election" (because it was not sanctioned by the existing Chinese Constitution), official media eventually hailed the event as a bold experiment and the authorities did not, significantly, annul the results of the election.

However, expectations for the potential of village elections must be tempered by the political reality in China. The ruling Communist Party has so far consistently ruled out democratization as a future political goal and exhibited a high sense of insecurity toward signs of organized political opposition. While Chinese leaders see certain instrumental value in allowing village elections to continue, they have given this experiment low political priority. This is evident in the fact that a secondary bureaucracy – the Ministry of Civil Affairs – has been assigned the responsibility of implementing the programme. Lack of top-level political commitment will deprive this experiment of new momentum and support in addressing several thorny political issues. For example, there are no clear policies on how to define the power and role of the Communist Party in villages with elected village committees, the legality of political opposition groups in villages, and the relationship between elected village officials and the unelected township officials who wield enormous power over the former. These unresolved issues are likely to cloud the prospects of village elections and increase the uncertainty of their political impact.

Therefore, one must maintain both caution and hope in assessing the future of village elections and the prospects of democratization in China. At most, village elections represent a small and tentative step toward democratization. The progress has been slow and uneven. However, this experiment may have started a gradual process of political participation for nearly 80 per cent of China's population and, if allowed to continue and spread, may constitute the first step toward China's long-delayed democratic transition.

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5. | EXPANDING PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

5. | EXPANDING PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Often the difficult issues faced by a community are too complex and involve too many divergent interests to be successfully resolved at the ballot box. Facilitating citizen participation in decision-making processes can augment electoral democracy by helping to build trust and confidence and by managing or resolving disputes that cannot be arbitrated by elections alone. Indeed, one of the most important functions of collaborative approaches is that they tend to reduce the cost of losing an electoral contest, thereby mitigating the conflict-inducing nature of winner-take-all politics.

This chapter describes the benefits of enhancing citizen participation in local governance, while acknowledging that in some cases there may be disadvantages to making a decision-making process too broad and potentially unwieldy. Much depends on the skills and training of the facilitators. Knowledge of process options, facilitative skills, and awareness of ways that similar deadlocks elsewhere have been broken are often the keys to success. Issues covered in this chapter include:

- **Innovative options to enhance citizen participation from around the world;**
- **How skills such as negotiation, mediation, and facilitation relate to effective management of citizen participation efforts;**
- **The pitfalls of empowering citizens to make decisions through these mechanisms;**
- **Ways to evaluate consensus-oriented decision-making approaches, and when such methods may be unnecessary or unachievable; and**
- **The importance of communication and education for participatory democracy, and new methods of participation using information technology.**

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5.1 What is Collaborative Civic Engagement?

◼ *Involving citizens in community policy-making improves information flow, accountability, and due process; it gives a voice to those most directly affected by public policy.*

Collaborative civic engagement refers to policies and methods for creating opportunities for citizens to get directly involved in community policy-making and implementation. Often, in collaborative decision-making the broad range of interests and identities in a community are represented and different perspectives and positions are valued and integrated into collective decisions. Although collective decision-making can be difficult, complicated, time-consuming, and sometimes unattainable, when consensus-based decisions are made, the results are often more legitimate and widely accepted than decisions made by elected officials acting independently.

In evaluating what type of collaborative decision-making approach may be appropriate, it is important to keep in mind two distinctions: *ad hoc*, issue-specific methods for management (e.g., an environmental dispute such as site selection for a new waste-treatment facility) and ongoing collaborative organizations that deal with continuing issues such as education or town planning; and processes that involve direct citizen participation as compared with those that involve only those with a special interest in an issue and who exercise inordinate power ("stakeholders").

Figure 15	Traditional Participation	Enhanced Participation
	◼ Representative democracy ◼ Standing for office ◼ Voting for candidates ◼ Active in political parties ◼ Election monitoring ◼ Communicating with elected officials ◼ Involvement in the legislative or official policy-making process	◼ Direct democracy ◼ Citizen initiatives ◼ Information-gathering ◼ Consultation ◼ Community decision-making ◼ Dispute resolution mechanisms and peace-building efforts ◼ Involvement in civil society processes

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Building effective participatory procedures at the local level offers a strategic opportunity to build democracy and mange social conflict at the national level. Local governance with strong citizen involvement and meaningful participation forms the ground-level tier of democracy.

5.1.1 The Importance of Participation

There are a variety of reasons for encouraging and facilitating citizen participation and collaboration. Perhaps fundamentally, *participation* is intrinsic to the core meaning of democracy. It is essential for good governance as it improves information flow, accountability, due process, and gives voice to those most directly affected by pubic policy. Democracy theorist Robert Dahl emphasizes the notion of "effective participation" – i.e., citizens having an adequate and equal opportunity to express their preferences, place questions on the agenda, and articulate reasons for endorsing one outcome over another.

Procedures that emphasize ongoing participation between elections and consensus-oriented decision-making provide more legitimate decisions because people have been involved in making them, emphasizes Jane Mansbridge in her book *Beyond Adversary Democracy*. The book stresses how collective decision-making in an alternative workplace and in a town hall meeting in New England (in the US) produced more durable policy solutions than either electoral or top-down approaches.

One practical outcome of participation is the creation of "social capital". Social capital is the trust and confidence that is developed when government and civil society meet together in pursuit of a community's common good, explains political scientist Robert Putnam. Social capital is the basis of legitimacy for official government institutions and is necessary for effective and efficient governance. Without social capital, when trust and confidence are lacking, then progress of government efforts can be hindered; in the long run, communities without trust are dysfunctional and in the worst scenarios violence among contending social forces can erupt. Collaborative civic engagement can be a critical tool in reinvigorating social capital that exists and building new social capital when it is absent.

As communities become increasingly diverse, collaborative decision-making processes are providing new methods for preventing, managing, and resolving community disputes. In the United States, for example, local government activists have taken the lead in directly linking diversity with new forms of participation. A 1997 National Civic League report states:

> *As the number and diversity of actors expecting to be part of any community decision increase, so must the process for making these decisions become more*

accessible. Bringing diverse players together – finding common ground, defining shared interests – is a process of self-realization whereby all community members can discover that they have the talent and ideas necessary to improve life for themselves and their neighbors.

Finally, international influences on local governance are increasing around the world as the international economy affects critical issues for local decision-makers and international standards on democratic decision-making are strengthened. The need to improve participation in local governance thus seems to be a direct outgrowth of the changing pressures in a globalizing and urbanizing world. If sustainable local development is to be a reality, participatory governance is a necessity.

Figure 16	Key Terms in Collaborative Decision-Making

Collaboration is defined as a process in which the diverse interests that exist in a community are brought together in a structured process of joint decision-making. Often, third parties are involved in helping facilitate agreement. When common decisions are made, there are often mechanisms built in for implementing these decisions together. Collaborative approaches are often used for managing issues of development and economic well-being, goal setting, planning and policy-making, and implementation of policies and programmes. Collaborative decision-making is linked to efforts to prevent disputes by involving everyone in decisions before conflicts arise, to manage ongoing differences, and to settle disputes that threaten the health and cohesion of the community.

Conflict resolution is a catch-all term that often refers to prevention, management, and settlement of disputes. As scholar John Burton describes: "Decision-making at the community level is likely to focus on human needs as they surface in family, social and school environments. It is likely to be, therefore, more problem-solving than would be the case at a level at which there is little face-to-face contact between decision-makers and those affected." Managing these basic human needs issues in a collaborative way is a key to conflict resolution and violence prevention.

Consensus is defined as the decision rule that operates in a collaborative process. This involves a group decision to which all – or the most number of participants possible, including all of those with the capacity to "scuttle" or "spoil" a decision (sometimes called "sufficient consensus") – subscribe. The decision is arrived at through open and honest dialogue, give-and-take, and empathetic appreciation of opposing points of view. Ideally, the process includes equal power and responsibility of the participants, although this goal is sometimes elusive when especially powerful interests are involved.

5.2 Designing a Collaborative Process

■ *Deciding who will participate in collaborative decision-making is one of the most critical issues in designing such processes; setting the agenda, defining objectives, and evaluating results are also important.*

Collaborative policy-making processes seem especially well suited to difficult and complex social concerns. These include problems such as:

■ The environment and sustainable development;

■ Crime and an aspiration for safe communities;

■ Discrimination and social justice; and

■ Poverty and a more equitable society.

Collaborative, participatory policy-making is not a single approach or a single method. There is a wide variety of techniques that may serve different purposes or have varying forms, costs, structures, and effects. These approaches may be used singly or in combination. Which method might work best, and when it should be used, is highly contingent on context. For example, in a particular local context there may be a traditional culture of decision-making with long-standing patterns of policy formation, leadership, and class or ethnic relations that inform the feasibility of an approach or method. So, designing culturally specific methodologies involves taking into account on-the-ground structures, discretion, and sensitivities.

5.2.1 Setting the Agenda

Choosing among various types of collaborative approaches is often a matter of agenda setting. Agenda setting determines not just the issues to be discussed, but the overall purpose of the activity and its ultimate aims. In many instances, local authorities will decide the agenda and solicit participation. On the other hand, there are clear benefits to involving civil society at the very earliest stages of planning for collaborative approaches, as civic NGOs often can play a vital role in developing capacity, thinking through in-process issues, and facilitating post-dialogue steps such as follow-up, evaluation, and implementation.

Some of the questions to think about in deciding what type of collaborative process to use and how to set it up include the following:

■ What are the objectives? For what purpose is the participatory initiative being launched?

- What should the process look like? Who should initiate it? Who should be involved? What types of responses are expected or desired?

- How can the problems be defined? Who has the expertise and on what aspects?

- What should the agenda be?

- Where should the talks be held and what type of room arrangement is most conducive to a successful meeting?

- How should participants be invited? How should the aims, structure, and goals of the process be announced?

- What methods can be used to facilitate the discussions?

- How can the discussion be moved from dialogue to consensus-building, especially in bringing the initiative to closure?

- How can decisions be implemented and how can the results be evaluated? How should the results of the process be used?

- How can the outcome and the next steps be communicated to others?

- Who will sponsor the process, and who will provide the resources for it? What types of training and other pre-initiative preparatory work will need to occur before the initiative can be launched?

- How can the main participants in the process be involved at the very earliest stages in the planning and project formulation process?

5.2.2 Selecting Participants

One of the enduring issues in collaborative decision-making processes is that of selecting participants. Who should be included, who (if anyone) should be excluded and who should decide the matter of participation? Should participants be chosen or should open invitations be issued? How structured should participation be (i.e., representatives of organizations, prominent individuals, or ordinary citizens)? How many participants should be involved? Selecting participants is not just a practical matter of policy or politics, it is a critical aspect of what is known as "democratic justice", which is related to the notion of inclusivity. At least one purpose of making participation as broadly inclusive as possible is building and strengthening social ties among individuals, organizations, and institutions around common interest solutions.

A collaborative decision-making process can take more time to reach decisions, but it can make the implementation process more efficient by preventing blocking of decisions by interests opposed to it. If community groups are provided greater opportunities for moulding and shaping decisions that affect them, they will be less likely to ignore, resist, or withhold their support for new initiatives. This is the principle of "ownership" of the process, which has become a tenet of local development

projects around the world. Lawrence Susskind, in the book *Breaking the Impasse*, has referred to this kind of decision-making as "slow-fast", meaning that the process can be slow and tedious as consensus is being forged, but then the process is fast when implemented because of the broad support for the decisions that have been made.

Figure 17	Designing Successful Collaborative Processes

Bring all to the table. Efforts should involve the entire range of community interests and bring a number of disparate people together in the same forum for interactive dialogue and consensus-based decision-making. Insofar as possible, traditional power brokers and those traditionally disadvantaged should relate to each other on equal terms. Leadership should come from all sectors of society. Access to decision-making for all affected groups, organizations, and agencies is critical.

Identify mutual interests. Participatory processes should seek to bridge differences and find solutions based on the common interests of the community to live together in a mutually beneficial way. All participants should take responsibility for the process and its outcomes.

Trust and confidence. Participation should be aimed at improving inter-group relations, promoting trust and confidence, and developing a broader identity for diverse communities.

Stick with it. Participants should be fully committed to the process and should be willing to see it through moments of difficult bargaining, sensitive issues, impasse, and even breakdown. Link the responsibility of participation to civic duty.

Stay focused on the problem. The process should focus on the issue at hand, in particular defining problems, sketching out the broadest possible array of options, developing strategies and finding solutions that can be jointly implemented.

Be creative. When possible, a new option should be developed through discussion that is better for all. When this proves impossible, issues should be traded, not unified. It is often unreasonable to expect that all citizens or civic groups involved in a participatory process will be able to unify or merge their divergent interests. A more realistic principle is that the common interests should be identified and emphasized; divergent interests should not be ignored, but rather efforts should be made to encourage participants to trade off their interests in an overall mutually beneficial agreement.

Everybody is equal. Processes should seek to achieve official government participation as an explicit form of partnership. That is, the official deci-

sion-makers are sometimes party to municipal disputes; they often cannot approach a participatory process as an arbitrator or final decision-maker.

Drive from below; co-ordinate from above. Those community representatives whose interests are directly affected by the issue at hand should drive the process. Yet, local government authorities often must be responsible for co-ordinating the process and managing practical aspects of it, such as financing of decisions and co-ordinating with other policies or programmes.

Practise external accounting and internal flexibility. Participatory processes must be externally accountable and transparent, yet within them there should be flexibility in the dialogue – participants should be able to speak freely – and in the process and methods of decision-making.

Don't forget the very practical issues of launching and sustaining a collaborative decision-making process. Resources, staffing, capacity of agencies and organizations, and ability of parties to negotiate in good faith and reach consensus must be carefully assessed prior to any initiative.

Committed personnel. Collaborative policy-making and implementation processes often run aground when there are a shortage of qualified personnel with negotiation, mediation and consensus-building skills; when there are limited resources to support the effort; when the culture of decision-making is hierarchical (top-down); and when there is a lack of public awareness of the issues or the process.

Be aware of links to the electoral arena. Remember that ultimately many decisions will be decided at the polls in the next election. Electoral and participatory democracy can be complementary, but they can also work at cross-purposes.

5.2.3 Role of Public Officials

What role, if any, should the local authority be given in such a process? Should the official be an advocate for defining a problem and promoting a solution, a mediator among various civil society groups, a listener and ultimately an arbitrator, or a facilitator of the process? Indeed, local authorities may end up playing various roles at different stages or even simultaneously. In any event, each of these tasks will require more of local authorities in terms of their own skills as *social mediators*. Local authorities must be able:

- To build coalitions;
- To listen carefully to different points of view;
- To be open to persuasion;

- To be able to negotiate and mediate among contending social forces;

- To forge a consensus; and

- To decide when complete consensus is impossible or undesirable.

NGO staff and citizens, too, should possess these skills so that consensus policy-making does not prevent them from being manipulated by more powerful state officials or by other interest groups.

Some of the roles that local authorities can play in collaborative decision-making processes:

- *Convener.* The public official convenes and ultimately decides on the structure, participants, nature of participation, agenda, outcomes, and implementation. The "convening power" of the municipal authority suggests that it in some way has the legitimacy and capacity to gather all the parties around the table and to facilitate their participation.

- *Mediator.* A mediator acts as a third-party facilitator in bringing together disparate individuals or groups in a dispute. Mediation implies that the official may seek to manipulate the situation to bring the parties to agreement, for example through financial incentives or sanctions, but that ultimately the parties themselves must reach agreement on how to solve the problem.

- *Catalyst.* Authorities may serve to catalyze a consultative process, and work with civic groups to facilitate and launch a participatory initiative that will ultimately be run by others, such as a neighbourhood association.

- *Funder.* In some instances, local governments may prefer to allow other groups to conceptualize and implement a participatory process, but do not want to be directly involved. They may alternatively provide financial resources to an NGO or civic organization, such as a church, to design and manage the initiative.

- *Technical assistance provider.* Similarly, when technical issues such as zoning or sanitation are involved, local officials may serve in participatory forums primarily as the providers of technical assistance.

- *Capacity-builder.* Local authorities may help empower certain groups to participate in a process by helping them "build capacity". This may involve training, education, financial support, or informal advice.

- *Partner.* Local authorities may also seek to partner with civil society groups, such as NGOs, to launch and manage a process. Partnership involves division of labour, combining resources, mutual support, and shared obligations.

Checklist	Steps Involved in Planning Collaborative Projects

- Form a planning committee;
- Plan a series of conversations;
- Choose a leader for the discussions;
- Divide tasks among members of the planning committee;
- Choose a focus for the discussion;
- Select materials for the discussion;
- Determine the discussion format;
- Draw up a set of ground rules for the discussion;
- Locate and invite potential participants; and
- Create a syllabus and set out the ground rules for the discussion series.

Leading a Discussion

- Be prepared;
- Lead introductions;
- Facilitate each session;
- Handle procedural and behavioural issues;
- Create opportunities for all participants to speak;
- Keep the discussion moving;
- Close each session; and
- Bring closure to the discussion series.

Follow-up

- Conduct evaluations;
- Generate ideas about methods to continue the discussion; and
- Implement follow-up activities in the community.

5.3 Overview of Participatory Approaches

■ *There are a wide range of participatory approaches including information gathering, consultations, decision-making processes, and public dispute resolution.*

There are a wide variety of participatory methods and approaches, which are organized below in four broad categories. The following list is not comprehensive; sometimes processes go by other names, and there is a multiplicity of variations on any given type of method. Readers should consult the *Further Reading* list at the end of this chapter for further information on each of these options.

■ *Information gathering and sharing.* These types of processes involve research and analysis, or the sharing of information with citizens and civic groups. Specific examples include sampling of the population, soliciting views that will not be heard through traditional means, posing questions for which answers are sought, phraseology (or framing) of the problem, and attaining the views of key people involved in a particular issue. Information-sharing processes often have a specific civic education function.

Strengths: Can deal with the problem of lack of knowledge or appreciation for other points of view; can yield valuable information to decision-makers prior to taking action.

Weaknesses: Information can underscore the irreconcilable nature of some points of view; when promises are made by local officials through information sharing, they are not always easy to keep.

■ *Consultation.* These types of approaches feature structures and events that systematically consult with affected constituencies – together or separately – on matters that affect them. After such systematic consultation, the authoritative decision-makers (such as elected officials) make decisions that seek to reconcile insofar as possible the various positions. Consultation, like information gathering and sharing, involves learning, but the element of decision-making by those in positions of authority distinguishes this approach from the others.

Strengths: All points of view can be heard; alienated or marginalized groups can feel that they have had an input into the process.

Weaknesses: Some processes, especially those that become drawn out, can evolve into talk shops that produce no results; consultation sometimes reveals that points of view within the community simply cannot be reconciled.

■ *Decision-Making.* In decision-making processes, authority over the final resolution of the issue at hand is with the participants around the table. The final decision on a matter is taken by the participants themselves, and cannot be overturned by elected officials or (ideally) by regional or national-level governments. Some of the issues that arise in decision-making processes include who is at the table and the legitimacy of their involvement in decision-making, how decisions are made (e.g., by consensus or majority), and how issues can be resolved when consensus is unattainable.

Strengths: People feel a real ownership of a decision when they have made it themselves, and binding decision-making processes can be useful when a tough choice has to be made, particularly during a difficult implementation process.

Weaknesses: Sometimes getting to reaching agreement is a much more difficult process than could ever have been imagined; moreover, sometimes powerful interests can hijack a decision-making process and push through their position.

■ *Public dispute resolution.* This includes methods for preventing, managing, and settling public disputes through negotiation, mediation, or arbitration. These methods do not necessarily feature policy-making or implementation, but instead involve facilitation, problem-solving, task forces, community mediation services, and conciliation commissions.

Strengths: The right kinds of public dispute resolution programmes – in the right place, with the right kind of people involved, and with public support for peace – can help prevent, manage and resolve inter-group and other violent conflicts; when they are composed of legitimate and valued actors from across the political spectrum, they can help improve the legitimacy of efforts to promote local public safety.

Weaknesses: Sometimes even the best-designed public dispute systems cannot stand up to the intense pressure of conflict among groups in an urban setting; when there is no will for peace, institutions designed to foster it are bound to fail.

5.3.1 A Menu of Collaborative Policy-Making Methods

Information Gathering and Sharing

■ *Sample surveys, preference polling.* Sample surveys are rigorously-designed public opinion polls that seek to determine the range of community views on a set of issues or opinions. Sampling involves selecting a representative subset of the population, devising a questionnaire, implementing the survey through interviews, and analysing the results. Preference polling is a similar method, which relies on identifying various views and assessing, among other things, the intensity of the preferences.

■ *Innovative public meetings and community forums.* Public meetings are a traditional form of information gathering and sharing. Sometimes they are required by law when contentious decisions are to be made or have been made, or when there are challenges to the community. Some municipalities have right-to-know laws, which require authorities to routinely inform the public of key issues – such as environmental threats or budgeting matters – and this is often done through public meetings such as hearings or community forums. Recently, emphasis has

been placed on ways to design public meetings – including practicalities such as the way chairs and speakers are arranged – to more effectively promote interactive dialogue.

■ *Participative research.* A representative group of officials, citizens, or civic groups collectively engage in research into a problem facing the community. The research process may involve identifying the problem, determining the range of opinions on its causes and ways in which it can be ameliorated, and making recommendations for policy options.

Figure 18	Addressing Apathy in Jihlava, Czech Republic

In 1997, officials in the Czech Republic realized that they had a problem of citizen apathy and mistrust of local authority. Jihlava, a city of about 56,000 inhabitants was chosen for a pilot programme to assess whether working with and enhancing the media could improve citizen participation in areas such as community budgeting, exchange of information between citizens and governments, and service delivery. The Jihlava municipal officials formed a Project Advisory Committee drawn from journalists, citizens, interest groups, and the government. The committee began by conducting a survey probing the officials' and citizens' views of each other. Based on the committee's deliberation and the results of the survey, the group outlined an action plan:

- Town meetings with journalists and citizens especially encouraged to attend;
- Creation of a new press office for day-to-day liaison with reporters;
- Publication of a new citizen information brochure;
- Broadcasting a weekly phone-in radio show for discussion and raising issues;
- Establishment of a task force to review city procedures on working with NGOs; and
- Designating "Jihlava Day" to increase community identity and pride.

The programme lasted eight to 12 months with a cost of about US$ 30,000 for staff, materials, broadcasting, and other costs; no changes in regulations were needed, however.

As a result of the process, a new town park was developed and the city is holding more press conferences on day-to-day town business. Neighbouring cities also have emulated the programme. (For more information on the programme, contact the Jihlava Mayor's office at +42 66-23651).

Consultation

- *Issue-specific ad hoc consultations and issue forums.* These methods involve structured dialogues on specific problems before the community on an *ad hoc* basis in which key participants are systematically consulted on policy options. Issue-based forums can be held singly or in a series, and may involve the same set of participants or participation may vary. The purpose of the consultation is to learn more about the sources of problems, to engage interested parties on potential policies, and to make recommendations. They are consultative in that the forum is not empowered to make authoritative decision; often, the recommendations are forwarded to elected officials who ultimately choose the policies that will be taken.

- *Programmes for citizen monitoring.* Citizen monitoring programmes allow individuals to be directly consulted on the efficacy of a particular policy or programme and involve them in making recommendations for improvement. For example, a common option under this rubric is a standing citizen panel that evaluates the impact of a programme on the community and regularly reports to authorities regarding its view on whether the programme is meeting its aims.

- *Participatory appraisals and beneficiary assessments.* These consultative mechanisms seek to systematically consult a target population (such as the unemployed, youth groups, or women) in the development and implementation of a project designed to address their specific concerns. These methods allow the objects of local policy-making to be directly involved in the programmes and projects that are aimed at their benefit.

- *Public hearings.* A traditional form of civic engagement in some established democracies, public hearings are a way to formally consult affected groups – either by selection or open invitation – on potentially contentious issues. Usually participants may give testimony or question public officials on the matter at hand in an open, transparent process.

- *Community visioning processes.* These methods involve collaborative approaches for strategic planning for a community and the policies, programmes, and resources that will be required for a community to reach its goals. A common tool in this method is the development of a vision statement to frame goals and set priorities. Participants are often asked to evaluate questions such as "What kind of quality of life do we want in our community in 10, 20, or 30 years, what are the values that lie behind this vision, and what are the steps that will be necessary to achieve this vision?"

- *Task forces.* This method is often used when it is expected that a subset of community groups, leaders, and citizens can help "brainstorm" to develop policy responses to specific issues. With a specified time frame, task forces are broadly

representative panels that systematically consult with affected populations, analyse the problems, devise options, and make recommendations. Task forces may also be formed at the implementation phase, where collaborative efforts are needed to ensure a policy or programme's success.

- *Community budgeting.* Budgets set priorities and help clarify, define, and even quantify a community's priorities. Community budgeting methods involve consultations on both the fiduciary details of a municipality's life, but also the priorities that budget allocations reflect. Although budgets are often seen as technical documents that are best handled by officials and administrators, public involvement in the budgeting process is increasingly seen as a critical way to help communities understand more fully the possibilities and constraints of local governance. By highlighting how scarce or finite resources are allocated, citizens and civic groups can understand better how competing values of the community may be more effectively balanced.

- *Standing citizen advisory councils.* This method involves the creation of a representative panel of citizens with specialized knowledge or interest in an issue to provide advice and recommendations to local authorities. The benefit of standing panels (over the *ad hoc* mechanisms, for example) is that over time citizens can acquire a great deal of collective memory, expertise, and awareness of an issue. Although these are usually more permanent bodies, participation in them usually changes over time; that is, they can be designed to be fairly dynamic and fluid over time as individual participation changes.

Figure 19	Market Women, Bankers, and Mayors: Kampala, Uganda

The World Bank's technical, managerial approach to urban management ran up against powerful informal networks of local authority in the street markets of Kampala, Uganda's vibrant capital city. Kampala's sustained rate of population growth is one of the highest in the world: 48 per cent annual growth.

Services lagged behind the new demand. Some 75 per cent of the residents lived in desperate, crowded conditions where the service necessities of urban life were simply not available. Employment opportunities could not keep up with the new growth in the pool of workers.

Market vendors managed to organize themselves effectively in pressuring local officials to upgrade the infrastructure of their market and to help with regulating transportation around the market. The World Bank emphasized a policy of fiscal restraint, privatization, and cost-effectiveness for local authorities. But the complexity of Kampala demanded

greater city involvement and regulation of the market stalls. In the Owino market some 400 vendors and 30,000 employees (as of 1992) were at work. Owino is the country's largest retail and wholesale marketplace, located near Kampala's bus station and central taxi park in the middle of the city.

Market vendors informally but effectively organized themselves. They were worried about the lack of services, the dirt floors, the problem of acquiring and shipping goods, and the accumulating garbage and other waste. Out of their frustration they organized an effective lobby to address the economic, social, and political obstacles to market improvements. The most important actor was the Market Vendors Association (MVA), which promoted and encouraged business practices and established a set of rules for governing the market. The MVA also sponsored a local soccer programme for youth, the "Hot Stars". The MVA became an important player in negotiating with the Kampala City Council and with the World Bank.

- The MVA was open to anyone over 18 who could afford a nominal price for subscription and membership;
- Almost everyone in the market was an MVA member, including porters and workers;
- The MVA organized and managed the market, setting general rules for participation, trading, and membership;
- The MVA created some 57 departments with committees of interested vendors to manage commodities such as rice, palm leaves, flour, spices, and so on, and to set up a plan for the stalls that sold such items;
- MVA departmental committees regularly elected executives and other positions within the organization.

In 1990 the World Bank stepped in with a US$ 28.7 million project to improve the chances for economic growth and development in Kampala. It focused on key infrastructure services, improved financial management, and land-use programmes. World Bank officials engaged in many meetings with the MVA; but the MVA wanted more improvements than the World Bank would approve and the negotiations became bogged down in a complex land dispute. The market upgrades took years to materialize, and many poor *ad hoc* management decisions were made about the growing, crowded, and inchoate market.

The true innovation of the MVA is its meetings, in which members of departments work collectively in the management of their own sector of the market. The large number of democratic and participatory meetings held over time by the MVA produced a better-organized market and a more aware and capable city council. Furthermore, it freed up World Bank funding for significant improvements in the infrastructure that have led to more effective urban development in Kampala.

Decision-Making Forums

- *Citizen juries.* This is the best-known option for dialogue by a select group of citizens (usually, broadly representative) for a specified time period, such as four to five days, in which they receive evidence, query experts and other witnesses, and discuss among themselves possible policy responses. Often, a report is prepared for the jury that sets out the basic policy options, and the jury is asked to make a choice among them. After investigation and decision-making, a report is prepared that outlines the decision, describes areas of consensus and disagreement, and provides the overall findings of the jury investigation.

- *Problem-solving workshops.* In problem-solving workshops, participants engage in a creative and consensus-oriented search for resolution to a problem. The aim is to provide an initial period of open dialogue to help define the problem, frame the set of solutions, and identify obstacles to resolution. After some period of open discussion, the moderator or facilitator prepares a summary document outlining the consensus-oriented findings and recommendations. This summary document becomes the basis for discussion for the next two or three days, and it is frequently revised until all parties are in agreement or until irresolvable differences are identified. The summary document that emerges at the end of the workshop becomes the decision reached by participants on how a community problem can be effectively addressed.

Figure 20	Innovation in Public Participation: Citizen Juries

John Stewart

Citizen juries bring together a representative group of citizens to consider a policy issue. They receive evidence about the issue, question witnesses, and discuss the issue among themselves over a three to five day period. Normally the authority commissioning the jury undertakes to consider seriously and respond to the views of the jury, while not necessarily accepting them. In the United Kingdom, for example, citizen juries have been used for issues on which an authority is uncertain how to proceed, such as the drug problem in one local authority or rationing issues in a health authority.

Citizen juries have three characteristics:

- The approach draws on a sample representative of the population;

- Information is given about the issues involved; and

- Time is taken for consideration and discussion of the issue – in other words, for deliberation.

Experience of citizen juries has shown a readiness by the public to be involved in such approaches. They do not demand a continuing involve-

ment, but an intensive – if short – involvement. Personal invitations ensure a much better response than general invitations to attend, as might happen for a public meeting. Authorities commissioning juries have been impressed with both the quality of reports produced and by the way members of the juries have probed the issues.

Another important lesson is that involvement breeds involvement or, at least, the desire to be further involved. Most members of the juries find it a satisfying experience, arousing their interest in public affairs, but also an appreciation of their complexity. They express an interest in being further involved. Nevertheless, citizen juries, too, have their problems. Bias, for example, has to be avoided, and while these juries can provide insights they are not wholly representative.

Public Dispute Resolution

- *Grievance handling systems.* This method refers to efforts to design a municipality-wide system of dispute management, including procedures such as ombudspersons, report hotlines, whistle-blower programmes, mediation centres, or counselling services. Grievance handling usually refers to concerns that civic groups or individuals have about the policies or activities of a local authority. It is important that a dispute resolution system be designed to work as an integrated whole, in which the methods for reporting, monitoring, managing, and settling community disputes are clear, consistent, and self-reinforcing.

- *Conciliation commissions.* In situations where severe inter-group differences exist in a municipal setting, a conciliation commission is an approach to acknowledge and directly address differences. These commissions serve as institutions designed to bridge group divisions with a community by offering a sustained venue and mechanism for ongoing dialogue on inter-group relations. Commissions can also investigate incidents, offer mediation services, or advise policy-makers on ways to devise projects and programmes to ensure that they help promote accommodative and fair policies in situations of diversity. Important issues in the design of conciliation commissions are balance, participation, ties to the communities concerned, and the national, regional, and even international contexts in which inter-group tensions occur.

- *Community mediation and arbitration centres.* In many societies, traditional forms of dispute resolution require adversarial interaction in courts of law. Increasingly, alternative forms of dispute resolution are being offered by local authorities and civic groups that channel community disputes into facilitated negotiation or mediation. When mediation is successful, disputes are resolved through the discovery of mutually beneficial solutions that all parties agree represent a fair trade

of interests and concerns. When mediation fails, mediation centres can also offer forms of definitive dispute settlement, or arbitration. Such centres can be strategically placed and made accessible to resolve disputes that might ordinarily threaten the safety and security of a community, for example centres that are geared toward the management of disputes among youth groups from different identity groups or neighbourhoods.

■ *Crisis-related response committees for violence prevention and mitigation.* As pointed out in Chapter Three, methods such as peace commissions have at times proven successful in the amelioration of political violence in situations of high conflict. There are a wide variety of approaches within this set of methods, among them broadly representative efforts to monitor investigate, mediate, police, and prevent political violence. An important promise of options such as peace committees is the ability to flexibly respond to incidents of political violence in efforts to prevent disputes from escalating.

Figure 21	**A Design Model for Collaborative Civic Engagement**

In deciding what kind of collaborative policy-making approach to use, it is important to understand the broader policy context, the issues at hand, the range and disposition of the participants, and many other variables. The design model seeks to respond to the question:

We want to enhance participation, but what are the issues and what will the process look like?

or

How can we get the community involved and for what purposes? What is the best technique or set of techniques to use in this particular instance?

Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each option may help determine whether any given approach is appropriate to the problem or issues to be tackled. Many practitioners of collaborative decision-making processes agree with the dictum: "Don't get into something that you don't have the capacity or competence to do." Participatory approaches will founder if people believe that they are being used to legitimize decisions that have already been taken or that the results of their efforts will not matter in the long run. Citizens and civic groups will quickly recognize when a process is a mask for top-down decision-implementation and when the views of the participants are genuinely sought.

Analysing the situation is thus critical to determining what method might be appropriate. There are three guiding rules for choosing and implementing any given method:

- Always make clear the basis on which a participatory process is being launched;
- Always respond to concerns and suggestions; and
- Always make clear the constraints.

Questions that aid in the analysis of a situation potentially ripe for collaborative decision-making processes include:

- Who will be most affected?
- Whose opposition could spoil the policy or project?
- Who has expertise?
- Who is best placed to mediate and balance conflicting interests?
- Who should not participate?

Using the Design Model

The design model offers practitioners – in official positions and in civil society alike – the opportunity to assess what types of participatory practices might be useful in various phases of the policy process. It is in essence a questionnaire that allows the reader to make his or her own assessment of the challenges they face and evaluate for themselves the technique that appears to be most suited to building civic engagement in responding to the challenges. This may involve a very careful assessment of the "proximity" issue and the question of what types of problems can be addressed closest to home and what types involve the participation of municipal, district, regional, or national participants. Location and implementation of a transportation improvement project may require a participatory process in a specific neighbourhood, but financing the neighbourhood's decisions may require the participation of officials in the central government transportation ministry.

Similarly, public input or direct involvement in decision-making may be very important in policy planning for a given project, but once that is done then elected officials and administrators can handle the more specific and possible technical aspects of financing and implementation. If a clean water tap is to be installed to improve water quality in an informal settlement, it may be especially desirable to have community involvement at the planning stage – for example, where should the tap be placed? However, public participation may be less important in financing the water supply than in actually implementing the decision by installing the tap.

Participatory Practices	Phases of Policy Process		
	Planning	**Finance and Budgeting**	**Implementation**
Information Gathering and Sharing	■ What types of information are needed to effectively begin a planning process? ■ What do the communities need to know about the planning process? ■ How can communities make systematic input into the planning process?	■ How can complicated aspects of the financing and budgeting process be best explained to the various communities? ■ What ideas can emanate from community sources on revenue generation and expenditure? ■ How can a process of community priority-setting be launched?	■ What does the public need to know about implementation? ■ How can we gather information on what implementation options are feasible and those that are not? ■ How can the public help with information that will make implementation more effective?
Consultation	■ Who are the main actors that must be involved early in the process if they are to be critical to subsequent phases? ■ Should consultation occur in a joint setting, or with individual participants and stakeholders separately? ■ Who is likely to be difficult to involve? How will this be done?	■ Should a community budgeting process be considered? ■ How can the process engage those whose priorities are reflected or not reflected in the budgeting phase? ■ What is the role of regional and national-level officials in the formation of a budget?	■ Which elements in the communities have the capacity to enable implementation of policy decisions, and which elements can block implementation? ■ How can these elements be systematically involved in implementation efforts?

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Praticipatory Pracities	Phases of Policy Process		
	Planning	**Finance and Budgeting**	**Implementation**
Decision-Making	■ What forum will work best to make definitive decisions on strategic planning? ■ Will it help the community buy in to the revenue and implementation phases of the project?	■ How can a community budgeting process be structured so that decisions on priority-setting are made by the community? ■ How can these decisions be reconciled with the budgetary realities?	■ How can communities be empowered to spend their own allocations of the budget themselves?
Community Dispute Resolution Procedures	■ How all of the affected parties be engaged early on in a conflict resolution/disputes management process? ■ How can those who refuse to participate be engaged? ■ What are the potential benefits, and risks, of any given approach?	■ How can ad hoc and ongoing dispute resolution processes be financed? ■ Can training of facilitators and mediators be afforded? ■ What are the costs of not launching a dispute resolution process? ■ Can this procedure help resolve conflicts over the budget?	■ Is it possible to envisage a process whereby agreements among disparate communities are implemented themselves? ■ What backup mechanisms exist if such implementation efforts fail?

| Figure 22 | Guidelines for Public Participation |

John Stewart has outlined the following guidelines to keep in mind when assessing or designing collaborative approaches.

Innovation by itself is not enough. An approach can be developed which ensures public involvement, but the effectiveness of public involvement also depends on the response of the authority, which can regard public involvement as a formality or can see it as an essential process of government.

No single approach is likely to prove effective. An armoury of instruments is required, meeting different purposes and appropriate for different situations; often approaches will need to be combined.

Do not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Criticisms can be made of each and every approach. Even voting has its critics. Citizen juries can be criticized for their small numbers for not being statistically representative. Opinion polls, which are statistically representative, have been criticized as giving immediate responses to pre-set questions that may be little understood by those responding. The issue is not whether an approach has weaknesses, but whether it is better than no approach.

Fitness for purpose. The guiding principle in selecting an approach should be its suitability for the intended purpose. Different purposes include: learning public attitudes, citizen deliberation, stakeholder deliberation, conflict resolution, public scrutiny, and direct democracy. Depending on the purpose, different approaches or combinations of approaches are appropriate.

Make clear the basis of public participation. If the public is to be involved, then it is important to make clear the purpose of that involvement and the constraints on it. The public should know whether they are being informed, being consulted, or deciding on an issue. They should know what has already been decided and what remains to be decided. They should know what the financial, legal, or policy constraints are. Unless this is done, ideas will be put forward that are doomed to frustration. This does not mean that the public cannot challenge the constraints, but first they have to know what these are.

Always respond, even when the response is negative. When views disappear into the bureaucracy and no response is made, interest turns into disinterest, concern turns into apathy, and the commitment generated by effective involvement trails away. There must always be a response. The involved public is entitled to know the outcome of its involvement.

The initiative should not always be with the authority. Not all public involvement depends on authorities. Forms of public involvement can be

designed by the public as well as by authorities, and government process-es should be open to such involvement.

- *Always appreciate whose voice is being heard and whose voice is not being heard, and act upon it*. This is the test of democratic justice. In many forms of public involvement, certain voices will be heard from more often that others. Certain groups in society may be little heard from but their views are both important and relevant. If the public knows who is not being heard from, then approaches can be developed to hear those voices.

- *Criteria are needed to evaluate public involvement*. Fairness and compe-tence have been suggested as the basis for evaluation. Fairness gives expression to the criteria of democratic justice. Competence refers to the knowledge and procedures used and whether they meet the require-ments of effective involvement.

- *Innovation in democratic practice is not enough*. The need for innovation has been argued, but left at this, it could lead to innovation for its own sake. New approaches are justified by their impact on the quality of democracy.

5.4 Potential Problems in Collaborative Decision-Making

■ *Participatory policy-making can be a utopian notion. The more sensitive the issue, such as determining official language policy, the less likelihood that complete consensus will be possible.*

While collaborative approaches offer considerable promise in solving social prob-lems and building community capital, they are not without their own drawbacks and risks. For one, they are sometimes difficult to organize and implement. One World Bank study, *Participation in Practice: The Experience of the World Bank and Other Stakeholders,* identified the following barriers to enhanced participation in planning for development projects:

- Lack of government commitment to adopting a participatory approach;

- Unwillingness of project officials to give up control over project activities and directions;

- Lack of incentives and skills among project staff to encourage them to adopt a participatory approach;

- Limited capacity of local-level organizations and insufficient investment in community capacity-building;

- Participation started too late; and

- Mistrust between government and local-level stakeholders.

The reality in many societies, it must be stressed, is that the average citizen may be cynical about politics or apathetic or unwilling to participate. It is for this reason that the World Bank has stressed the difference between "citizen" participation as popular participation and the need to include main "stakeholders" in policy decisions. *Stakeholders* have specifically affected interests and these special interests should be represented and satisfied in public decision-making.

The emphasis on stakeholders, as opposed to popular participation is not a normative decision made by the World Bank; it is one of practical reality. As *The World Bank Participation Sourcebook* notes:

> *Attempts to bypass powerful stakeholders often resulted in opposition from them; this opposition usually compounded the problem of getting anything useful accomplished….We recognize that different stakeholders have different levels of power, different interests, and different resources. For these reasons, we also recognize that arrangements are needed to level the playing field and enable different stakeholders to interact on a more equitable and genuinely collaborative basis.*

> *Achieving consensus and reconciling key stakeholder differences is not always easy; it may entail risks, such as generating or aggravating conflicts among groups with competing interests and priorities. Dealing with conflict often requires an understanding of the underlying societal interests inhibiting consensus and putting into place mechanisms for dispute resolution and negotiation.*

Among the tools the World Bank has adopted to achieve these ends in terms of development project planning are:

- workshops to encourage stakeholder collaboration,

- community-based work such as participatory rural appraisals,

- beneficiary assessments and systematic client consultation, and

- objective-oriented project planning.

The World Bank has given particular attention to ways to enhance women's participation and to work against systematic gender bias that may exist in the laws and customs of a community, indigenous peoples, and "intermediary" NGOs. Civic organizations offer a less threatening avenue for citizens to engage in the political process. If the legitimacy of political parties improves over time, it may be possible for citizens to feel better about their involvement in them. A particularly interest-

ing finding has emanated out of the Latin American experience, namely that, as George Peterson writes, "citizens expect concrete results from participation, especially a greater say in neighbourhood capital projects. They have limited tolerance for longer-term planning or 'policy' discussions."

In addition to implementation difficulties, sometimes too much participation can be dysfunctional and can inhibit efficient policy-making. Local government scholar Pierre Hamel, for example, has expressed the following concern about participatory policy-making approaches:

> *In many municipalities, public consultations are being integrated into planning processes.... However, their institutional influence and their effect in terms of the democratization of public management remain somewhat ambiguous. Consequently, although these new mechanisms are bearers of innovation on an institutional level and contributors to the renewal of different modes of management, their appropriation by experts or "network operators" contain a menace for local democracy and participatory forms of citizen input....Such mechanisms do not prevent community actors and social movements from being submitted to political power relations.*

Many policy practitioners also eschew participatory policy-making because the choices are limited and citizen input often has, in the long run, little impact on policy outcomes. Those involved in participatory practices tire when the processes drag out too long, when powerful interests prevail, when macro-level constraints (i.e., national or international influences) drive policy, or when the policy-makers listen to, but don't act upon, citizen input. Much of the concern with direct participation, however, indicates that practitioners need better skills and knowledge about when, how, and why to launch participatory practices.

Figure 23	**Troubleshooting Participatory Policy-Making**

Mechanisms for engaging citizens and building broad consensus on community affairs involve the balancing of many interests and the search for consensus. Sometimes, even often, complete consensus is elusive. No amount of process innovation or skilful mediation can find common interest among communities when there is none to be found. Some of the issues to consider include the following:

Is equal participation a chimera? Equal participation is a tenet of liberal democracy, yet the reality is that some participants will be more vocal, powerful, or both, or may have access to information that others do not.

Realities of networks. A collaborative process may become overtaken by "network operators" or overwhelming stakeholders. Citizens groups may

be unable to cope or counter the pervasive influence of some individuals, factions, or organizations (such as a locally powerful business firm, or the representative of a national-level ministry).

- *Election mandates*. Office holders may have been elected during a campaign that sharpened differences and clearly delineated an official's position on issues. Once elected, however, they need to represent the entire community. When do local office holders have an interest in promoting consensus-based solutions to local problems? When do consensus outcomes override alternative policies that are popular in elections?

- *Perils for civil society*. If a participatory process puts the onus of obligation for implementation of a decision or programme on an NGO, but then the resources for that activity are not forthcoming, the NGO may be held responsible even though the resources are beyond the NGO's control.

- *Fragmentation in the political community*. In some instances, the social structure of a community is so fragmented that finding legitimate and valid spokespersons for a group or interest is very difficult. For example, a public official seeking to initiate a problem-solving workshop might have difficulty deciding on which particular individual or set of individuals validly represents a specific interest. The choices can be frustratingly difficult, and the risk of choosing a person who is not closely tied to the interest they purportedly represent can undermine the legitimacy of the entire consensus-building exercise.

- *Inability to develop complete or even near-complete consensus*. One risk of a collaborative process is that it may highlight to a community that there are indeed irreconcilable views on some problems; this realization may sharpen differences and encourage those not inclined to seek a solution through dialogue to harden their positions even further.

- *Design flaws.* Participatory processes can run aground because they are improperly designed or carried out. The absence of a clear strategy of how and why to engage citizens and civil society on a policy problem, or the inability to mediate among social groups because of poor skills, training, or information, can lead to ineffective "talking shops" that are inadequate in their attempts to help devise new options and solutions.

- *Limits of context*. Sometimes communities can convene, share information, consult, and make decisions on a local policy problem, only to learn that the power to resolve the problem does not lie within the sphere of local governance. The reality of many national and regional contexts is that some local problems are often addressed at other tiers of governance, and local communities are relatively powerless in addressing them (such as financing for major transportation improvements).

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5.5 Evaluating Civic Engagement

■ *Evaluation must depend on a long-term assessment of whether the community is reaching its goals; this requires a thorough process of monitoring, measuring, tracking, and re-evaluating.*

Evaluating collaborative decision-making can be very difficult. One of the most common problems is determining whether the exhaustive efforts to engage citizens and forge collaborative approaches really make much difference in terms of policy development, implementation, and most importantly, attainment of goals. Practical aspects of a collaborative approach can be measured: participants came, they discussed, they recommended, and they departed. But whether recommendations are carried out and situations in the community significantly change, cannot be so easily determined. Although a number of rigorous methods for evaluation can be introduced into the collaborative policy-making process, measuring performance of local governance over the long-term is a more difficult, demanding, and ultimately subjective task.

One of the main purposes of evaluation is ensuring accountability. Accountability is central to good governance. Approaches to accountability reflect differing conceptualization of local governance. Accountability is exercised through the ballot box as citizens have the opportunity to vote out elected officials who are not performing well and to elect new authorities that can serve the community more effectively. Accountability is also about preventing and punishing corruption, or the use of community resources or political power for individual, private gain. One of the most important tests of a collaborative process is whether the process itself has been open, fair, and transparent. When this overarching criterion of evaluation is met, the likelihood that the deliberative effort was worthwhile is quite high.

5.5.1 Common Methods of Evaluation

Among the popular methods of evaluation is the use of questionnaires. Usually administered after the process is complete, a survey is designed to determine whether participants felt that they had an impact on the policy process, whether their views were taken into account, whether the time they spent engaged was worthwhile, and whether the performance of facilitators and resource materials was good.

Important evaluation questions, usually posed by those who have sponsored, organized, or convened the dialogue, include:

- Was the issue under consideration a suitable subject for collaborative policy-making?
- Was the process of the dialogue carefully and professionally managed?
- How was the nature and quality of participation?
- What will be the effect of the deliberative process on those who are expected to most benefit from the policy, programme, or project?
- How effective will the collaborative process be on the authoritative policy decisions that are made?

Assessment can also be fruitfully conducted by external evaluators. For example, a neutral specialist on the community, on collaborative decision-making, or on the policy options under consideration can be invited to observe and prepare an independent report that is provided to sponsors or circulated to all parties. Similarly, a subgroup of participants might be asked to perform this task. Officials from national ministries, or some national civic organizations, might be asked to observe and report.

Ultimately, evaluation of collaborative decision-making must in some ways be done according to a long-term assessment of whether the community is reaching its goals. This requires a more thorough process of monitoring, measuring, tracking, re-evaluating, and the ability to take into account unforeseen events. The outcomes of policy – performance of those involved in governance in delivering the services they provide – are some of the most difficult aspects to measure.

5.5.2 Performance Evaluation

One of the most important new concepts in local governance is the systematic evaluation of performance, not only local officials evaluating themselves but also citizen evaluation of government performance. And evaluation of the work of NGOs and other civil society actors as well. From advances in the study of management, new methods have developed for evaluating how local government and NGO providers perform in providing responsive public services and carrying out the wishes of the community.

Performance measurement refers to concerted and systematic efforts to assess or evaluate how the services provided to a community serve their needs and the local officials or NGOs capabilities to provide these services. Various techniques seek to provide some grounded indicator of the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of services. According to Paul Epstein in his book *Using Performance Measurement in Local Government*, "effectiveness measures service responsiveness to public needs and desires; service quality is an important effectiveness consideration. Efficiency compares the quantity of service provided (e.g., tons of refuse collected) to the resources (e.g., labour hours) used to produce it; efficiency provides a measure of how reasonable service costs are".

Performance measurement is used to improve decision-making processes, to improve service delivery and increase capacity, and to improve public accountability. Measures of effectiveness might include monitoring community conditions, service accomplishments, citizen or client satisfaction and perceptions of community conditions, and unintended or adverse impacts of an action.

Checklist	Performance Evaluation Measures and Methods

- *Goal setting*. Performance measurement in local governance is directly related to goal setting, regular monitoring of progress toward these goals, and the impact of programmes and projects in pursuit of these objectives. Goal setting is a critical first step. What are the top five or ten priorities for the community that should be accomplished in the coming year? What is the strategy for reaching the goal? What targets have been set?

- *Community conditions*. Performance evaluation means monitoring community conditions. For example, many municipalities have installed regular monitoring stations that can determine the level of air, water, or noise pollution and assessment of the measures that have been taken to alleviate problems. Systematic surveys that provide a picture of the overall level of health in the community and the provision of medical care are an important measure of the overall condition of the city.

- *Income assessment*. Assessments of family income and the relative distribution of low, moderate, middle class, and wealthy classifications, along with measures to determine local unemployment is another criteria. Performance measures might also include the availability of affordable and quality housing available in these lower- and middle-income classes.

- *Measuring government accomplishments*. Accomplishments of local governance can be measured, such as how a particular programme designed to help a certain group (such as children living in poverty) has addressed a social problem and how satisfied the "clients" or citizens are with the services they have received. Many project-related measurements exist for determining whether an initiative has efficiently met its objectives and goals.

- *Citizen satisfaction*. This can be measured through regular opinion surveys, focus groups (small groups focused on a specific issue or topic), or post-service follow-up.

- *Efficient delivery of services*. For example, what is the process time for considering an application for a new sign at a business? Is there a backlog?

- *Trained observers*. Trained and knowledgeable individuals, often citizens with special skills, can observe the work of local government officials and

NGOs and then prepare public reports on what they have seen and learned. Sometimes trained observers can be given questionnaires or other methods of rating to determine the quality and efficiency of the service provided. For example, a citizen or group of citizens might be asked to systematically monitor the conditions of city streets and describe what they have seen to authorities and to the public.

Assess the process of decision-making by community leaders. In many instances, for example, elected officials such as a city council or commission can use strategic planning, resource allocation, or communication-based methods to assess the quality and effectiveness of decision-making. Likewise, city managers and other administrators can assess the process of decision-making that leads to the allocation of budgets, incurring costs, or identifying service-delivery problems. Systematically reviewing decision-making steps can help identify whether and how community needs are being met.

Clear communication. Transparency and effective clear communication between public authorities or NGOs and the citizenry is the link between performance and accountability. Communication is a two-way street. Elected office holders, public administrators, or NGO service delivery providers need to communicate with the public about problems and performance and the outcomes of their measures and evaluations. Performance information needs to be routinely and clearly presented to the public. At the same time, citizen involvement and communication is the principal way in which individuals can provide their own evaluations, ask questions, and pose policy recommendations. Good communication relates back to one of the core concepts of local democracy, education of the public on the challenges and choices they face.

5.6 The Importance of Communication

■ *Communication is a two-way street: citizens express their preferences to officials; officials describe and justify their actions.*

Effective communication is an essential element of democracy and the cornerstone of civil society-government co-operation. How local authorities communicate the choices before the community, and the ways in which community-level concerns are provided to policy-makers, is at the heart of enhanced participation. At the same time, it is important for local authorities and NGOs to communicate across communities to identify joint problems and effective solutions. Moreover, the educative

function of local governance is rooted in the communication relationships between citizen and policy-maker and forums for communication among leaders of civil society. Local authorities educate the public on community issues such as the challenges and options, resources needed, possibilities and constraints, and alternatives for policy choices or implementation. The public educates officials on community problems, needs, and the feasibility of solutions.

Communication is also inherent in citizens' right-to-know and the transparency of local governance institutions and processes. Communication is educative. Effective communication of risk, for example, is a function of leadership skills and a proactive approach to listening and sharing of information and knowledge. The local media plays a critical role in this sphere as well, serving as the eyes and ears, watchdog, and player in agenda setting in local governance. An informed and competent press that practices "precision journalism" – competence, accuracy, and fairness – is essential to democratic local governance. The local media helps set the public agenda, investigate the issues, and provides accountability and transparency in the policy process.

Among the roles that communications strategies play in facilitating collaborative policy-making are:

- Educating for democracy, highlighting the issues, procedures, and explaining the choices and constraints before the public;
- Highlighting the ways in which officials, administrators, and civil society leaders can relate more effectively to the local media, especially in explaining the purposes, processes, and outcomes of collaborative policy-making; and
- Developing new communications strategies made possible by advances in information technologies, and in particular, considering how the Internet can be used to enhance participation in democracy and transparency in governance.

5.7 "Virtual" Local Governance

■ *"Virtual" democracy at the local level has the potential to inform citizens about community issues, provide services more efficiently, and facilitate citizen involvement in decision-making.*

Technology is rapidly changing the ways that communication and even decision-making occurs in today's metropolitan arenas. Digital democracy has become a watchword of the day, and the local arena is arguably the best place to begin in mak-

ing a more direct democracy possible among a larger group of people through communication, information sharing, and the interactive nature of the Internet.

One of the most important recent developments is that local governments are increasingly turning to the Internet to enhance participation and provide services and information to their citizens. As *The Economist* notes in a special report on government and the Internet, "Within the next five years, [the Internet] will transform not only the way in which most public services are delivered, but also the fundamental relationship between government and citizen. After e-commerce and e-business, the next Internet revolution will be e-government".

As the proportion of people wired to the Internet expand, so too do the possibilities for moving more and more functions of government to an online format when the technology is conducive to solving these kinds of problems. Cities around the world have used the Internet for sharing information on city programmes, policies, regulations, services, and contact information. Promoting tourism and touting the city as an investment or job creation prospect have also featured prominently. The more innovative cities have set up ways in which citizens can contribute to debate and dialogue on policies or projects.

Most major cities today have well-developed sites on the Internet that are aimed at global audiences as well as internally at their citizens. Public space is being radically transformed and the opportunities for direct public access on current issues pending before the community is increasing. Modern computer technologies offer the ability for local authorities and civic activists to create a "virtual town square" as a forum for managing local governance. Among the leaders in the development of these initiatives are the MAXI site, run by the state of Victoria in Australia (www.vic.gov.au) and Singapore's eCitizen service on its website (www.ecitizen.gov.sg). In Europe, a project that started in Valencia, Spain, known as InfoVille, has now expanded to five European countries. InfoVille, offered by a consortium of local and regional authorities, provides a common platform to provide information and communication opportunities for citizens on municipal and regional services, education and training, transport, and electronic commerce. The InfoVille service can be accessed (www.infoville.net) through personal computers; public kiosks have been installed and some users can access the service from their televisions.

Many of the innovative efforts to create new mechanisms for participatory governance via the use of the Internet for communication, posting of information, and for making decisions – such as through electronic voting – are still incipient. Both the technology and the practice of virtual governance are at an early stage of development and still evolving. Indeed, most government websites are fairly nascent in their development. Few local governments allow for online voting, which is poten-

tially the most extensive use of the technology for e-democracy. Yet all observers of the new trends agree that technological changes made possible by widespread use of personal computers could radically transform notions of participation. We are witnessing the emergence of the virtual town square in many cities of the world; the limits on access to appropriate technology are quickly fading except for in the most economically deprived communities.

Citizens can be especially relieved when using the city website to navigate through a complex set of offices, officials, and bureaucracy. A well-developed site can help orient citizens in city government, and it can help officials work together in a more co-ordinated fashion by providing easy access to information on what each department is doing. It is important, in this context, that cities create a single "portal", or entry point, so that citizens can navigate their way through the maze of agencies and programmes to find the right information easily and quickly. A single mechanism for taking care of simple citizen-to-government issues – such as marriage licences, taxes, or motor vehicle registration – is critical to success.

One of the most promising aspects of virtual democracy at the local level is its potential for learning. Providing information about basic issues of agriculture, health, housing, transportation, environment, water, utilities and energy, market places, and civic associations opens new avenues for citizen education. Possibilities exist for using the Internet to enhance citizen knowledge on these and other issues through online training, courses, and through practical application. For example, Singapore's Ministry of Education has teamed up with IBM to launch a programme called "Learning Village", which aims at making schools and educational resources available to the general public.

Nonetheless, complex information technology systems can be an expensive business and problems in the technical development of a complicated website can be a significant headache for local officials. Working with technology consultants may be confusing and difficult. As a result, many cities around the world have chosen to keep their sites on the web simple, but up-to-date and containing all the necessary helpful information they would normally be providing through other means (such as through newspapers).

Some other possible concerns about local democracy and electronic governance include concerns for privacy of potentially sensitive personal or city information, the lack of personal contact with a city official on important items, the potential cost to residents and governments, and its possible limitation to only getting basic information.

It is possible to envisage that citizens could exercise direct democracy in a way never dreamed possible before. If the size of the political unit has always been an

argument in favour of representative democracy, is it possible that new innovation like Internet voting could allow citizens to pass legislation and govern themselves through the click of a mouse?

At present, much of the innovation in the use of online technology is in the process of social organization. Both in advanced and developing countries alike, social movements and civil society groups have used the communication features of e-mail and electronic mailing lists to organize for political aims, and to mobilize appeals, public awareness campaigns, generate new supporters, and organize protests and demonstrations. It can also be used within organizations, such as political parties, to hold online elections or to survey members.

So far, practical applications of new information technology to reinvigorate direct democracy must still be considered experimental. But the opportunities for citizen participation and for collaborative decision-making are extensive. For example, some computer applications easily handle complex "threaded discussions" – a method of carrying on a conversation online in which people involved in a dialogue on a topic can directly respond to prior comments that have been posted in a communication forum.

Figure 24	Democracy Online

Among the current potential uses of the Internet for improved democratic local governance are:

- Developing community identity, for example through threaded discussion, virtual forums, e-mail features, links to civic groups, and open, "real-time" town meetings with elected officials;
- Conducting online surveys and preference polls;
- Keeping a community calendar;
- Education on issues affecting the community;
- Voting online for representatives, referendums, or on the passage of legislation;
- Communicating about policies and programmes; practical information on service delivery;
- Summarizing city council agendas, deliberations, and decisions;
- Providing feedback and citizen input, e.g. e-mail to elected authorities, or ombudsmen, and feedback on non-governmental service providers;
- Organizing local and neighbourhood associations;
- Campaigning and election information;

- Linking beyond the community to other similar municipalities (such as sister-cities);
- Providing community radio and television broadcasting;
- Organizing campaigns and citizen initiatives; and
- Promoting the municipality's image to the world, for example in efforts to boost tourism or trade.

Not all assessments of e-government are rosy, however. Some point to the potential for a growing "digital divide", or the creation of a schism between those with the financial resources, access to technology, and skills to make use of Internet-based services, and the vast majority of citizens in the world to which the new tools may be inaccessible due to cost, complexity, disabilities, or skills. Efforts to address the digital divide are growing rapidly; in Costa Rica, for example, a public-private partnership is installing technology "pods" throughout the country to give poor peasants and other rural people access to Internet-based information on critical development issues such as health, education, and agriculture.

Efforts to create "smart communities" using Internet-based technology are just beginning to emerge, and important problems like the "digital divide" will present serious impediments to large-scale use of the opportunities technology provides for enhancing participatory democracy. Technology may also pose problems for citizen privacy and security as more and more information is collected and stored on computers. At the same time, the rapid development of information technologies such as the Internet may open new doors to direct, participatory democracy that just a few short years ago were not even known to exist.

Figure 25	www.andhrapradesh.com: An Innovation in E-Governance

N. Chandrababu Naidu, the energetic Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, has steadfastly pursued an imaginative vision to turn the city of Hyderabad into *Cyberabad*, a high-tech centre with sophisticated economic and political advancement based on the integration of computers into the everyday lives of the people. One of the most innovative advancements has been the creation of a public affairs website designed at economic development, www.cyberabad.com, and one for public involvement in governance, www.andhrapradesh.com, both of which have been instrumental in the revolutionary social, political, and economic changes that are happening in this dynamic city.

The city's website offers opportunities for participating in online surveys, joining discussion forums, or finding information on any number of

government services. Particularly interesting is the effort to promote incentives for the use of online communication, information sharing, and networking capacities to plan, co-ordinate, and directly involve people in local democracy and in economic development.

Naidu has helped develop systems that use computers to check the water level in the major reservoirs and monitor power generation. Water and power are the lifeline of the farming sector, the backbone of the state's economy. Naidu has been successful in using technology to lure global computer giants to invest in the state, build information technology training facilities, and computerize the government's daily operations and policy decisions.

E-governance and information technology advancements in Andhra Pradesh involve making government more transparent, efficient, communicative, and effective. The objectives of the initiative directly relate to remaking modern democracy in the modern, globalized, computer age. Some of the advantages include:

Economic development of the state

Growth of IT industry and exports

Open new windows of economic opportunity

Create employment potential

Promote knowledge as an economic resource

Development with equity

Improvement in quality of life

Human resource development

Education and health care

Good governance

Convenient, anytime, anywhere citizen services

Constantly open lines of communication between citizens and the government

E   S   S   A   Y

COMMUNITY PLANNING
From Conflict to Consensus
John Thompson

Community planning is a non-political technique that can achieve co-operation and change by means of an effective, local, democratic process. Simplicity is the key. The principle is that as many people as possible should participate – residents, decision-makers and all other interested parties, so as to be able to share ideas and experiences and to participate collectively in the inception and delivery of a process for change.

The real experts are invariably the people who have direct everyday experience of their own area. As a neutral multi-disciplinary team of outsiders, the facilitators arrive with a "blank piece of paper", prepared to listen, analyse, and evaluate. There is never a pre-ordained solution to be imposed. The aim is to tap common intelligence in order to achieve a balance that has the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people.

Despite apparent friction involving cultural, religious, financial, class and gender differences, a consensus almost always emerges which proves that people do in fact usually want more or less the same thing. Community planning is becoming a multi-disciplinary "tool" which can focus public attention on solving problems rather than reverting to acrimonious adversarial exchange. In many instances the process is seen as a form of therapy; it is a disarming but powerful means of achieving a common perspective, whereby a mixed group of individuals, with often dramatically different aims and viewpoints at the outset, wake up to the realization that they are indeed capable, with some external help, of working out a shared agenda.

Community Planning Weekends

As a participatory approach which can initiate or give impetus to the collaborative process, Community Planning Weekends are designed to suit the client's brief, ranging from large-scale public events involving all interested parties, including the local and wider community, to small, private gatherings involving key people in constructive dialogue; the attendance may be a few hundred or more than a thousand people. The methodology is as applicable to rural Welsh market towns as to disintegrating inner cities or to Belfast's deeply divided Crumlin Road.

The point of this process is that everyone who lives or works in a particular area can be involved in shaping its future. Individual citizens are able to contribute their experience and suggestions and take "ownership" of what in a sense becomes *their* project. A "critical mass" of expectations and suggestions is generated and the journey of decision-making, from problem to solution, becomes much more transparent. Eventually a consensus is reached, a balanced view that respects the fundamental tenets of social well-being, an aspiration that in our experience is shared by most people.

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A Typical Event

A well-planned and properly designed planning weekend has the ability to create a unique chemistry between professional and local expertise, decision-makers and campaigners, by enabling them to work together constructively for a short and intensive period of time. The intention is for all relevant parties to become actively involved. They may be young or old, in work or without. They may have an existing or potential interest in the project. They may include local and statutory authorities, the voluntary sector, professionals, politicians, landowners, developers, financiers, employers and employees, tenants, residents, and the wider community. By focusing on common goals, there is the potential to overcome the limitations of traditional design and development methods. Lateral thinking is encouraged and the coalescence of many strands of thought often leads to new and unexpected results.

The neutral team of facilitators and relevant advisers treats everyone present as having an equal right to the process, and physical, social, commercial, and environmental issues are addressed holistically through a combination of topic-based workshops, "hands-on planning" sessions and, where appropriate, "lessons from elsewhere". The views of young people are taken seriously and children are given a chance to exercise their creativity.

The event usually lasts six days, commencing on a Thursday, when the Planning Weekend Team assembles, familiarizes itself with the site and location, and receives background briefings from key people. The team brings together whatever collective skills and experience are needed to match the particular characteristics of the project under review. Workshop facilitators and monitors are provided, as well as advisers and analysts, architects, urban designers and planners, and an editorial team to produce the final report. The event may have a public launch on a Thursday, if appropriate, setting the scene for the public sessions that will run through Friday and Saturday. These are open to anyone who wishes to attend.

Workshops

The workshop facilitators initiate a procedure that first identifies the issues, then looks at possible solutions and how best these can be implemented. Participants contribute their suggestions by jotting them down on post-it notes that are then gathered by the facilitators and grouped to identify key themes. Ideas are discussed as they arise enabling a full dialogue between all members of the workshop in a fully inclusive process. The combination of written ideas and professional facilitation allows the ideas of the less confident to be placed on an equal footing with those of the more experienced. The process also diffuses the potential for aggressive and single-issue dissent.

Throughout the day there are regular plenary sessions to give all participants an opportunity to know what has gone on across the range of workshops.

Hands-on-Planning

The "hands-on planning" sessions are an extension of the workshops whereby participants gather in groups around tables on which are pinned large scale plans of the area. Issues that have already emerged are then developed in a physical form, using pens to mark up the plans. Although architects and urban designers are present to assist and facilitate these practical sessions, participants are encouraged to explore their own ideas and to work out potential solutions, along with other local individuals who may, or may not be in agreement. Responsibility is passed to the participants to try and reach consensus amongst themselves

The result of these "hands-on-planning" sessions is a number of visually stimulating plans, which have been designed on a collaborative basis and reflect the wishes and aspirations of the local community. They are then described in turn by a member of the group, so that everyone attending the event can be aware of the myriad of ideas and options that have emerged throughout the comparatively short period of time.

Vision for the Future

The essence of a Community Planning Weekend is to utilize the burst of energy and activity created by this intensive participatory event to produce results that might, using more traditional methods, take many months to deliver. Despite municipal-level conflicts and individual versus community claims, a practical way forward can usually be found, held together by a sense of collective ownership of a vision that many have helped create.

Over Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday the planning weekend team then works in private analysing and evaluating the output from the previous two days. The vision that is created, along with summaries of the workshops, diagrammatic versions of the "hands-on planning" sessions, and recommendations for the way forward, is presented back to the public on Tuesday evening in the form of a slide show, exhibition, and broadsheet.

All relevant parties can then sign up to the "action plan" that has been created. Thus all stakeholders, whether representing the state, the community, or the private sector will have been collectively involved in creating the future they will all share.

Sustaining Local Involvement

The planning weekend therefore becomes a springboard to aid and implement future development. Outputs can be used in a variety of ways according to the aims and objectives of the project. The results of this vision-building process may form the basis of a master plan for the area, help solve critical decisions on town planning, assist funding applications, or initiate the setting up of collaborative mechanisms by which the development process can be delivered.

The creation (or strengthening) of a sustainable civil society on a local level requires the involvement and commitment of people who recognize and respond to a shared vision. Although everyone will invariably see this vision from an individual

standpoint, the key lies in generating effective use of valuable community resources, allowing linkages between various needs to create a pool of multi-purpose benefits.

Focus groups and working groups are usually formed as a direct result of a community planning event to continue the dialogue and help bind the community together in a realistic market-driven, politically-open, and democratic way by creating local community ownership of activities. Once the vision has been created, partnering arrangements can then be set up with the relevant stakeholders to oversee delivery. Out of this process a new strand of community leadership almost always emerges, holding greater respect and influence than those chosen through traditional political systems.

The aim is therefore to create an action plan for each section of the community: local government, the commercial sector, and the citizens themselves. Market, state, and community interests can be entwined through transferring land and assets to a Community Development Trust. This will then create an active, stabilizing force that is able to operate effectively, regardless of political change. The state provides the legal framework, the market provides the finance to set up appropriate partnerships, the community becomes the long- term stakeholder.

Local ownership of decision-making processes is an essential ingredient for the strengthening and stabilization of places, neighbourhoods, and communities. It is a principle that must be at the heart of democratic practice, and a new and effective tool now exists to help make it happen. The following examples illustrate different forms of community planning.

Wenceslas Square, Prague

The history of Prague's most famous square has been punctuated by a number of memorable moments when the Czech people have seized the initiative and regained their own voice. It was therefore an appropriate venue for the Community Planning Weekend that took place in April 1996. Since the start of the twentieth century Wenceslas Square has been the embodiment of progress, but progress can bring stress and problems as well as affluence. It seemed that five years after the euphoria of the Velvet Revolution the heart of the nation was being lost to pimps and prostitutes, becoming a symbol for the downside of capitalism. The dilemma facing the planning weekend was one familiar to many people trying to find ways of securing the benefits of economic growth while also maintaining what is best in their own culture.

Many different ideas were expressed and explored, but certain themes emerged in which participants referred to the necessity for everyone to take responsibility, to become involved, to be prepared to take action, and to recognize the need for effective management.

The Community Planning Weekend provided an opportunity for the local people of Prague, those who actually lived and experienced everyday life on Wenceslas Square, to express their own feelings and to participate directly in planning a future

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for the square. The event initiated dialogue and generated co-operation between citizens, decision-making bodies, and the business community. The planning team, in conjunction with their Czech counterparts, created a vision for Wenceslas Square and the buildings that surround it, which stemmed directly from publicly discussed ideas.

As a first step towards managing and improving the open space, it was agreed that the formation of a new association for the revitalization of Wenceslas Square should be considered. This group could be composed of local businesses, owners of property, local residents, and others with an interest in the area. It would work with the municipal authorities and others to ensure that an effective management brief is prepared. This could then lead the way for real local ownership of decision-making processes, involving all strata of the community in a partnering arrangement. The process of community planning was therefore instrumental in articulating practical options for enhancing the Square, which would in turn have a positive effect on civic society.

Crumlin Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland

After a five month process of planning and preparation The Crumlin Road Ideas Weekend took place in February 1997. A 30-year cycle of decline and neglect had been caused by a number of factors: the "Troubles", the economic decline of Belfast and the blight of an unrealized road widening scheme, and a misguided attempt to create a "physical peaceline". More positively, questions had arisen about the future of a significant group of public buildings that stand close to the city centre: the Mater Hospital, the Crumlin Road Jail, and Belfast's County Courthouse.

During the period of initial consultation and planning an agreed list of "Is" and "Isn't"s was prepared which provided the common ground on which both Catholic and Protestant communities felt comfortable to proceed. As a result, two days of public sessions took place in which invited participants explored the physical, social, and economic problems of Belfast's Crumlin Road.

The event created a shift in imagination and enhanced participants' perceptions of what is possible. Surprising ideas emerged, such as turning the Gaol and Courthouse into a cross-community cultural, leisure and arts project, rather than seeing them turned into a Public Records Office as planned currently by the government. As one of the participants commented, "We've always shared these buildings – let's keep them that way!" What the Ideas Weekend did not do, as many feared it would, was to destroy the hard work and carefully developed relationships that had been established over the preceding months.

The tried-and-tested techniques of community planning were appropriate to the task in hand: there was a neutral multi-disciplinary team of outsiders, which treated everyone as having an equal right to the process; workshops and "hands-on plan-

ning" sessions were able to stimulate non-threatening dialogue and establish valuable areas of consensus; and by putting the communities at the centre of the regeneration process and developing public and private sector partnerships, a vision was created that could lead to the Crumlin Road emerging as a peaceline of economic regeneration, the symbolic gateway to Protestant and Catholic reconciliation.

Schlossplatz Berlin, Germany

Schlossplatz has been the subject of heated discussions since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Situated in the centre of Berlin, it has become symbolic of the reunification debate. Firmly entrenched positions are held between the *"Ossies"* who wish to keep the *Platz der Republik* (built by the former East German government) and the *"Wessies"* who wish to rebuild the baroque *Stadtschloss* (former residence of the Prussian king). A planning weekend was held in early autumn 1997 to help identify and build on the common ground that invariably exists, even when the views that are initially expressed so often seem irreconcilable. It was hoped that neutral facilitation would free up the discussion, create a special atmosphere of co-operation, and help focus on issues rather than symbolism.

The fact that Schlossplatz is of national and international importance tends to obscure the fact that for a significant number of people it is their local neighbourhood where they want to be able to live, work, and play. A primary aim was to seek solutions that would enable the area to function effectively at all these different levels. As a result of the public sessions the process moved from polarized debate towards a proper analysis of the uses and activities which would be most appropriate for this important location, together with respect for the context and nature of the local area.

Distilled from the results of the "hands-on planning" sessions were a set of urban design principles which could generate an Urban Design Code, which could then be used to guide the future development of the site.

A new consensus group was formed shortly after the public event, drawn from a wide range of residents, business people, politicians, professionals, and campaign groups, most of whom held diametrically opposed views at the outset. The initiative *Perspektive Schlossplatz* will act as a monitoring and advisory body on the future development of the Schlossplatz area and actively campaign for the implementation of the results and methodology of the planning weekend. In spite of their very different positions and opinions, all participants were able to agree on 10 principles that should guide the process.

As a result of the planning weekend there now exists a new focus for the debate, working to ensure a sense of common ownership of the final results and fulfilling the desire to find an appropriate way forward that can be endorsed by everyone.

Caterham Barracks, Surrey, England

Linden Homes acquired Caterham Barracks from the Ministry of Defence at the beginning of 1998 and commissioned developers to prepare a masterplan in consultation

with local people. While respecting the historical character of the Barracks, the challenge was to integrate the site with the existing community of Caterham-on-the-Hill (which was initially hostile to the idea of any significant development taking place) and bring lasting social, economic and environmental benefits to the local area. By agreeing to host a Community Planning Weekend the developers took the unusual step of inviting public participation prior to the preparation of plans or the submission of a planning application.

More than 1,000 people attended the event, and the workshops and "hands-on planning" sessions revealed a unanimous desire for the creation of a balanced community on the site, with mixed residential accommodation and a range of uses that should include retail, employment, leisure and commercial opportunities.

The planning weekend resulted in a vision for Caterham Barracks, which was subsequently refined into a more detailed masterplan. Focus groups were formed to maintain community involvement after the event. The spirit of the weekend continued as local people continued to work with the developers, architects and local authority representatives in order to balance competing interests and forge a consensus-orientated practical solution for the site.

Plans have now been approved to transform the barracks into an urban village, regenerating a "brownfield" site and offering a mixture of private, sheltered and social housing as well as business accommodation, live/work units, shops, and a 60-bed nursing home. Leisure and community facilities will be included in the development, which will be linked to Caterham railway station by a new bus service.

The Caterham Barracks proposals can be seen as a positive example of local democratic practice whereby citizen and stakeholder participation has resulted in a masterplan that will develop the site as a balanced community with a mixture of uses, creating 350 more homes than in the local authority's original brief and a locally owned Development Trust with initial assets in excess of £3 million.

C A S E   S T U D Y

PROMOTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
Julie Ballington

In 1997, countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) ratified the "Declaration on Gender and Development" committing member states to eradicate gender discrimination and inequality. The Declaration commits SADC countries to ensure the equal representation of women and men in decision-making at all levels, and to achieve a 30 per cent target of women in all political decision-making structures, including local government, by the year 2005. This declaration, together with other international treaties and conventions, has heightened awareness around the issue of women's participation in both national and local spheres of governance in southern Africa.

Women's participation continues to lag behind the participation rates of men, especially at the local level, although regional variances exist. It is also apparent that once elected, women often face pervasive obstacles to effective participation in decision-making structures. Where men usually dominate local structures, patriarchal attitudes and norms often inhibit or marginalize women's participation, both as elected officials and as citizens, thereby sidelining the concerns of women.

Therefore, if women are to succeed in influencing the agenda at the local level, they need to overcome at least two hurdles. Firstly, they need to be given the opportunity to participate in community affairs by being elected into local government structures. Secondly, they need to ensure their effective participation in decision-making once elected. This case study highlights some of the ways in which women have tackled these obstacles, and increased and enhanced their effective participation in local governance in southern Africa.

Context
The idea that inclusive participatory local governance can contribute to the consolidation of democracy in southern Africa has gained prominence in the recent past. For the past decade, national elections have dominated the political agenda and have often received more attention than elections and governance at the local level, partly due to the importance attached to national politics and the need to establish effective democratic institutions to consolidate fledgling democracies. Democratic and inclusive local elections in southern Africa generally have taken place years after founding elections.

For example, Malawi held its first local government election in November 2000, six years after its first national democratic elections in 1994 (although opposition figures have questioned the fairness and competency of the poll, pointing to very low turnout rates of only 14 per cent). Even where national and local elections are conducted at

the same time, as in Tanzania, national issues usually dominate the political agenda. However, increases in urban population, the deepening of urban and rural poverty, restructuring, and inadequate service provisions are now posing major developmental challenges to many southern African countries. While there is enormous diversity in local government structures, from large metropolitan cities to sparsely-populated rural areas, it is now apparent that, without strong and participatory local government, effective delivery is nearly impossible.

The notion that gender equality is critical to the consolidation of democracy at the local level is gaining more prominence through the activities of NGOs, grassroots organizations, committed political parties, and gender activists. The participation of women at all levels of decision-making is critical to the common goal of equality, development, and democratization. This is particularly so at the local level, where in southern Africa, women are the major recipients of resources, constituting more than half of the population. Politics is essentially about representation and decision-making, and if women do not participate they cannot ensure that their needs and interests are adequately addressed in the distribution and allocation of resources at the local level. Yet many factors influence and inhibit the participation of women in local governance. These include cultural, patriarchal and gendered views of politics, political party bias to male candidates, and an insufficient number of experienced or trained women at the community level.

Electing Women to Local Government

The number of women represented in local government structures varies markedly from country to country. While official statistics are scarce, it is estimated that Namibia and the Seychelles have the highest representation of women at over 40 per cent. These countries are followed by Tanzania, South Africa, and Botswana with representation between 15 and 30 per cent. At the other extreme are countries such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, and Zambia, with under 10 per cent representation of women in local structures. Many factors account for the varying levels of participation, including the difficulties women face in progressing through party structures, the nature of the electoral system and whether affirmative action is provided for in electoral legislation, discriminatory attitudes and practices, childcare responsibilities, and the high cost of seeking and holding public office. Despite the challenge these obstacles pose, some of the following strategies have been employed aiming to increase women's political participation at the local level.

The high representation of women locally in Namibia is largely attributable to the *legislated affirmative action* provision applying to local authority elections in 1992 and 1998, together with the use of the proportional representation electoral system. The affirmative action provision required parties to include at least 30 per cent women on their party candidate lists. Today, despite some protests for greater gender balance at the national and regional levels, 44 per cent of Namibia's local councillors are women, including some mayors or deputy mayors. Unfortunately with the proposal to change to a constituency-based system (which has often proved difficult for the elec-

tion of women) for subsequent elections at the local level, a decrease in the number of women councillors is to be expected. As a result, a number of NGOs are lobbying for the retention of a quota system. Tanzania also has a legislated quota for women, where 20 per cent of seats at the national level (this is an increase from 15 per cent) and at least 25 per cent of seats at the local level are reserved for women. While the representation of women remains below 30 per cent, the reserved seats have ensured that at least some women are elected and participate in local governance.

However, the special seats in Tanzania have been criticized by some gender activists for taking pressure off political parties to forward woman candidates in constituency seats. Generally with the constituency-based system often used to elect councillors at the local level, affirmative action strategies have proved effective in guaranteeing the representation and participation of women in local governance in southern Africa.

In the campaign to increase the participation of women at the local level, many civil society groups and NGOs have played a critical role in *training and lobbying* in southern Africa. In particular, the activities of the *Emang Basadi* (Stand Up Women), an NGO based in Botswana that lobbies mainly for the rights of women, has been exemplary. In 1999, the organization was noted for its programmes that aimed at increasing the participation of women in national and local elections in Botswana. *Emang Basadi* operates through a Political Education Project that trains women to run for political office. Training programmes in 1999 were directed at all aspiring candidates regardless of political affiliation, and included developing public speaking skills, campaign management, and fund-raising expertise.

Similar strategies have been implemented in other southern African countries. In Malawi, the Civil Liberties Committee recognized the importance of developing training programmes in the run-up to the first local elections in 2000, based on the poor representation of women at the national level. The programmes train aspiring councillors on women's rights, gender equality, and democratic governance. They also encourage women to run as independent candidates in the local elections. As a result, women fared fairly well in the contested elections, with women gaining as many as 45 per cent of the seats in some municipalities. The Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) has also assumed a critical role in raising awareness about the importance of women's participation in national and local governance. The training activities of TGNP stem from the realization that the patriarchal structure of elections and difficult process of preliminary elections within political parties, severely impact on women's chances of winning elections. By creating an enabling environment through support networks and training, TGNP hopes to facilitate increased representation of women in local structures. According to the TGNP Director an important success of their campaign has been raising the debate on women's participation and the constraints they face in Tanzania. However, she notes that obstacles confront aspiring candidates, including funding of campaigns and lack of logistical support for women within parties and as independent candidates.

Although strategies have been adopted in a number of countries, their success varies. Deliberate efforts such as quotas, gender lobbying and support for women candidates undertaken by NGOs and other stakeholders can contribute to enhancing women's participation at the local level, yet these strategies often have a limited impact. Of critical concern is the difficulty encountered by women in getting selected as candidates within the party structure. Despite the general commitment to gender equality, women continue to be under-represented as candidates at the local level.

Women and SALGA

While representation is critical, the struggle by elected councillors, NGOs, and women themselves extends beyond representation to the issue of effective participation in local governance. Once elected to local politics, the participation of women in male-dominated structures is often inhibited by patriarchal norms, unfamiliar language and rules, and a lack of training and support. One way in which women may be empowered to participate effectively is through the establishment of gender machinery to promote the effective participation of women in local councils. This is particularly important in countries where local governance is currently undergoing transformation. This is the case in South Africa where the institutions at the local level are being reformed as a final phase in its transition to democracy.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa gives prominence to local government by establishing it as a sphere of co-operative governance. While local government is a separate and distinct sphere of government, it is inter-related with other spheres, namely national and provincial governments. The Constitution also makes provision for the establishment of municipal associations as a means of ensuring consultation between the different spheres of government. As a result, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) was created through the Organised Local Government Act of 1996, and launched in November 1996, consisting of a national and nine provincial associations. SALGA is unique in that it acts as a unifying voice for all local governments, urban and rural, and contributes to the development of policy and improved service delivery at the local level. Its main task, as stated in its mission statement, is "to promote developmental and co-operative local governance throughout South Africa, in order to deepen democracy and to provide services to meet basic human needs".

The SALGA Constitution contains a commitment to gender equality and the participation of women in local governance. This has resulted in the organization recognizing that transformation at the local level will never be complete without redressing the imbalances created by patriarchal relations. In order to achieve its strategic objectives SALGA instituted a number of working groups, including a Gender Working Group (GWG). Its mission is to promote the achievement of gender equality and protect the rights of women, both as councillors and as part of the municipalities they serve. Where women constitute 19 per cent of councillors at the local level, this is an important initiative as it builds supporting structures to encourage the effective par-

ticipation of women, and ensure that policy discussion and implementation reflects the concerns of women. SALGA has also ratified the IULA declaration on women in local government, which challenges SALGA to promote compliance with the declaration within individual councils. Without a critical mass of women at the local level, a cadre of gender activists is needed to ensure that the needs of women are reflected in local transformation and policy development.

SALGA explains that women councillors often experience gender specific constraints at the local level. Included is the fact that the low number of women councillors often means that gender issues are not addressed in certain councils and that women often have limited access to decision-making as patriarchy remains rife among many gender insensitive councillors. The SALGA GWG is ultimately responsible for co-ordinating the policy formation around gender issues, lobbying other levels of government and civil society, as well as supporting gender initiatives in local councils. To aid this process, the GWG provides training in a number of areas, including leadership training, advocacy and lobbying skills, and budgetary skills so councils are able to "engender" their budgets. In this process, the activities of local NGOs are extremely valuable. The Gender Advocacy Programme and the Women's Development Fund have been critical in providing empowerment programmes to women councillors in South Africa.

The SALGA Gender programme consists of a GWG at the national level, comprising councillors representing each province, together with provincial working groups constituted of local councillors in the province. Some, but not all, municipalities have established working groups at the municipal level. The resolution to form GWGs in local councils has been met with varied levels of success. This is often because municipalities lack councillors committed to gender programmes, or achieving gender equality is not seen as a priority in the face of severely under-resourced councils.

The implementation of a national programme committed to gender sensitizing local councils has therefore been a difficult task. It has been plagued by several challenges, including insufficient resources, as well as a lack of political will within individual councils to support the network. Despite these obstacles, the SALGA GWG remains a critical structure to aid women in their effective participation at the local level. If all local councils implement GWGs and conform to a national gender policy, real changes can be expected with regard to the representation and participation of women councillors at the local level in South Africa. The initiative by SALGA Gender may prove to be an effective strategy that will benefit the effective participation of women in other southern African countries.

Conclusion

Inclusive and effective participation is necessary to reverse the subordination and marginalization of women, and contribute to democratic local governance in southern Africa. Although women are able to participate in a number of ways, this case study emphasizes the election of women councillors as the most visible and direct way in

which women are able to participate in local governance. Through such participation, women are enabled to influence decision-making ensuring gender sensitivity, and through training are empowered to make necessary interventions to communicate the concerns of women in their communities. The examples provided above demonstrate that the enhancement of women's political participation at the local level requires a co-ordinated effort from a number of players, including governments, political parties, NGOs, activists, and men and women working in partnership.

CASE STUDY

ENHANCED PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Lessons from South Africa
David Storey and Dominique Wooldridge

South Africa's government structures have fundamentally and inclusively transformed in the post-apartheid era. At the local level, the participation of civil society has been a key feature in the move from apartheid to democratic local government. The way in which civil society has participated in, contributed to, and benefited from the establishment of democratic structures and processes has varied throughout the transition process. This case study breaks down the transition process into four chronological phases to examine the changing nature of civil society participation during each phase.

Phase One (1985–1993): Mobilization

Effective mobilization in opposition to apartheid local government and the building of local-level civil society organization and capacity characterized this phase. The mobilization was linked to the broader struggle against apartheid and issues discussed were therefore both constitutional (i.e., "who decides/represents") and distributive (i.e., "who benefits") in nature. The result of the mobilization, coupled with the absence of negotiations with those in control of resources (whose legitimacy was in question), was a stalemate in the ability of local governments to provide basic services and the acceptance by the state of the need for, and legitimacy of, including civil society in decision-making.

Images of apartheid-era towns and cities are now notorious across the world: on the one hand, leafy "white" suburbs with service standards comparable with those of highly industrialized countries; on the other, the collection of "matchbox houses" and unserviced shack settlements that constituted black townships. This uneven pattern of development was underpinned by a local government system designed to produce and perpetuate inequality on the basis of race. South African local government derives the bulk of its income from property rates and a levy charged on business and industry. Apartheid legislation and residential segregation, combined with a policy of "own management for own areas" entailing separate local government structures for each racially defined area, limited the extent to which black citizens would benefit from the local tax base. The high rateable (commercial and industrial) tax base was contained in "white areas" and although township residents worked and shopped in these areas, income derived from the local tax base was collected by white municipalities and spent on servicing white areas.

During the mid-1980s, township residents mobilized against this unfair system under the popular slogan of "one city, one tax base". This slogan simultaneously assert-

ed the right of township residents to access the tax base they contributed to, and asserted their (historically denied) rights as urban citizens. Mobilization was organized and led by civic associations and most often took the form of rent and consumer boycotts – both of which directly threatened the financial viability of white municipalities, and hence the financial basis of white suburban lifestyles.

As a result of effective mobilization, local-level negotiating forums were established in many parts of South Africa in the late 1980s. Black communities were represented in negotiations largely through civic associations. Most of these early local negotiating forums were simply crisis-management structures concentrating on brokering deals around "improved services for improved payment levels", and thus real benefits for township residents were limited. Nonetheless, these early negotiations played a critical role in building the capacity of civil society to engage the state.

In 1992 the ruling National Party attempted to pass legislation, the "Interim Measures Act", which would enable local negotiating forums to reach legally binding agreements on the government of local areas. The ANC Alliance, fearing that their weak technical capacity in many local forums would result in agreements that entrenched white privilege, rejected the legislation. A National Local Government Forum (NLGF) was then formed to negotiate a framework for local negotiations. Civic associations were represented in the NLGF through the South African National Civic Association (SANCO). In 1993 the NLGF reached an agreement, which was subsequently legislated in the form of the "Local Government Transition Act" (LGTA).

Rather than prescribing a new system of local government for South Africa, the LGTA outlined a process for change, consisting of three broad stages:

■ *A pre-interim stage* to last from the promulgation of the LGTA in 1993, until the first local elections. During this phase negotiation forums had to be established to reach agreement on the boundaries (specifically to amalgamate former "white" and "black" municipal jurisdictions), the allocation of municipal powers and authority, and the composition of interim "power-sharing" structures.

■ *An interim stage* to begin with local elections in November 1995 that would elect representatives to the structures that had emerged as a result of local negotiations. These interim structures would govern until the next elections, which would be held under a new system of local government located within the new national constitution.

■ *The final stage* of the transition process commenced with local government elections in November 2000 in line with the new policy and legal framework for local government.

Phase Two (1993–1994): Negotiation
The LGTA entrenched local negotiations as the key vehicle for affecting change at the local level – representing a break with racially-defined apartheid structures and set-

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ting the scene for joint governance of South Africa's cities, towns, and rural areas. Mass mobilization diminished and its purpose, when used, changed from effecting a "seat at the table" to supporting negotiating positions at the "table". The LGTA's staggered process both guided the local level transition and radically affected the dynamics of civil society participation. Possibly the most significant change was a shift from direct resident accountability towards political party caucuses.

Each local negotiating forum had to reach an agreement on which type of local government would be established in that area (e.g., metropolitan or local system), and on issues such as the boundaries for a new local government in the area. The "statutory" (representatives from existing local government structures and political parties that participated in the previous local elections) and "non-statutory" sides (community representatives and political parties that had not participated in the previous local elections) then prepared lists of candidates, and a new political council was appointed from these lists on a 50/50 basis, to govern until local government elections could be held.

The enactment of the LGTA and "power-sharing" by civil society in local forums leading up to the establishment of interim or "appointed" councils affected the dynamics of civil society participation in several ways:

■ It was mandatory to establish a negotiating forum in each local area, consisting of representatives of statutory and non-statutory parties. The structure of early negotiating forums was unregulated, with the result that each local forum set its own rules. On the statutory side, seats were allocated roughly in proportion to the number of seats political parties had won in previous local government elections. On the non-statutory side, the issue was more vexing. In many areas political parties who had not previously participated in local negotiations entered local forums and competed with civic leaders for the right to represent township communities in negotiations.

■ In one sense this rearrangement increased the number of vehicles through which civil society could participate in local negotiations (e.g., through either civic associations or a political party). However, coalitions of similar interest tended to dominate both the statutory and non-statutory caucuses, with the result that smaller interest groups were often marginalized.

Participation by political parties (as the ANC began the transition from liberation movement to political party) saw a significant shift from accountability to civic structures (such as street and block committees) and mass residents meetings, towards accountability to party caucuses.

■ The LGTA focused negotiations in local forums around a narrow and technical agenda. Participation became directed at the outputs specified in LGTA, including reaching agreement on new local boundaries, the allocation of municipal powers and functions, and the division of assets and liabilities. NGOs played an increas-

ingly important role in providing technical capacity to support the non-statutory side in these negotiations. In some instances this close collaboration between NGOs and broad community-based organizations led to ongoing and mutually beneficial relationships. In other instances, tensions surfaced between the predominantly white, NGO-based technocrats and activists who provided technical support to the non-statutory component of local forums, and the predominantly black community representatives they worked for.

■ As negotiations progressed, the combined effect of an increasingly "technical" agenda, and the new party-political dynamics of a two-sided negotiation table, made it increasingly difficult for civic leaders to maintain their previous style of community mobilization. The shift from mass mobilization against the local state to engagement with the state through negotiations required new forms of representation, mandates and accountability.

Phase Three (1994–1995): Joint Decision-Making

The joint decision-making phase entailed previously excluded people taking responsibility for a system that they had not created and had limited scope to change. The conclusion of the major constitutional issues allowed more distributive issues to come to the fore, although this phase marked the beginning of a period of internal focus whereby organizational change was seen as crucial to improved service delivery. Relationships between and within civil society organizations continued to change and the emergence of increasingly diverse interests from under the broad opposition banner raised dilemmas for those within and outside the new system.

The onset of interim or "appointed" councils found newly appointed councillors from the non-statutory side of the 50/50 model responsible for managing municipal organizations designed to selectively service the white population. By entering local government, these people, often community activists with a background in the anti-apartheid struggle, entered a new "terrain of struggle".

Simultaneously, many of the old negotiating forums were transformed into "Local Development Forums", where community organizations engaged with the new agenda of defining infrastructure investment plans, planning capital projects and the like.

If the shift from the "street" to the negotiation table had been difficult, the move from the negotiating table to boardrooms where municipal budgets, staff structures and services were discussed, proved as profound. The days of participation equalling opposition to the formal "system" were fading fast and instead participation was now associated with joint responsibility for service delivery. The shift from negotiation to joint decision-making had further impact on the nature of civil society participation and the period reconfigured a number of relationships:

■ Many former community leaders and activists entered government, and found themselves in a position where they had to manage tensions with their former con-

stituencies over issues they had been part of creating, such as land invasions, reinstating a culture of payment for services and the like.

■ Many white activists with technical skills moved away from offering their services as members and associates of community based organizations and civic movements, towards a more professional "consulting" approach. This transition of intellectual capital and experience coincided with the entrance of mainstream consultants and service providers who had positioned themselves for work in restructuring local government.

■ The introduction of resources into communities by inexperienced local councillors desperate to deliver on high expectations before an election led to destructive conflicts between various interest groups and undermined trust between community constituencies and councillors.

■ Divisions between political party structures and community and civic associations, which had been blurred to a large degree under the banner of the national anti-apartheid alliance and local "non-statutory" side, became more distinct. Activists made personal choices about whether to go into political parties and into government, or to remain in community-based organizations. Others avoided the choice or, by virtue of their status or skill set, were encouraged not to. This meant that it was not uncommon for a single individual to simultaneously be a councillor and hold senior positions in a political party, a civic association, and a youth or women's movement. Meetings of development forums often began with a tongue-in-cheek request for participants to identify which "hat" they were wearing to the meeting. This rapid reshuffling of roles and relationships even led to situations where a councillor responsible for consulting civil society on a specific issue, was also head of the community organization or lobby dealing with that issue.

■ While the major municipal union, the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU), had been firmly aligned with the ANC Alliance in the negotiating phase, tensions now surfaced as councillors drawn from the ANC Alliance took on the role of employers. In most cases new councils inherited poorly managed organizations with huge discrepancies in conditions of service between staff. Within the context of limited municipal budgets, councillors had to juggle demands for improved services in former black areas, and pressure from unions to standardize conditions of service and bring employees of former Black Local Authorities up to the same salary scales as their white counterparts. As councillors prioritized resources between service delivery and staffing concerns, the tensions between new councillors and their allied unions began to simmer.

■ The notion of "community" also became increasingly problematic. In the negotiating phase, the interests of most residents in localities converged to a sufficient

extent to enable a fairly non-critical use of the term and concept "community". For example, the desire to replace illegitimate political structures with a non-racial local government, and the desire for non-racial local boundaries that ensured that all residents could access the local tax-base, were often common to a large majority of township residents. Once these broad goals were achieved, the differing interests of residents in the same locality became more apparent. Local Development Forums were often split into different sectoral groups (for example housing, water, electricity) to enable new councils to consult "communities" on a sectoral basis. New councils not only had to distinguish parts of the "community" to enable policy formulation on sectoral issues, but also found themselves mediating between different parts of the community (for example mediating between shop-owners and informal traders or between land-owners and squatters).

Phase Four (1995–2000): Democratic Local Government

Newly-elected democratic local government embraced co-operative governance approaches and encouraged civil society participation. The adoption of a participative approach can be explained by both a principled commitment to the idea of grassroots consultation as well as the experience base of the ex-activists-now-councillors. However, the complexity of organizational transformation and the pressure to provide infrastructure and deliver services has meant that participation has been easier to talk about than to implement. Alternatively, participation has been widespread and thorough but has taken long periods of time and led to unsustainable outcomes or provided an excuse for officials not to take hard distributive decisions. These difficulties, combined with a deepening of divisions between civil society (and within community-based organizations) and government and the growing confidence of the ANC to act as the majority political party within a representative democratic system, has ensured that the form and style of participation remains controversial and continues to evolve.

The short local joint decision-making period ended with the election of democratic local government structures in late 1995/early 1996. Against the background of a struggle for black residents to be recognized as full citizens and to make their voice heard in the governance of their local areas, the premise that development must incorporate the needs of the community at which it is targeted, as expressed by that community itself, was widely accepted. Given the ethos of the mass democratic movement and that the local transition process was driven by civil society participation, it is not surprising that most new councils enthusiastically seized participation as a necessary component of democratic local governance.

But despite this widespread commitment, new municipal councils have not found the implementation of participative approaches to be straightforward. Difficulties have included:

■ The need for both councillors and civil society organizations to adjust to working together within a representative democracy. At the heart of the tensions that have emerged is a failure to distinguish between a commitment by local councils to *sharing information and consulting* with civil society and *joint decision-making* whereby organized interest groups hold a veto over development decisions. This problem has two aspects. The *first aspect* relates to the legitimacy and status of non-governmental forums. Prior to the election of democratic local government, there was an assumption that forums and broad-based development committees had as much of a legitimate right to take decisions on behalf of the community, as did the discredited local government structures. Following elections, new local councils were trying to establish themselves as the legitimate voice and decision-making locus of the local community and did not want to be demoted to partner status and lose their authority to make decisions independently on the basis of their representative mandate to govern. The *second aspect* stems from confusion as to the difference between consultation and negotiation as "consensus-based processes", and "consensus" as a desired outcome. Local development forums were not always willing to simply be consulted by their former comrades, who – as councillors – now claimed the right to take decisions regardless of whether consultations resulted in consensus. Similarly, newly-elected councillors were not prepared to grant veto rights to the myriad of interest groups that would line up to support or oppose local issues.

■ The need to reform municipal bureaucracies, designed to exclude participation under apartheid, in order to enable civil society participation. The culture and practice of local government administrations was geared to suppress local voices, deny residents citizenship rights and ignore demands for improved delivery. Although many new councils adopted a sincere and strong commitment to participative local development, the reality was that organizational structures, practices and cultures could not be changed overnight.

■ The complexity of integrating the national political agenda of the majority parties in a particular local council, with local needs and demands. Furthermore, budgeting mechanisms changed and the fiscal discipline demanded by national government increased making the availability of funds more scarce and the means to access them more difficult. The sophistication required to engage with the fast-changing and complex regulatory environment simultaneously made participation more difficult for grassroots leadership and the need for participation more onerous on overworked councillors who increasingly looked to technical experts for assistance.

■ The culture of "veto" politics in civil society organizations that had grown from the seeds sewn through a history of negative behaviour. Civil society power had largely been built on "refusal" tactics, such as boycotts and not on positive organization. This made it difficult for newly elected councillors to encourage communities to

begin to pay for services and even more difficult for civil society leadership to maintain legitimacy at the negotiating table (by assisting councillors with the call to pay) and with their constituencies who were expecting improved services without necessarily paying for them.

∎ The fact that organized structures of civil society have dissolved in recent years. This may be a predominantly short-term phenomenon arising from the absorption of many civil society leaders into government and parastatal structures, and the need to reconfigure civil society organizations to engage with the state in a new way (i.e., to move from mobilization against the apartheid state to participation in a democratic state). While it is possible that new forms of civil society organization more appropriate to the democratic era will soon emerge, organizations representing the interests of less affluent local areas are currently weak. The irony of the current situation is that the most organized civil society lobbies are often conservative ratepayer and business organizations, that have adopted the style and techniques of the old mass democratic movement to challenge the new democratic state.

∎ The inexperience of newly-elected councillors in making, and sticking to hard distributive decisions. This inexperience, often coupled with or exacerbated by uncertain political will, led to many councils trying to cover up their own confusion and/or unwillingness to antagonize any constituency by adopting processes that sought consensus at all costs thus often resulting in no substantive outcome at all.

∎ The shift from issue-based to interest-based organization. During the earlier periods of mobilization many different interest groups were united by a common need to oppose apartheid. With the introduction of democratic local government these interests began to be raised leading to conflict within civil society organizations. These conflicts were often combined with, or mired by, leadership struggles and led to the formation of splinter groups around certain issues. This raised a whole new dilemma for councillors as they tried to distinguish between different types of participation for different sectors and constituencies who relied on, or asserted the need to operate by consensus.

With hindsight it was inevitable that the simultaneous assertion of the "right to govern" and commitment to participative development from new municipal councils would result in tensions emerging between development and consultative forums, and government decision-making structures. It is also obvious that the major challenge facing South African local government is to develop the skills, methods and systems that will extend the commitment to participation from the council itself to the whole municipal organization. This said, some local councils are revisiting the forums and practices through which participation and consultation took place in the pre-election era and many municipalities are experimenting with participative forms of

budgeting, planning and service delivery. Municipal councils are now experimenting with a wide range of approaches. In some areas Development Forums remain in place, but function predominantly as consultative forums. In other areas, other forms of consultation, ranging from issue or area specific meetings, through to more traditional "customer-surveys" and focus-group approaches, have replaced the "forum-approach".

Towards the "Final Phase"

Since local government elections in 1995-1996, national government has run a highly consultative policy process to define a "final" local government system for South Africa. In March 1998 the Local Government White Paper was published, followed by the Municipal Demarcation Act (1998), Municipal Structures Act (1999), and Municipal Systems Bill (currently before parliament). This legislation addresses some of the inequities that resulted from the locally-negotiated approach to the current interim municipal structures, and allows for the re-demarcation of municipal boundaries. In November 2000, local government elections were held on the basis of the new municipal boundaries, to elect structures as defined in the new legislation. These elections marked the beginning of the "final phase" defined in the LGTA.

Just as the structural transformation of local government remains incomplete and frustratingly complex, so too the role played by civil society continues to evolve and diversify. Although its evolution has often been misunderstood and remains poorly documented a new initiative has recently been launched to ensure effective analysis of the manner in which councils grapple with new ways of engaging civil society and developing workable participative approaches to development. The three spheres of government (represented by organized local government, provincial departments responsible for local government, and the national departments responsible for local government and finance) have launched a "Local Government Transformation Programme", a central feature of which is an attempt to share municipal learning and experience during the transition period through the establishment of a "Learning Network".

This newly initiated "Learning Network" provides an opportunity for municipalities to reflect on their own approaches to participation and offers the hope that, in five years time when we look back at how participation in local development has been fostered, there will be a body of documented case studies and experiences to enable an informed analysis. It is only if such an analysis is fed into the development of new local government institutions that the practice of "exclusionary development" can be transformed into a practice of "participative development" within South Africa's fledgling democracy.

The November 2000 local elections were an important milestone in the development of South Africa's democracy and its system of local government. For the first

time, local governments will be working under a stable set of rules that give them certain, specific powers and responsibilities. The newly elected governments are now imbued with a sense of legitimacy that has been lacking in previous years. A critical question will be whether these newly elected officials, working together with civil society, can bring the kind of service delivery that urban residents in South Africa desperately need.

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6. PROMOTING LOCAL DEMOCRACY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

6. PROMOTING LOCAL DEMOCRACY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

I n the last 20 years, and especially in the last decade, a far-reaching global public policy network has rapidly developed to promote local democracy world-wide. Between 1974 and 1999, more than 40 countries experienced transitions from some form of authoritarian rule to more democratic systems. The democracy-promotion policy network responded to, and helped shape, this unprecedented wave of change.

One of the principal lessons learned from the democracy-promotion field is that local actors need to be more fully and systematically included in the global public policy network if external assistance for democracy-promotion is to be more successful. A close, co-operative and equal relationship among local and international actors in this network is critical. This chapter offers an overview of local democracy-promotion efforts, focusing on the network, methods, and lessons learned.

6.1 Overview of the Democracy-Promotion Network

■ *A critical challenge for democracy promoters is the need to co-ordinate across a vast number of organizations working in this arena.*

The network of actors mobilized in support of democracy-promotion includes the governments of major states and their aid agencies, international organizations, international financial institutions, multilateral donors, non-governmental organizations with global programmes, region and country-specific NGOs, and philanthropic organizations.

As a global public policy network, democracy-promotion organizations in the international arena are perhaps the most interventionist in terms of the elements of internal sovereignty with which they involve themselves. The construction of a domes-

tic political order, the internal legitimacy of a regime, the means of choosing leaders, and the relative balance of power among domestic social forces are perhaps the most sacred of all aspects of sovereignty. Yet pressures for democratization have also arisen from within, as mobilized groups pressure incumbent regimes for political liberalization. Coalitions have formed among international, regional, and domestic NGOs to co-operate on common goals. Often, this relationship has involved external funding by public (i.e., donor state) and private-sector (philanthropic foundations) sources for democracy advocacy groups within countries and for general support of an "open society".

The democracy-promotion network features both horizontal and vertical dimensions. The *horizontal* dimension refers to collaboration and learning among various organizations at the same level – co-operation, for example, between the OSCE and the EU in a given case such as Bosnia. The *vertical* dimension is also apparent, as a global level organization such as the UN's Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD) assists a local independent election commission to organize itself and run an election. The process of governance includes linkages among actors at the same level and co-operation on multiple levels of the policy domain. These organizations often co-operate on the basis of comparative advantages that pool diverse resources (such as knowledge and funding) and address issues that no single organization can address on its own (like launching a major election monitoring mission). And they lend each other legitimacy by mutually reinforcing the purposes and effectiveness of their actions.

6.1.1 Purposes

With the end of the Cold War, ideological challenges to multi-party democracy withered away. The significant transitions to democracy in the former Soviet bloc (especially in Eastern Europe but also in Russia itself), in Africa, and in South-east Asia dramatically changed the context and created global political space for the emergence of a new set of actors engaged in the promotion of democratic governance. Today, fully 117 states can be considered democracies (countries with regular elections and good human rights records) according to the New York-based organization Freedom House, with a combined population of 2.35 billion people.

At the same time, differences between the trappi ngs of *formal democracy* and the realities of continued non-democratic practices indicate that there were serious differences between transition (the movement among regime types) and the *deepening and quality of democracy* in terms of meaningful choice and public participation. Moreover, in many countries there were serious difficulties within the transitional period itself – such as a lack of trust among domestic actors on the relative free and

fair nature of elections – which prompted the rapid rise of an external election monitoring "industry", for example. The global public policy network has its origins in both "supply" and "demand" dimensions of pressures for democracy. The supply of assistance emanates from the international community's pursuit of democratization as a long-term path to global development and stability. The demand for outside help emanates from civil society groups within countries undergoing turbulent transitions to multi-party rule. External help can provide them with resources and reduce their vulnerability in their opposition to incumbent regimes.

6.1.2 Tasks

The variety of tasks performed by the network can be summed up with a typology that includes advocacy, funding or the provision of external resources, education and training, consulting and information sharing, and monitoring.

Advocacy

- *Promotion of new global norms.* The network has at times been involved with the creation of new norms in the international arena, particularly for example within regional organizations such as the OAS, OSCE, and OAU, as well as "soft law" norms such as the authoritative statement of the former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his 1996 *Agenda for Democratization*. Funding has been provided directly to NGOs globally for creating and sustaining the network, and also directly to civil society actors in domestic contexts, to include capacity-building, training, the media, labour unions, and in some instances political parties.

- *Assisting specific cases.* The network has also engaged in efforts to promote democratization in specific instances. Probably the best example of a concerted effort by the network to advocate democracy in a specific instance is the case of Burma; an interesting aspect of this particular case is the widespread use of the Internet to create and maintain the network. There are myriad instances of the networks promoting or supporting specific advocates for democracy within countries, such as Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

Funding

- *Providing financial support for NGOs.* One of the most important tasks of the network has been providing financial resources for local-level actors such as democracy-promotion NGOs in transitional countries. The actors providing this function include donor states, multilateral aid agencies, international organizations, and philanthropic foundations. Issues in the direct, external funding of opposition-related NGOs are equity, intrusion into internal affairs, sustainability over

time, transparency, and the legitimacy of local actors when they receive external financial support.

Education and Training

- *Capacity-building.* Elements of the network, such as the party-affiliated organizations in the United States, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the International Republican Institute for International Affairs (IRI), have been at times involved in directly training political party officials and candidates in transitional countries. Similarly, training has been provided for functions such as electoral administration and election-related dispute resolution.

- *Civic education.* International NGOs have been extensively involved in mounting civic education campaigns in transitional societies, from "get out the vote" campaigns to "street law" (practical applications of human rights), to awareness of constitutional concepts and the meaning and purpose of democracy.

- *Training for government reform or improved practices.* The network has promoted democracy through training programmes aimed at improved transparency and accountability, and through more effective aspects of governance such as parliamentary rules and guidelines. The international NGO Parliamentarians for Global Action, for example, has provided opportunities for training newly-elected legislators in law-drafting procedures.

Consulting and Information Sharing

- *Best practices, comparative information, and specific consulting.* Due to the highly technical nature of aspects of democracy such as constitutional design and electoral system choice and administration, a key function of the democracy-building network has been to provide information and specific consultative advice on these often complex issues. In 1995, for example, the UN's Electoral Assistance Division helped sponsor the work of the Fiji Constitutional Review Commission, which toured the globe meeting with scholars, NGOs, and state officials on best practices for constitutional design in multi-ethnic societies.

Election Administration and Monitoring

- *Election monitoring.* The most celebrated function of the network has been its extensive work in monitoring transitional elections. Monitoring involves everything from placing international poll watchers at voting booths, to assessing media coverage, to evaluating vote tabulation and results, tracking public opinion, and the often controversial practice of parallel vote tabulation independent of the authorities. Election monitoring has been a particularly regular instrument in post-war situations, a practice which was first widespread in Namibia in 1989

and which has been a remarkable feature of virtually every post-war election since then.

■ *Election administration.* At times, although rarely, the international network has been called in to administer an election within the boundaries of a sovereign state. The most recent example is the UN-administered referendum in East Timor; important antecedents include the OSCE-managed elections in Bosnia and UNTAC's administration of the 1993 elections in Cambodia.

The initial results of the democracy-promotion network's performance of these tasks are highly difficult to measure. Success in the creation and consolidation of democracy can be defined in many different ways; different actors may use different criteria in evaluating whether a democracy has advanced; and assessment of education and training programmes involves long-term tracking of individuals and their attitudes and behaviour. Success might be viewed as an election that is relatively free and fair and without violence, or it might be the fact that a training programme was run, but the actual impact on the political dynamic is hard to know. In sum, there are good short-term measures of successful programmes and efforts, but evaluating whether democracy is truly taking root in a society in the long-term entails a much more difficult means of evaluating progress.

At least one of the lessons learned is that national-level elections are well and good, but one or even two elections do not make a democracy. The democracy-promotion network has been seen as myopic in its pursuit of elections in circumstances where the believed conditions for electoral democracy arguably do not exist. The emphasis on poorly conceived or administered national election processes in cultivating democracy has often been cited by critics of democratization as *the* fallacy of democracy-promotion. Of course a national election to establish the legitimacy of a democratic government is critical and necessary. But democracy involves more than elections, it requires a bottom-up dynamic that has often been lacking in transitional states.

Top-down approaches to democracy are insufficient and indeed inefficient for promoting democracy; bottom-up approaches are not just complementary, but in the long-term are more important for successful democracy-promotion. Many cite Bosnia as an example in which the international community has devoted significant resources to hold two major post-war elections, with the elections' outcomes described as nothing more than an "ethnic census". At the same time, local democracy-promotion efforts have seen at least some success in encouraging multi-ethnic accommodation in a very difficult post-war situation such as Bosnia.

6.2 New Emphases on Local Democracy

■ *Democracy-promotion organizations are placing a new emphasis on supporting local democracy in order to provide long-term support for young democracies.*

Increasingly, the international democracy-promotion network is therefore turning its attention to decentralization and the democratization of local governance as a complement to its ongoing work at national-level democracy-promotion. International organizations, bilateral aid agencies, the international financial institutions, and democracy-building NGOs are placing greater emphasis on promoting democratic local governance. The new emphasis is a direct result of the inadequacy of focusing too much on national-level governance and an appreciation of the potential role local democracy can play in ameliorating the adverse effects of globalization. In emphasizing local governance, these organizations are also building global public policy networks that significantly rely on bolstering the activities of local organizations working closest to the immediate interests and needs of people.

An interesting aspect of the emerging local democracy network is the growing linkages and collaboration among local government officials and administrators internationally. Municipal associations in emerging democracies have been pivotal players in advocating for local self-government and international linkages have been important to them in arguing their case for greater devolution of powers. At the international level, IULA, established in 1913 and with a secretariat in The Hague, is an influential co-ordinating body. Its mission is to represent the interests of local government in international organizations such as the UN, promote global norms on democracy at the local level, advance the participation of women, and to exchange information and lessons learned for education and training purposes.

The network for the promotion of local self-governance is a sub-network of the larger effort to promote democracy world-wide. International organizations, in particular the UNDP Management and Governance Programme, have made significant efforts throughout the world in promoting decentralization and local democracy as a key to good governance, economic development, and improved quality of life through the rubric of "sustainable human development". In particular, the UNDP's Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment (LIFE) programme has emphasized participatory policy-making in development; its "MagNet" on-line resource base (ww.magnet.undp.org) offers information dissemination on democratic local practices through the Internet. Similarly, the UN-sponsored Commission on Human Settlements (CHS) has played a critical role in setting the agenda on the priorities of local governance.

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The efforts of regional organizations in promoting local governance are also significant. Both the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OAS's Unit for the Promotion of Democracy have significant local democracy-promotion programmes. Bilateral aid agencies have also played a critical role; for example, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry has provided financial support of more than US$ 35 million in support of local governance and municipal reform in South Africa. USAID has worked extensively on promoting local governance in the newly-independent states of the former Soviet Union.

Democracy-promotion NGOs with global reach, such as the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), US-based political party organizations such as NDI and IRI, the German party-based *Stiftungen*, have devoted considerable resources and support for local political party development, the training of local electoral management bodies, and programmes in public administration that emphasize democratic decision-making programmes. Universities, too, have been involved with such training; notably the Institute of Local Government Studies at the University of Birmingham (UK) works to evaluate and assess local governance in Russia and the Baltics. Another example of a university-based centre is the Mega-Cities Project of the City University of New York, which has programmes in virtually every one of the some 22 cities in the world with more than 10 million inhabitants. Similarly, university centres have also turned their attention to the importance of decentralization and improved local governance in growth, development, and conflict management in divided societies.

6.2.1 Methods

Outside actors use various methods to promote local democracy. UNDP has been engaged in establishing tripartite networks that involve public officials, local authorities and administrators, and private sector enterprises for participatory development projects at the local level. Conference diplomacy has also been a feature of this network in setting the agenda for the promotion of local self-governance to meet the challenges of urbanization and globalization, in particular the UN-sponsored Habitat I and II conferences on human settlements and Agenda 2000.

NGOs have been critical in the network, and again the post-war arena offers examples of the critical nature that these organizations have played in concert with international and regional organizations. Conflict-management specialists have been increasingly concerned with efforts to build local capacities for consensus-building skills that feature negotiation, mediation, and coalition-building capabilities for problem-solving. This is especially the case in post-conflict societies.

6.2.2 Lessons Learned

There are some lessons learned from these attempts at local democracy-promotion through innovative democratic practices:

- *Do not expect too much from collaborative problem-solving.* Collaborative problem-solving processes do not make conflicts go away. This is true of post-war societies, but participatory practices also have their limits in urban arenas in developed countries, in which cities are increasingly segregated by ethnic differences. In most cases, people will not give up their long-held interests of principle, religious beliefs, territory, property, rights of assembly and speech, or their material needs for housing, clean water, or sanitation, just to seek accommodative solutions. Consensus-oriented approaches are limited by the hard facts and entrenched positions of many situations of deep-rooted conflict. But, when people can work to turn their attention toward the problem instead of turning toward their adversaries, practical consensus solutions can be found in even very acrimonious, post-war relationships.

- *Multi-layered approaches to democracy-promotion should emphasize the importance of bottom-up approaches and fully integrate local NGOs and officials into the global public policy network.* The multi-layered approach has several distinct advantages: it allows actors in the network to develop comparative advantages; a layered approach allows for the development of more sustainable local NGOs; and the co-operative interaction between global-level and local actors can be mutually reinforcing, with each lending legitimacy to the work of the other. That is, global level democracy-promotion NGOs find intrusive work more legitimate when they can show that there is a local demand for democratic reform. Similarly, local actors can point to the world-wide movement for greater democracy to legitimate their mission and activities.

- *Much has already been learned, and these findings need to be integrated into practice.* Within the short time frame in which democracy-promotion has been a major feature of the international system, there has been considerable learning about how to go about enhancing elections and direct participation. For example, election systems need to be carefully considered; multi-party competition can be very divisive, and indeed incendiary in societies that are deeply divided along identity lines.

- *Co-ordination is critical in the network.* When no single organization is able to mount a major mission such as an electoral observation activity, or when grassroots involvement requires a keen appreciation of the local scene, co-ordination among actors in the network is essential. International organizations have proven to be very well placed to serve this co-ordination function. They have implicit "convening power" (the ability to get all relevant parties around the table) and they are normally perceived as neutral and unbiased.

■ *Sustainability of local-level actors in the network is a serious concern, and more atten-tion needs to be paid to ways in which local NGOs can become more self-sustaining.* In some instances, such as in Mozambique, a major election assistance mission has helped in the inaugural election in 1994. More than US$ 80 million in assis-tance was provided, much of it with the aim of bolstering local capacity for ongo-ing promotion of democracy in that fragile, war-torn country. In local elections in 1998, however, the international community's financial assistance was much more limited, and an absence of sufficient engagement from abroad is at least one reason why the municipal elections were not very successful (see section 4.3). In 1999 national elections, donors sharply reduced the assistance provided and there are now serious questions about the sustainability of a significant democracy-pro-motion NGO sector in Mozambique. Democracy-promotion is a long-haul pro-ject, and donor commitment to sustaining local actors in the network is an important challenge for the years ahead.

6.2.3 Outlook

A critical step in the further evolution of this network is the furtherance of inter-national norms on local democracy. It is useful to note that even in countries where competition in national-level democracy is constrained, for example in China and Iran, there have been recent instances of vigorous local-level democracy. That is, there are few ideological barriers to the recognition of the importance of local self-governance and the basic tenets of local democracy. Moreover, there are strong developmental reasons for enhancing local democracy that are widely recognized in the international community. The approval by the UN General Assembly of the draft World Charter on Local Self-Government would give a significant boost to the further development of the network. The new norm would establish a clear right to democracy and stimulate institutional change in countries around the world.

Other avenues for fruitful development of this network include the further sharing of information and experience on options for enhanced participation at the local level and a better recognition of the inherent dilemmas of participatory practices. If col-laborative policy-making is to be a hallmark of the future of democracy-promotion and high on the agenda of members of the network, more needs to be understood on the conditions in which participatory democracy at the local level is possible, desirable, and appropriate. The importance of skills transfers and learning across experience – for example on difficult issues of governance of cities with significant migrant communities – is a critical challenge for this network in the years to come.

Democracy-promotion will require more emphasis on local governance as the forces of change for billions of urban dwellers are increasingly affected by influences beyond the parameters of a single country or region. In the twenty-first century, rates

of urbanization will continue to be very high in the developing world, with the advent of dozens of new mega-cities in Asia and Africa a virtual demographic certainty. Effective governance of new and old cities alike in an urbanizing world is critical to the project of promoting human rights, international security, and sustainable development. Innovation in urban democracy is a global challenge. It will require further development of the nascent global public policy network for local democracy-promotion, featuring above all the more systematic inclusion of local-level NGOs and local elected officials in the multi-layered system of governance that inevitably will be required.

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A N N E X   O N E

GLOSSARY

Accountability. The ways in which elected and appointed officials are evaluated by their citizens. Accountability relates to politicians keeping their promises, appropriately administering funds and the public trust, and not being able to act without oversight by the people.

Apathy. When the people do not care or are not really interested in politics. Often apathy results when people do not believe that their voice is being heard or that their views will be taken into account. Or, maybe they do not believe the issues directly affect their lives.

Autonomy. Political space given to minorities. Autonomy is the principle that people deserve the right to make decisions over those issues that affect them most directly. Often used as a means of providing for cultural expression, education, and language.

Capacity. The ability to get things done. Elected officials may be free to make decisions in the public good, but good decisions are worthless if they cannot be implemented. Capacity refers to resources, but also to the government's relationship with society. If the society rejects government remedies, the government lacks capacity to address problems.

Citizen juries. Processes of decision-making or a series of exploratory hearings in which citizens take testimony and decide or make recommendations on specific issues.

Citizenship. Citizenship has a legal meaning as well as one that applies to participation. As a legal issue, it refers to who is entitled to membership in the political community and the benefits (and obligations) it entails (citizenship as legal standing). The other meaning of the term is active involvement and devotion to civic duty, or contributing to the life of the community.

Civic engagement. People forming organizations and being involved in the issues that affect them most. Civic engagement suggests that local interest groups are organized, have a developed agenda, and seek to advocate their interests. When people are involved in social groups, social trust is built up, laying a basis for democratic tolerance.

Civil society. The means of organization by which people come together to form groups in society and define the values, goals, and solutions for social issues.

Civil society generally means non-profit, advocacy, or charitable organizations, including religious groups and private sector interests.

Citizen initiatives. Efforts by citizens to change a law through gathering signatures or other indications of support, in order to put decisions to the people in an election or a referendum.

Collaborative policy-making. Getting together and deciding difficult issues as a group, in a search for common solutions. These processes ideally feature all major interests at the table, and a good faith effort to come up with a solution that every interest finds satisfactory.

Community. Community is the feeling of location and place, and of relationships that bind people together; it contributes to a feeling of identity and belonging. It can also refer to a recognized group of people who consider themselves a community.

Community-based organizations (CBOs). Associations at the very local level, in neighbourhoods, through which people come together to provide services to their community. Self-help organizations fit this category.

Community budgeting. A process by which the budget – which allocates spending, and therefore social values – is shared with the people in community meetings and decisions are made together on the tax and spending questions before the municipality.

Community visioning. A process by which a group of citizens and elected officials, together with experts, try to envisage how they would like their community to look in the future. This technique also helps define community values.

Consensus. Decision-making that attempts to get an agreement everyone can be satisfied with.

Co-operative governance. Patterns of interaction and co-ordination among various levels of government, for example between provincial and local levels, or across political boundaries.

Decentralization. Shifting authority to levels of decision-making closer to those who are most effected by the decisions. Some decisions can be made at the local level, but some require co-ordination by national governments.

Decision rules. The rules of the game, which determine what level of agreement is necessary for a decision to be made that is binding on the entire political community.

Deliberative democracy. A method of determining the popular will through discussion, dialogue, and give-and-take. This may be seen as a supplement or as a replacement for electoral democracy.

Democracy. A system of governance in which popular preferences guide official representation and action (rule by the people). Practically, democracy involves elections, political rights, and opportunities for direct participation in decision-making.

Devolution. Shifting authority to the lowest possible level. Devolved powers, once granted, are less easily revoked than are delegated powers.

Direct democracy. Direct citizen involvement in decision-making, by assessing through discussion or election the general will of the people. The views of the majority tend to bind those opposed to the decision as well.

Electoral systems. The rules by which elections are held. The rules influence how the election game is played, and the purpose of the competition itself.

Fiscal decentralization. Devolving authority for taxing and spending to the most local level of government possible.

Local. The arena of public decision-making that is closest to the people.

Mega-cities. Cities with more than ten million inhabitants.

Participation, traditional. Traditional participation occurs through standing for office, voting for candidates, and being involved in the debate over issues decided at the ballot box.

Participation, enhanced. Enhanced participation occurs in discussion, dialogue, debate, and problem-solving in formal or informal processes of policy evaluation and formation.

Peace commissions. Local-level bodies, such as committees or neighbourhood representatives, who seek to ameliorate disputes among contending social groups. Often used as a technique in post-war situations or in cases of ongoing ethnic violence.

Performance evaluation. Methods to measure whether the goals of the community, or of an organization or individual, are being reached.

Plurality. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes (not necessarily a majority) wins the seat.

Proportional representation. An electoral system that tries to directly reflect the proportion of votes won in the number of council or parliamentary seats awarded.

Referendum. An election in which voters are asked to accept or reject a specific proposition. The rules can stipulate how much is needed for the referendum to pass, but the term is used most in situations where more than 50 per cent carries the day.

Representative democracy. Democracy in which voters choose representatives to advocate on their behalf in decision-making bodies.

Stakeholders. Stakeholders are those whose interests are most directly affected by the issue at hand. It is never easy to be sure that all the legitimate stakeholders are at the table, and whether those at the table are in fact legitimate stakeholders.

Subsidiarity. The principle that says decisions should be taken at the level closest to the people, as long as it is feasible and does not require broader national or regional co-ordination. In practice, it means that local communities are empowered to make decisions on issues such as education, language, economic development, and environmental management consistent with national or regional principles.

Transparency. Being able to see inside government and know that the processes of decision-making and the decisions made are fair, consistent with the law, and free of corrupt influences.

Turnout. How many people vote in elections as compared to the total number eligible to vote. Turnout is usually lowest in local elections.

Urbanization. Urbanization is the movement of people from the rural areas to city life, changing the ways in which they earn a living, consume, participate in the economy, and add to the social mosaic of a city.

Virtual democracy. Democracy over the Internet, in which people may express their opinions through e-mail to local authorities, or browse local civic announcements online, or participate in an online election, or watch a council meeting in action. Some see virtual democracy as a way to encourage direct citizen participation in an age of big cities.

Ward-based systems. City administration or electoral districting that divides the city up into sub-zones. Often these areas form their own distinct communities, each with its own identity and characteristics. These systems usually feature decentralization of authority within a large city.

ANNEX TWO

CONTRIBUTORS

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Julie Ballington joined International IDEA as an Assistant Programme Officer in 2000 to work on the gender and youth programmes. She previously worked as a researcher at the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa based in Johannesburg, South Africa. Her interests are in gender and youth politics, and she has written on these issues in the southern African context. She holds a Master of Arts in political studies from the University of the Witwatersrand where she is presently a Ph.D. candidate.

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Julia Demichelis is an urban planner who focuses on strategic development issues in societies where massive social violence has disturbed communications and decision-making structures around the world. Working closely with grassroots leaders and new government officials in, for example, Albania, Bosnia, Côte d'Ivoire, Serbia and Sierra Leone, she has facilitated community and nation-wide peace-building programmes within refugee relief, disarmament, and post-conflict municipal rehabilitation operations. Ms Demichelis was the 1999 recipient of the Sergeant Shriver Award for Distinguished Humanitarian Service and holds a Master of Urban Planning from

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John Thompson is Chairman of John Thompson & Partners, a firm of community planners, urban designers, and architects. He has pioneered various techniques for bringing about collaborative, multidisciplinary, community-based planning. A founder trustee of The Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture and a member of the Urban Villages Forum, Mr Thompson has been involved in projects in over 50 towns and cities throughout the UK and Europe, including Belfast, Berlin, Turin, Moscow, Prague, and Beirut.

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